

THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENTS

OF LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

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by

ROBERT SINCLAIR STEWART

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
(University of Adelaide, May, 1967)

Bachelor of Arts (University of Adelaide, May, 1968)

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS (PHILOSOPHY)

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

HOBART

DECEMBER 1981

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

ROBERT S. STEWART

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I. ABBREVIATIONS

Most of the abbreviations in the text and footnotes are self-explanatory.

"P.I." stands for *Philosophical Investigations*.

In the text "§ " refers to section numbers in *P.I.*, Part I, and "p" or "pp." refers to page numbers in *P.I.*, Part II.

"Essays" or "Essays, Ed. Pitcher" refers to Pitcher, George, (editor), *Modern Studies in Philosophy, A Collection of critical essays. Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations.* Macmillan, London, Melbourne, 1968.

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II. ABSTRACT

After an introduction I start by giving a brief outline of Wittgenstein's account of language about private sensations, the expressive use hypothesis, that sentences about private sensations, e.g., "I am in pain", replace the natural primitive expressions of sensations. The expressive use is seen as analogous to the performative element in Austin's performative utterances.

There are besides the private language arguments proper, other reasons against private language, and I initially argue against these.

Firstly others can know I am in pain. However, some account still needs to be given of the fact that others still do not have my private feeling of pain.

Secondly "I know I am in pain" is seen as a Rylean category mistake, but this depends on whether "I am in pain" is only in the expressive use category of utterance.

Thirdly another of Wittgenstein's points is like the Rylean distinction between sensation and observation, which makes it seem as though sensations cannot be known. I argue against this.

A fourth Wittgensteinian reason against private language is an argument about the rules of "know" and "pain", these rules making "know" logically redundant in "I know I am in pain". I see the plausibility of Wittgenstein's appeal to rules here as resting upon our natural bias towards the incorrigibility thesis. I argue that the incorrigibility thesis does not yield a premiss strong enough to support Wittgenstein's argument. I then give reasons against the incorrigibility thesis, which makes the appeal to rules implausible,

because the rules are not in accord with normal usage. Against the incorrigibility thesis I cite both Austin and the electroencephalogram argument, and then argue that the logical exclusion of doubt about incorrigible statements rest upon an empirical claim that there are no circumstances which preclude taking a statement as incorrigible. Wittgenstein's final move of shutting out doubt does not remove the problem.

One of the problems of dealing with Wittgenstein's elimination of "I know" from "I know I am in pain" is that he has two main reasons for this. The Blue Book contains mainly the reason that it is all a matter of rules. But the private language arguments of the Investigations yields as a solution the expressive use hypothesis. So the second reason is that of the Rylean category mistake. This can lead to confusion.

Next I examine the expressive use hypothesis more closely. To be consistent, if "I am in pain" is an expression of pain then "I" must also be an expression, and not be a reference to a person. Wittgenstein gives several reasons against "I" referring, but I do not find them conclusive.

I do not think that Wittgenstein later abandons in any clear way the expressive use hypothesis, but I give some reasons against it. Patients do need to observe and describe sensations. Words used to describe pains are borrowed from contexts in which they are descriptive. Some sensations have little natural expression, but are communicated through circumstances in which they arise. If "I am in pain" as a referring expression is not incorrigible, then as an expression it is not a criterion for me being in pain.

I then examine the private language arguments proper. The first

private language argument appears to rely on the unreliability of memory, but I argue that this is not the deep aspect, and that the problem of public checking to determine correct and incorrect usage is the basic point. Ayer's criticism meets this deep aspect.

I criticise Rhees' position that a private language is unintelligible, as following from an unwarranted definition of "language".

The second private language argument concerns sameness, and ends up like the memory problem, really being a problem of public checking of correctness.

Wittgenstein holds that the process of public checking comes to an end where justifications run out, but seems to be against private checking doing the same thing. The end of the two processes is the same, "seems right" gives way to "is right".

The need for public checking is seen as the basic root of Wittgenstein's reasons against a private language. Some of my criticisms are these: 1. Ayer's point that any checking must reach a point where something is taken as valid in itself.

2. The problem of public checking should hold for expressions of sensations too.

3. The expressive use model does not seem plausible for public objects, so why should it be so for private objects?

4. Public and private objects would be got rid of by assuming that they are constantly changing, only no one notices the change. The beetle in the box argument is relevant here. It is hard to see why private objects drop out, and if they do it seems that public objects could do so as well.

The conclusions of Wittgenstein's arguments lead him to the peculiar position that he can say nothing about private objects not

even about their existence..

I try and clarify the meaning of § 297 - "water boils in a pot".

By taking the stipulation that a language is necessarily private, then the private language arguments work in a cryptic sort of way - behaviour in the form of writing "S" is ruled out.

I try and say something about sensations and sensation words. To understand someone else's feelings you need not only their behaviour, but feelings of your own. What Wittgenstein has shown is that natural expressions of sensation are required for public language. This is similar to saying that we have to behave towards public objects to have a public language about them.

In the ostensive teaching of sensations words it is unlikely that pupils would pick-up the replacement of natural behaviour rule rather than the naming rule. Teaching the names of private sensations is often just as hard or as easy as teaching the names of public objects. Sensations do not enter our lives in grossly different ways from public objects.

One of the main reasons for Wittgenstein's position is that he treats sensations as if more in the realm of sense data rather than being nearer to public objects.

I then make a distinction between contingently and necessarily private objects. Contingently private objects merely happen to be accessible to only one person, whereas access by others to necessarily private objects is logically impossible. I argue that pain is contingently private, not necessarily private.

Wittgenstein seems to indicate that pain could be exhibited if there were pain patches. I indicate that our pains are already

something like pain patches on our skin which are contingently private.

I further argue that for any object anyone can think of it is logically possible that someone else has some apprehension of it, and so there are no necessarily private objects.

I try to show that there is a sense in which we have our own or particular or individual private experience, but that these experiences are not necessarily private in a strong sense, but may be so in a weaker sense. However, this still does not give a person a basis for having a name for his particular private experience and another name for a public or contingently private object corresponding to it.

I then try and clarify for myself J.J. Thomson's comparison of Malcolm's interpretation of the private language argument with the Principle of Verification. She seems to conclude that as the Principle of Verification is of doubtful use so too is Malcolm's interpretation of Wittgenstein's private language argument in ruling out a private language.

I feel that in considering the case where it is supposed to be logically impossible for others to find out whether or not a word applies to someone's private object, rather than the analogy with the Principle of Verification being useless to rule out that the someone has a private language, we should appreciate the difficulty of showing the supposed logical impossibility of others finding out if a word applies to someone's private object, and thus the difficulty of showing that someone has a (necessarily) private language.

I next consider whether all our private items are contingently private rather than necessarily private. For any private item one can try and find ways in which it could have been public, but it seems to me that any private item could have been public. There are no

necessarily private items.

There are different degrees of contingent privacy. There are private items which one can compare with public objects, and those for which there is no public object for comparison. Then there are those private feelings which seem unique - only one individual seems to have them - and those who do not have anything of the same sort are more peculiarly excluded from understanding the other's feelings.

The judgement that we are feeling the same sort of thing, e.g., a pain, is seen as analogous to the judgement that we are seeing the same thing, e.g., a tree.

The lack of analogy between telling that someone has a gold tooth and telling that someone has toothache is seen as harmless in the light of toothache being contingently private. As we do not demand that we have someone's personal experience of a public object, so there is no demand for his personal experience of a contingently private object.

After a short note on behaviour I list some features of pain which mislead us.

My conclusion is that there is no necessarily private language.

III. INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein viewed public sensation words as expressions of sensation, not as names referring to our private sensations. He has brought out the important point that natural expressions of sensations are as important a basis for a public language game about sensations as are our natural reactions to public objects a basis for a public language game about them. By assuming the ruling out of expressions of sensation he considers the private naming of a sensation itself. He is right when he indicates that such a name cannot be correctly applied as determined by public checking, but wrong in that a private language user can use his own private checking, for the end of public checking is similar to the end of private checking. His conclusion leads him to deny that our public sensation words name or refer to our sensations (which are usually taken to be private objects), and thus he embraces the expressive use hypothesis. I think that there is some truth in the expressive use hypothesis but that mostly our sensation words name and refer to sensations, in a similar way to the way we name and refer to public objects.

This thesis examines Wittgenstein's reasons against private language, and tries to show that we need not accept all of Wittgenstein's conclusions.

But why, one might ask, should one concern oneself with the private language arguments of Wittgenstein?

Firstly there is a whole tradition of philosophy from Descartes on which sees no difficulty in the naming of our private sensations. The philosophers of this tradition seem to indicate that I know what the word "pain" means or what pain is solely by observing my own pain.

Locke, for example, says that: "...words, in their primary or immediate signification, stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them ..."¹ and also "... every man has so inviolable a liberty to make words stand for what *ideas* he pleases that no one hath the power to make others have the same *ideas* in their minds that he has; when they use the same words that he does".²

If Wittgenstein is right and one cannot name one's private sensations in this way then the above view of language needs re-thinking.

Secondly, in order to talk about the language involving private sensations one is forced to get a clearer view of what sensations are, and what sort of privacy they have. One may experiment with oneself and try to notice all sorts of sensations one is not normally aware of. One notices a slight itch at the back of the scalp, and then one at the side of the chest, a slight ache in the left elbow, a pressure under the hand on the desk, a slight ache in the teeth. Perhaps it is sensations like these that the hypochondriac notices but blows up out of all proportion. One may wonder whether the same sensations are had by other people and ask one's wife, for example, of her experiences, and discover just how well or badly two people can talk together about such things. Is it a contingent matter that sensations are private or are they in some sense necessarily private?

One perhaps tries to name a particular private sensation just to see how one goes. Perhaps one says the name out loud, or writes it down, or says it to oneself with the resolution to tell no-one else, or perhaps instead one picks out another private sensation and calls

1. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Chapter II, 2.

2. *Op.cit.*, Book III, Chapter II, 8.

it the name of the first one, such that a slight itch in the back becomes a name for a slight ache in the calf - the ultimate private language.

Of course, Wittgenstein might exhort us to heed that "It shews a fundamental misunderstanding, if I am inclined to study the headache I have now in order to get clear about the philosophical problem of sensation".¹ But when you are interested in the language concerning sensations you are also interested in the sensations themselves, and where they might fit into one's view of the world.

Thirdly, a close study of the private language arguments gives one a closer understanding of what we are doing when we use public language. The background to the private language argument is a view of the workings of public language. As the theory of language of the *Tractatus* is set up as a base to deal with further problems, so the view of language developed in the early pages of the *Investigations* is used as a base to eliminate amongst other things, private language.

Original thoughts in this area are now difficult and whatever one says has probably been written by someone else. However, the greatest value is obtained by being captured by the whole subject, not so that you mindlessly churn out the Wittgensteinian solutions, or that you arrive at original solutions to the problems which are right, but such that, as Wittgenstein wanted, you have thoughts of your own.²

1. *P.I.*, I, § 314.

2. *P.I.*, Preface, viii.

IV. REASONS AGAINST PRIVATE LANGUAGE

1. The Expressive Use Solution to Private Language Problems

Wittgenstein appears to give us his solution to private language problems at the beginning of his more concentrated section on private language in the *Philosophical Investigation*.¹ "How do words *refer* to sensations?"² We are to think of the situation in which one apparently refers to one's own sensations. The answer is that sensation words do not refer to or name sensations at all. They do not describe the private sensation. Sensation words in this situation replace the primitive or natural expressions of the sensation. By "expression of sensation" he means "appropriate human behaviour". Thus the sensation word does not name some private entity, nor does it describe human behaviour, but replaces the behaviour.

Wittgenstein's example is pain. "I am in pain" replaces crying. Thus "I am in pain" is seen as akin in function to "Ouch!". "Ouch!" does not name a pain sensation, nor does it refer to pain behaviour. It is verbal behaviour associated with pain, expressing pain.

Presumably "I am itchy" replaces scratching; "I am hot" replaces sweating and fanning oneself; "I am cold" replaces shivering; "I am ticklish" replaces giggling.

2. Analogy with Performative Utterances

To borrow a term from Austin,³ there are certain utterances which are performative, e.g., 'I do', 'I apologise', 'I promise', 'I will'.

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 244.

3. J.L. Austin, "Performative Utterances", in *Philosophical papers*.

They do not admit to truth or falsity, but are actions, operations, performed by words. They do not describe some inner state, nor any outward behaviour. They are the behaviour. Austin goes on to say that the distinction between performative utterances and statements is not clear, and that there are performative elements in the making of many statements, e.g. "I am sorry". This statement both describes my state and acts as an apology. Another example would be "I cross my heart". This describes the action of crossing my heart with my finger, and performs a promise.

Is "I am in pain" a performative utterance in Austin's sense. Austin attempts to give grammatical criteria¹ by which we can distinguish performative utterances, but finds that there are no obvious ones.² Performative utterances are often short and ambiguous, e.g., we may not know whether "Bull" is a warning or a name. It depends upon whether we are in the country or at the show. But there is some hope that most performative utterances may be analysable into one of two standard forms which Austin gives as "I ... so and so", or "You (or he) ... so and so". Thus "I order you to ...", and "You are warned that ..." are analysed forms of the usual performative utterances of ordering and warning. Also "I state that ..." may be a performative utterance and this indicates that all statements may be a class of abbreviated performative utterances.

But there are some statements, such as 'hurrah' and 'Damn', which Austin feels seem like performative utterances, yet somehow are not. Their primary nature is giving vent to feelings, yet they are actions. But we may here remind ourselves of the platitude that all utterances are actions, and indeed Austin concludes that there are

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 228.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 230.

performative elements to all utterances.¹

Perhaps the statements 'hurrah' and 'Damn' are purely performative, in that the words are not used descriptively at all, not even in other sentences. Although 'Damn' may be used descriptively, 'Damn' being short for 'Damnation'. But when someone swears by saying "Damn" or even "I'll be damned", he is not talking about a place, nor divining what might happen, but is just swearing. This is about where the word 'Ouch' fits. It is purely performative, having no descriptive use at all.

Austin almost rejects 'Hurrah' and "Damn" as performative utterances because they are not neatly translatable into either of the two standard forms of performative utterance given above. I think that the reason for this untranslatability is that the words have no descriptive use. Thus 'I hurrah', 'I damn', 'I ouch', are not used as neither are 'He hurrahs', 'He damns', 'He ouches'. (And we must think of 'Damn' in its distinctive use as swearing, and not as the action of sending or ordering someone to Damnation.) One would rather say 'I cheer', 'I swear', 'I cry in pain' or 'He cheers', 'He swears', 'He cries in pain'; there one is describing.

It is interesting to note that when Austin develops further his ideas on performative utterances in *How to do things with Words* he still finds that exclamations like "damn" and "ouch" do not neatly fall into one of the roughly defined classes of constative or performative utterances, or locutionary, illocutionary or perlocutionary acts.² Also the notion of a purely performative utterance, except perhaps as a marginally limiting case, is abandoned, the performative-constative

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 238.

2. J.L. Austin, *How to do things with Words*, pp. 105 and 132.

distinction giving way to more general families of related and overlapping speech acts.¹

However, my purpose in considering Austin's work here has been to try and get a clearer perspective on the expressive use analysis.

Austin's insights make it easier to believe that there is an element of 'Ouch' in 'I am in pain', indeed Wittgenstein would have it that the two expressions have the same use. But it is not yet settled whether 'I am in pain' is more like 'I am sorry', having both a performative element and a descriptive element. Certainly on the face of it 'I am in pain' seems to be referring to a private entity, a pain, which according to many can only be known to him who has the pain, and that the statement uttered genuinely by him is incorrigible. But Wittgenstein has obscure but powerful reasons for denying that 'I am in pain' refers to anything at all.

3. Some Reasons Against a Private Language

The section in Part I of the *Philosophical Investigations* from § 243 onwards contains not only one or two fairly well demarcated private language arguments, but also a number of other reasons against a private language. I will deal with these in turn.

4. Others do Know I am in Pain

In *P.I.*, I, § 246 to § 252 there occur arguments based on the use of the word 'know'. They consist of a number of scattered reasons why someone is wrong when he says "only I can know whether I am really in pain".

Wittgenstein's first point is that this is wrong in that others

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 149.

often do know that I am in pain. However, there is a difference between my saying "I know I am in pain" and "I know he is in pain". In the first case I tell from my feeling of pain, and in the second I tell from his pain behaviour. I may observe my own pain behaviour, but I have never had his feeling of pain. We often know that others are in pain but the interesting point is that we only know or have our own feeling of pain, and do not know nor have another's feeling of pain. Until it is shown that it is nonsense to talk of knowing one's own pains, or knowing or having the pain of someone else, then I take it that the question is still open - "Can it be only I that knows or has what I feel when I am in pain?"

5. Category Mistakes

Wittgenstein follows this point up with his second "It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I *know* I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean - except perhaps that I *am* in pain?"

"Other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations *only* from my behaviour - for I cannot be said to learn of them, I *have* them." [He says "cannot ... *only*" because there is nothing else to learn from but my behaviour.]

"The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself." ¹

This passage seems to be pointing out that "I know that I am in pain" is senseless in that it is something like a Rylean category mistake.² "I am in pain" is not the sort of statement that can end "I know that ...". It would be like saying "I know that ouch". As

1. *P.I.*, I, § 246.

2. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, pp. 17-25.

'ouch' is non descriptive it does not name a member of a category, so it does not name a thing which comes into the category of things known or things that might be known. But whether Wittgenstein is right here will depend upon whether 'I am in pain' can always be replaced by 'ouch', and this is yet to be decided.

6. Sensation and Observation

Another way of interpreting this passage is that it is drawing a distinction between knowing and having, and that we can be said to have pains but not to know them. 'Knowing' is more properly said of things which can be observed, and not of sensations which are had. Ryle here again is helpful in his distinction between sensation and observation,¹ in that it seems (accidentally or not) to be a possible expansion of the Wittgensteinean point.

Ryle make a distinction between having a sensation and observation. Having a sensation (e.g., a pain or a tickle) is just being aware of something, noticing something, whereas an observation is an act whereby we put ourselves in a position to have a sensation. E.g., to observe a tree I act by turning my eyes towards the tree and have a sensation, a visual impression of the tree. Making an observation involves having a sensation of some sort, but to say that we observe a sensation is to make a mistake. This Ryle says is the official doctrine that perceiving involves having sensations; although he would prefer to restrict 'sensation' to refer to unsophisticated sensations such as pain, tickles and itches.

Observing is a task, a finding out or trying to find out something. I think that Ryle plausibly further establishes that having a sensation

1. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Chapter VII.

is not the same as observing by pointing out the set of contrasts which exist between the two. In a way one wonders how they could possibly be alike. E.g., "One can listen carefully, but not have a singing in one's ears carefully." "We observe on purpose, but we do not have sensations on purpose, though we can induce them on purpose."¹ I think the general plan of these contrasts is that observing is an action, whereas having a sensation is being in a possessive relationship, and words which qualify actions do not usually also qualify possessive relationships.

But to establish that sensations cannot be observed is a different thing. Ryle has four arguments in favour of this, and these I shall criticise in turn.

1. It makes no sense to say that sensations are witnessed only by others, because I cannot be said to witness my own sensations. He says that I feel or have tweaks, but do not discover or peer, or watch, or listen to them. Certainly one cannot peer, watch or listen to tweaks, pains and itches because those observational words are applicable to the impressions associated with the eyes, or ears, and not those of the body. But I may discover that I have a pain, in that some pains are not noticed when attention is directed elsewhere, and they can be discovered by thinking again about them. Ryle's contrasts just do not prove anything here. I feel pain in much the same way that I watch trees. There is not much difference between watching a tree and watching an afterimage between listening to a bell ringing and listening to tinnitus. And the difference comes in further associated facts with respect to the tree and the bell such as existing unobserved, or being perceived by others, which do not apply to the afterimage, tinnitus or pains.

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 194.

One might think that here then one could not be said to discover pains or tinnitus or afterimages because they do not happen to exist unperceived. To discover something one might think can only be said of the thing to be discovered if it already exists, e.g., Antarctica before its discovery, but is not being perceived. This is a putative grammatical point about the word 'discover'. But in fact there are many cases of discovery where the thing discovered did not exist before the discovery occurred. E.g., the discovery by Newton of the formula for the magnitude of gravitational force between masses, or the discovery of a new synthetic drug. To say that I awoke and discovered a pain in my back or a loud ringing in my ears does not break any grammatical rules on that account [It may, however, break rules if the private language arguments are valid.]

There is a great temptation in some cases to talk of pain existing unperceived. E.g., the situation in which you have a mild pain but because your attention is involved in something else, you only notice the pain now and then. The pain is always in the same place, e.g., a blister on the foot, and it seems to make sense to say that the pain is still there even in the moments when you are not noticing it. Or think of Buck's case¹ where the football player deceives himself about his pain because he wants to keep playing. Is he in pain even though he denies feeling any pain? It seems to make sense to say that someone has continuous ringing in his ears, but that he does not notice it all the time. It seems as if it were there waiting for his attention.

2. Observational aids and handicaps are said to exist for the perception of objects and sounds but not for sensations. This is just

1. R. Buck, "Non Other Minds", in *Analytical Philosophy*.

false. The sensation of pain in my arm may be enhanced by the presence of a boil, or by some other cause of hyperaesthesia, while the feeling of the pain may be handicapped by a local anaesthetic or nerve injury.

3. It makes sense to ask what is the spelling of a word, but nonsense to ask the spelling of a letter. Analogously it makes sense to talk of observing an object but nonsense to talk of observing a sensation.

And if spelling a word consists in giving a series of letters, does observing an object consist in having a series of sensations? But Ryle has already said that observing an object is a trying to do something which is distinct from having sensations. So his own analysis wrecks the analogy as being an exact one. The analogy is rather like a parable. There its meaning has nothing to do with the doctrine it is trying to illustrate. It is an illustration, not an argument. One might well have concluded - "analogously it makes sense to ask what is the movement of an object, but nonsense to ask for the movement of a sensation". Yet we know that sensations move. The pain of appendicitis is described as moving from around the umbilicus to the right iliac fossa. "Ureteric pain is the well known colic passing from the loin to the groin."¹

4. Ryle's fourth argument against the observation of sensations involves an infinite regress. Observation entails having sensations. Presuming that a 'glimpse' is a 'neat' sensation word, then observing a robin involves having a glimpse of a robin, for having a sensation is a part of observation. But if we are to observe a sensation, then

1. H. Bailey and M. Love, *A Short Practice of Surgery* (1962), p. 1098.

so the argument goes, we must have a further sensation, such as glimpse of a glimpse. This series could go on forever, and yet there is no such thing as a glimpse of a glimpse. So it is nonsense to talk of observing sensations.

But even though observing an object involves having a sensation it is difficult to see why in observing a sensation one should analogously have a further sensation. Analogously one should have a sensation, but surely the one that we are observing will do. The further sensation is neither needed and nor does it occur. If observing involves having a sensation then in observing a sensation that very sensation fulfils the requirement. An analogy has suggested itself but it has no application here.

One may remark upon the element of trying in observation. If one is just staring at the window and looking as it happens at the tree rather than the horse, or the goat and then perhaps a little later at the horse and then the goat again, it is difficult to notice any element of trying in these proceedings. The gaze just shifts, I do not try to shift it, and I observe the objects, but am not trying to find out anything, for all I see is already familiar. So it seems that perhaps there are many observations made without the least element of trying or trying to find out anything. Ryle does recognise this use of 'observe' at the top of p. 198 where he says that it is sometimes used as a synonym for 'pay heed to' or 'notice'.

With respect to sensations there are many situations where one may try to have a particular sensation. Most of us are here because a couple of people tried to arouse some particular sensation or other. Ryle says "We observe on purpose, but we do not have sensations on purpose, though we can induce them on purpose".¹ Surely, if we can

1. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p. 194.

induce sensations on purpose, then we can try to have sensations!

The remark in the previous paragraph about merely observing without trying applies in many cases of having sensations. But as there are cases of trying in observation so there are cases of trying in having sensations. Ryle has spuriously emphasised the presence of trying in the one case and its absence in the other. Which all goes to show that Ryle's distinction between observation and having sensations on the basis of trying is groundless.

The situation as I see it is as follows. Observations of objects and sensations can be made. Observation of an object involves having some appropriate sensation. Observation of a sensation involves having precisely that sensation. When one observes an object, one observes the appropriate sensation, but not just that, for an object consists of more than its momentary appearance.

It appears then that Ryle and Wittgenstein are wrong in that one may not only be said to have sensations, one may also be said to observe them. That being the case then sensations are things which can be known, so the possibility of a private language is not denied by falsely stating that sensations can only be had and not known.

V. KNOWLEDGE AND INCORRIGIBILITY

1. The Incorrignibility Thesis

Next I want to talk about the incorrignibility thesis and how this is related to a different argument concerning the use of "know", one which is more fully explicated in the *Blue Book*, but which enters now and then in the *Philosophical Investigations* as a reason against private language.

When a sincere introspective report is made, there is the view that the report is incorrignible or indubitable, i.e., to make a mistake is logically impossible. Thus it is sometimes thought that such a report is logically necessary.

However, incorrignibility is different from logical necessity. Following Armstrong "a logically necessary truth is true in all possible worlds".¹ "I am in pain" could not be sincerely and truly uttered in a world where there were no pains, whereas " $2 + 2 = 4$ " is said to be true in all possible worlds.

But incorrignibility can be defined in terms of logical necessity "... a statement is incorrignible if and only if it is logically necessary that when the statement is sincerely made, it is true. A statement is incorrignible when sincerity entails truth."²

It might be thought that although the statement "I am in pain" is not logically necessary, the statement "Sincerely I am in pain" when uttered, would be logically necessary, for in a world in which there were no pains the statement "Sincerely I am in pain" could not

1. D.M. Armstrong, "Is Introspective Knowledge Incorrignible?", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol.72, (1963), pp. 417-432.

2. *Op.cit.*

be sincerely uttered. Well it might not be sincerely uttered, but it could be insincerely uttered, so that the statement would be false, i.e., making the word 'sincerely' part of the avowal does not produce a statement which is logically necessary. Nor does the sincerity with which the utterance is made make the statement logically necessary. Rather, it is logically necessary that if the utterance is sincere, then the statement is true. For the statement to be logically necessary a statement of sincerity itself would have to be logically necessary.

Similarly the statement "I know I am in pain" is not logically necessary, but if it is sincerely made then it is true, at least according to the accepted doctrine on incorrigibility.

2. Wittgenstein's Argument on Rules of "know" and "pain"

But scattered thinly through the writings of Wittgenstein is this further species of argument concerning the use of the word 'know'. Roughly the argument is as follows. In the statement "I know that x", if 'x' is a substatement which it is logically impossible either to doubt or to know, then respectively either 'know' has no function or the statement is senseless.

Perhaps the best statements of this argument occur in *The Blue Book*, pp. 54,55.¹ "When on the other hand, you granted me that a man can't *know* whether the other person has pain, you do not wish to say that as a matter of fact people didn't know, but that it made no sense to say they knew (and therefore no sense to say they don't know)." ... "That is, you did not state that knowing was a goal which you could not reach, and that you have to be contented with conjecturing; rather, there is no goal in this game. Just as when one says 'You

1. L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*.

can't count through the whole series of cardinal numbers', one doesn't state a fact about human frailty but about a convention which we have made"" it *is* analogous to a statement like 'there is no goal in an endurance race'."¹

"Again, when in a metaphysical sense I say 'I *must* always know when I have pain', this simply makes the word 'know' redundant; and instead of 'I know that I have pain', I can simply say 'I have pain'."²

Statements of the form "I know that I am in pain" look like descriptive or experiential ones, whereas Wittgenstein says that they "hide a grammatical rule"³ or are "about a convention we have made"⁴. "The thing to do in such cases is always to look how the words in question *are actually used in our language*."⁵ Thus this argument is grounded in Wittgenstein's conception of ordinary language as rule governed. (Armstrong I think wrongly uses this argument against the incorrigibility thesis, see p. 46 of this thesis.)

So it is said that to speak of having knowledge has a function only where to speak of not having knowledge also has a function. I now wish to construct an argument using an analogue of Wittgenstein's premiss and yielding the conclusion that "know" is redundant in "I know I am in pain"

If "know" is senseless in "I do not know I am in pain" then "know" is redundant in "I know I am in pain".

If "I know I am in pain" is logically necessary then "know" is senseless in "I do not know I am in pain".

Therefore if "I know I am in pain" is logically necessary then "know" is redundant in "I know I am in pain". This is a valid

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 55.

3. *Op.cit.*, p. 55.

4. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

5. *Op.cit.*, p. 56.

argument of the form:

$$[(p \supset q) \cdot (r \supset p)] \supset (r \supset q)$$

3. The Argument does not work with logically necessary statements

It is a paradox but true that if a philosopher finds statements of knowledge which are logically necessary, he cannot without redundancy say that he has knowledge. At first sight I thought this argument was bad because it might work with all logically necessary statements.¹ Let us try the argument with logically necessary statements which are rarely disputed, e.g., " $2 + 2 = 4$ ", "Pythagoras' theorem follows from Euclid's axioms", "three angles of a triangle sum to 180° ", "a bachelor is an unmarried man". Paralleling the above arguments we have:

If "know" is senseless in "I do not know $2 + 2 = 4$ "

then "know" is redundant in "I know $2 + 2 = 4$ ".

If "I know $2 + 2 = 4$ " is logically necessary then "know" is senseless in "I do not know $2 + 2 = 4$ ".

Therefore if "I know $2 + 2 = 4$ " is logically necessary then "know" is redundant in "I know $2 + 2 = 4$ ".

This is a valid argument but the premiss "'I know $2 + 2 = 4$ ' is logically necessary" is false. For although " $2 + 2 = 4$ " is logically necessary it does not follow that I necessarily know that $2 + 2 = 4$.

1. Lately I have found that Morick has also thought, wrongly I believe, that Wittgenstein's argument here is invalid because it would work with logically necessary statements. Rather I think that though the argument is valid, the failing is that there are no statements such as "I know that ..." which are logically necessary.

See Harold Morick, "Wittgenstein and Privileged Access" in *Wittgenstein and His Impact on Contemporary Thought*, pp. 366-368.

So it is seen that statements which are logically necessary, e.g., " $2 + 2 = 4$ " do not fit into Wittgenstein's argument. The statements which might do however, are the so-called incorrigible ones, e.g., "I am in pain". "I know I am in pain".

4. Does the Argument work with incorrigible statements?

For sometimes statements like "I know I am in pain" are taken as though they have all the certainty of logically necessary statements. But we concluded before that the incorrigibility thesis does not result in "I know I am in pain", as logically necessary, but only as true or false depending upon sincerity. So the incorrigibility thesis will not provide a premiss for Wittgenstein's argument.

5. Sincerity in Doubt

One could sensibly say "I am in pain and I know I am sincere so I know I am in pain". One could make a case for those times when one is not sure whether one is being sincere. E.g., a malingerer may think he is being sincere when he says "I know I am in pain" but may later realize that he was not sincere, so that what he says turns out to be false (meaning more specifically that "I know I am sincere" turns out to be false). As we hinted before my sincerity is not beyond logical doubt.

But in the case where there is no empirical doubt as to my sincerity, where it is understood that I am sincere, then nothing more is added by saying "I know I am sincere". and so nothing more is added by saying "I know I am in pain", after one has said with appropriate sincerity "I am in pain". "Know" here is not being used in an empirical sense where doubt has been excluded logically (in which case that use would be redundant), but in an empirical sense

in a case where doubt has been excluded empirically, where there is no empirical doubt and "know" does not function to remove it, does not add anything concerning the presence or absence of empirical doubt, for the doubt is already patently absent. This does not make "I know I am in pain" false, nor are any logical rules broken. One is just being long-winded, using repetition inappropriately. It is an empirical redundancy, not a logical redundancy here. All that the incorrigibility thesis can yield is a statement of knowledge where "know" is empirically redundant. It is not strong enough to yield logical redundancy.

6. Empirical and Logical Redundancy

What is a logical redundancy like? Well we know that the definition of a triangle includes that it is three sided, so if we said of some figure X, "X is a triangle and X is three sided" ("X is a three sided triangle"), that would be a logical redundancy. The words "three sided" are here logically redundant. What if we make the rule or definition that pain is what is known? The definition of pain includes that it is known. Then if someone says "I am in pain and I know it" ("I know I am in pain"). he has made a similar mistake. "Know" here is logically redundant.

What if now someone said "I am in pain and I know the definition of pain". He might instead say "I know I am in pain", "know" referring to his knowledge of the definition, i.e., "I know I am in pain" meaning "I am in pain and I know that the definition of pain involves knowing it". Someone could then conceivably say, when actually in pain "I do not know I am in pain" meaning "I am in pain but I don't know whether the definition of pain involves knowing it". I.e., "I am in pain but I don't know what 'pain' means". Presumably he has some belief about what "pain" means, otherwise his use of "pain" would

would be without any reason. He thinks perhaps that there is a slight chance that "pain" only applies to unconscious pains, i.e., pains which are not known, so that what he is now feeling and knows he is feeling is not a pain although he believes but does not know that the definition of pain involves knowing it.

So when Wittgenstein says "if anyone said 'I do not know if what I have got is a pain or something else', we should think something like, he does not know what the English word 'pain' means",¹ perhaps the person is using "know" in the sense of not knowing what "pain" means. That such a case should be actual seems to be beyond the realms of plausibility, but one must I think allow that by scraping the bottom of this particular barrel one can allow someone to say "I know I am in pain".

An infinite regress of knowing seems possible - knowing you are in pain, knowing the definition of pain, knowing that you know the definition. This is not to say that there is in fact a definite rule or definition of pain.

7. Comparison with the Arguments in *On Certainty*.

Wittgenstein's argument in *The Blue Book* can be traced on to the early passages of *On Certainty*,² where the redundancy of "know" is developed to occupy a significant place in that work. There Wittgenstein is concerned with the status of such propositions as Moore's "I know I have a hand". In § 58 (*On Certainty*) "I know etc." is conceived as a grammatical proposition, i.e., it is one of our rules of grammar. This is how we use "know". This is what we call knowledge.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 288.

2. L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*.

But this rule of grammar is not seen as the sole foundation or ground from which we judge. Somehow we pick up a general body of propositions which more or less all hold together, and these are the grounds from which we judge. One such proposition is sometimes expressed as "I know I have a hand".

But Wittgenstein does not agree with this expression, for he says "... What we have here is a foundation for all my action. But it seems to me that it is wrongly expressed by the words 'I know'."¹ And the reasons for this rest in the following passages from *On Certainty*.

"If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not ~~true~~, nor yet false."²

"... About certain empirical propositions no doubt can exist if making judgements is to be possible at all. Or again: I am inclined to believe that not everything₃ that has the form of an empirical proposition ~~is~~ one."³

"Is it that rule and empirical proposition merge into one another?"⁴

i.e., we find that there is no sharp boundary between rule and empirical proposition, so that there are cases where "I know" is redundant in empirical propositions such as "I know I have a hand". This redundancy to be consistent must be said to be neither empirical nor logical, for there would be no sharp boundary between these two types of redundancy.

But instead of using the language of redundancy, or saying that "I know" is functionless he wants to show that "I know" is functionless. E.g., "I want to say: propositions of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language) - This observation is not of

1. *Op.cit.*, § 414.

2. *Op.cit.*, § 205.

3. *Op.cit.*, § 308.

4. *Op.cit.*, § 309.

the form 'I know...'. 'I know ...' states what *I* know, and that is not of logical interest."¹

"What is the proof that I *know* something? Most certainly not my saying I know it."²

It is rather the way in which we act which shows that we know something. So he says "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it."³ So at this point we cannot say that "I know" is functionless. This is just as bad as saying "I know" has a function. These things cannot be described, they can only be shown. E.g., "Moore's mistake lies in this - countering the assertion that one cannot know that, by saying 'I do know it'."⁴ Moore should have pointed out how we act with the proposition "I have a hand".

But he seems to go back a little on this. E.g., "... it seems impossible to say in any *individual* case that such-and-such must be beyond doubt if there is to be a language game - though it is right enough to say that *as a rule* some empirical judgement or other must be beyond doubt."⁵ "Whatever may happen in the future, however, water may behave in the future - we *know* that up to now it has behaved *thus* in innumerable circumstances. This fact is fused into the foundations of our language game."⁶ There he used "know" in a case which perhaps should be one of those in which the use of "know" is seen to be functionless. Or perhaps here the way in which water behaves is not as vital a part of the foundations as the fact that I have a hand. If water began to behave differently the foundations would be cracked, but if I turned out not to have hands where to all appearances I still had them, this casts doubt on all observations. Thus he

1. *Op.cit.*, § 401.

2. *Op.cit.*, § 487.

3. *Op.cit.*, § 501.

4. *Op.cit.*, § 521.

5. *Op.cit.*, § 519.

6. *Op.cit.*, § 558.

says "I have a right to say 'I can't be making a mistake about this' even if I am in error".¹

But what if what I have always called my hands turned out to be some sort of systematic illusion and in fact I have no hands. Then, given that there are no contrary reasons, everything would be in question, anything might be the victim of this systematic illusion. I could not even say that I knew I had no hands for I might be wrong about that also. "Doubt itself rests only on what is beyond doubt."²

I said "given that there are no contrary reasons" because one could perhaps give good reasons why the illusion only applied to hands, that the illusion was an evolutionary advantage, and that it was caused by some definite brain structure. In that way one might come to say "I know I have no hands". Though the usual sentiment is, "if I cannot be certain that I have hands then what can I be certain of? - Nothing".

For all that I believe Wittgenstein's elimination of "I know" from "I know I have a hand" is still debatable. Firstly it is plain that the elimination is not based on a straight out logical redundancy. Rather it is a close approximation to logical redundancy. The second point arises from the impact of § 519.³ On the one hand "I have a hand" is treated as a ground from which we judge and is a statement we have a right to hold onto no matter what, and on the other it too is not beyond doubt. If it is not beyond doubt then "I know" gets a foothold. Thirdly one can envisage situations in which someone may say "I know I have a hand" and turn out to be wrong. E.g., someone confused after an operation or an accident may have lost his hands and yet still aver that he has hands. Or a pianist after an

1. *Op.cit.*, § 663.

3. *Op.cit.*

2. *Op.cit.*, § 519.

accident may stare at his hands and say "I know I've still got my hands".

In normal circumstances Wittgenstein's viewpoint seems plausible, the plausibility depending on whether one is against a sharp boundary between analytic and synthetic or not.

If one can get around private language problems and over the expressive use hypothesis then there would be a good case for treating "I know I am in pain" along the same lines as Wittgenstein treats "I know I have a hand". But one must be reminded that the elimination of "know" is different from and much more subtle in *On Certainty* than in *The Blue Book* and the *Philosophical Investigations*.

8. Relationship between the Incorrigeability Thesis and Grammatical Rules

But in fact in *The Blue Book* Wittgenstein believes that his conclusion follows from a grammatical rule. Statements like "I must know that I am in pain", "Only I can know that I am in pain", look like experiential or empirical statements, but are really rules for the way in which we use the words "pain" and "know". By examining language we find that the rules supposedly are that "pain" only applies to that which is known and known by one person. Whether this appeal to rules is right or not I do not know, but it is useful to realize that the rules would not be of much use if they did not have application to the world. This is analogous to the theoretical calculus with no application or interpretation - it is useless. So the rules of our language need to be useful in describing the actual world. If "pain" meant a sensation of one person only known to others, the word would be useless, for "pain" would apply to nothing at all. In fact the rules were developed with what had to be described in

view, so they in fact have good application. This makes one wonder whether the appeal to rules really hides an appeal to the way the world is, and that Wittgenstein's insight into the functionlessness of "know" and "I know I am in pain" does not rest on grammatical rules but on the incorrigibility thesis. What I mean is that the incorrigibility thesis has only more recently come to be more widely questioned, so that if one was previously an adherent to the incorrigibility thesis one would have accepted as a fact of the world that one could not be wrong about knowing one's own sensations. Then when Wittgenstein comes along with his argument about "know" being functionless, we are inclined to believe him, not because we suddenly notice the rules that he appeals to, but because we believe the incorrigibility thesis and the rules would appear to fit a world in which the incorrigibility thesis was true. The plausibility of Wittgenstein's appeal to rules here rests on our natural bias towards the incorrigibility thesis. But even so we have seen that the incorrigibility thesis does not provide us with the necessary premiss for Wittgenstein's argument.

But in making the certainty of "I know I am in pain" a grammatical point it looks as though perhaps it is logically necessary. Given our present rules for the usage of "know" and "pain", "I am in pain" is logically equivalent to "I know I am in pain", so "know" is logically redundant. Only how is it to be said that the rules for usage of "know" and "pain" are such that there is this logical tie made between them. What the rules are is to be found out by observation of the workings of language. Thus we start by examining the different ways in which "I know I am in pain" has a use, and from this one sees what the rules are. So firstly we should find that "know" is redundant

and then that will show what the rule is. Wittgenstein talks as if the metaphysician is making a rule up, or that what he says "hides a grammatical rule",¹ e.g., "You say that you don't wish to apply the phrase 'he has got my pain' or 'we both have the same pain', and instead, perhaps, you will apply such a phrase as 'his pain is exactly like mine'."² For him exposing this rule shows that "know" is redundant, whereas it is the redundancy of "know" which exposes the rule.

The trouble is that there are situations in which it seems to make perfectly good sense to say "I know I am in pain", i.e., in which "know" is not redundant, e.g., the problem of stating whether you know you are sincere or not.

9. Austin's Criticisms of the Incorrigibility Thesis

Another way in which "know" is not redundant in "I know I am in pain" stems from Austin's criticism of the incorrigibility of first person present tense sensation statements. Allowing for a couple of points, i.e., a man may lie, or be a victim of misnaming concerning his sensation reports (this is not an exhaustive list), it is not otherwise possible for him to be wrong in his sensation reports.

To counter this Austin cites cases where we are not sure what to call a particular colour, sound, smell, taste or feeling. It is hard to find cases where we find it difficult to call a red colour "red".

"But take magenta: 'It looks rather like magenta to me - but then I wouldn't be too sure about distinguishing magenta from mauve or from heliotrope. Of course I know in a way it's purplish, but I don't really know whether to say it's magenta or not: I just can't be sure

1. *The Blue Book*, p. 55.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

...¹ Similar examples are also brought up on p. 42 and p.113 of *Sense and Sensibilia*.² He gives examples of tastes -

- (a) some quite new taste not like anything experienced before, and
- (b) a taste not quite like one we know, i.e., a sensory discrimination task.

It is difficult also to think of having trouble calling a pain sensation a pain, and yet when we are being vigorously tickled it is sometimes hard to tell whether the tickle is still a tickle or has become a pain. "Any description of a taste or sound or smell (or colour) or of a feeling, involves (is) saying that it is like one or some that we have experienced before: any descriptive word is classificatory, involves recognition and in that sense memory, and only when we use such words (or names or descriptions, which came down to the same) are we knowing anything, or believing anything. But memory and recognition are often uncertain and unreliable."³

We must remember that to be mistaken about a particular sensation being a pain or something else is almost as unlikely as being mistaken about whether a colour is a sound, or a sound a smell. Imagine being presented with a colour and being asked "Is this a colour or a sound or a smell", and then getting it wrong. There just do not seem to be any unsharp boundaries between these sensory modalities. Perhaps someone in a state of synaesthesia might get confused. A straight out pain is just as unlikely to be misclassified. We might be unsure about whether it is really an ache or a stab, as we may be unsure as to whether a colour is heliotrope or magenta. The tickle may become painful, but so may a loud sound, or even a clash of

1. J.L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, "Other Minds", p.59.

2. J.L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*.

3. J.L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, "Other Minds", p.60.

colour, or an odour. In the first case however presumably the tickle gives way to the existence of the pain, whereas in the others the pain co-exists with the sound, colour or odour.

"I am in pain" is such a non-specific statement that it would be hard for the genuine utterer to go wrong. For the less we claim, the less the chance of error.

It is like the claim "I see something" - it is made true by seeing anything, or "I hear a sound" is made true by hearing any sound.

We do go wrong in such cases, e.g., I say "I hear a sound", and on listening more carefully I might say, "No, I couldn't have after all". Such claims are modified with respect to visual objects, and they also can be modified with respect to pain, only there are rarely occasions on which it is appropriate to do so.

Perhaps one occasion would be testing for tenderness, where at first pressing anywhere on the abdomen results in a pain claim, but on further relaxation the recognised tender area becomes more localised, and what was previously claimed to be tender is now denied to have been so.

If I am more specific in my pain claim, e.g., "I have a mild burning pain at the top of my stomach" then there are more ways in which the claim can be false. The pain might actually be not so mild, and it may be really at the bottom of my chest and also slightly in the back.

There is usually not much point then in saying "I know I am in pain" as distinct from "I am in pain", for it is usually obvious that you must know it. But in cases where the pain is barely perceptible one may say with some justification, when the pain increases, "Before

I didn't know I was in pain (it wasn't definite enough to call it "pain") but now I know I am".

In Chapter X of *Sense and Sensibilia*, Austin is trying to show that generally there is no sharp division from the viewpoint of certainty between statements which are usually held to be incorrigible and those which are corrigible. We can be just as certain or uncertain with respect to both. E.g., we might say that the so-called incorrigible statements only refer with respect to the present moment, and the corrigible statements refer with respect to all time, and that is a way of distinguishing them. There is thus another way for the corrigible to be wrong - they may be wrong with respect to future time as well as the present. But the so-called incorrigible statements may still be wrong with respect to the present.

Splitting off a class of statements in this way does not make them incorrigible. To decide whether a statement is incorrigible or not Austin takes an ordinary language stance. A statement is incorrigible if no further proof for it is reasonably needed. For each particular case we have some idea of when the number of tests required is ample, and that certainly the number of tests required is not regarded as being infinite. So he comes to the conclusion that descriptions of present sensations and descriptions of material objects may both be corrigible or incorrigible depending on whether you have the number of proofs required.

But the relevant point in the present context is that first person present tense sensations statements are to a large extent in the same boat as statements about the physical world.

10. The Electroencephalogram (E.E.G.) Argument

More recently there has been another argument put forward against

the incorrigibility of sincere avowals about present sensations and feelings - the electroencephalogram argument. Two steps to the argument are made out.

1. There is no necessary connection between sincere avowals and present sensations and feelings.
2. Situations are imagined where evidence or brain states would override the sincere avowal.

Let us imagine some possibilities of the use of an imagined instrument, an autocerebroscope¹ which could tell me about my brain states. I try and correlate my avowals with my brain states. Several possible results could occur.

1. Complete correlation occurs. Sincere avowals of pain for example are correlated with a particular type of brain state, and shamming, lying and known mistakes are associated with non-correlation with that particular type of brain state.
2. There is no correlation whatever. Sincere avowals have no particular associated brain state. The autocerebroscope is useless as an indicator of correctness.
3. Correlation occurs most of the time but at times there is a breakdown in the correlation. This is the important possibility, for the breakdown in correlation may indicate otherwise unknown mistakes.

Now what would make us say that someone had made a mistake as indicated by the autocerebroscope. Well if he could now on reflection say sincerely that he had made a mistake, then there would be no argument that he had not. But if he could not at all say that he had

1. P.E. Meehl, *in Mind Matter and Method*. (See bibliography)

made a mistake, but continued to avow that what he had was a pain and not a tickle as the autocerebroscope had indicated then we might be at a loss as to know what to say. The decision would depend for one thing on just how much information about the brain we had. If all we had was that the brainstate was that type usually associated with tickles I think that we would regard the avowal as having precedence over the autocerebroscope and say that sometimes pains are associated with brain states which are usually of the tickle type. There need not be any necessary connection between mental events and brain states. It is as certain as can be by introspection that it was a pain and not a tickle, and it is certain by observation by myself and others that the brain state was a tickle type. This would be evidence against a 100% correlation between a particular mental event (a sensation of pain), and a particular brain state (of the pain type). Also we are supposing that the subject sincerely believes that he is experiencing pain, when the brainstate is that of a tickle. So if we are to then say that the subject was mistaken, and instead of feeling pain he was feeling a tickle, this tickle would be something of which no one at all believed that he felt. Other observers did not feel the tickle and the subject also says he did not feel it. The tickle must therefore be an utterly unconscious tickle, and I take it that here such notions as unconscious tickles and unconscious pains are pointless, if not nonsensical.

This result is in accord with Meehl's way of dealing with the problem of a brain state in one person giving rise to a raw feel of red, and a similar brain state in another person giving rise to a raw feel of green. He imagines an experiment whereby Utopian neurosurgery disconnects the brain state, giving rise to a red raw feel, from the

tokening mechanism and connects in its place the brain state giving rise to a green raw feel. The brain state and the green raw feel are presumed to both have causal consequences for the tokening mechanism, so that the subject responds to this novel stimulus, indicating that he is tempted to say "red" but that in fact he must say "green" because it is green that he is experiencing.

Meehl does not believe that any such circumstance would arise, because he believes in the "same cause, same effect" principle. He would look for and believe that there was some reason for the same type of brain state giving rise to two different types of raw feel. The finding of a reason gives the autocerebroscope autonomy over the avowal. Meehl's introductory case on mistokening ends with the finding of just such a reason. A brain biopsy is performed and a defect found in the connection between the brain state giving rise to the raw feel, and the tokening mechanism. "These mistokenings 'seem right' at the time ..." for "... to 'seem wrong' a mistokening must occur farther along the intracerebral causal chain ..."¹

Having found such a defect the possible additional cause of the mistokening, i.e., that really a different raw feel did arise from the same brain state type, thus making it not a mistokening, could be ruled out by Occam's razor.

We have then the hypothetical result that an autocerebroscope plus a Utopian brain biopsy could give us good reason for rejecting the incorrigibility of a person's statement about his own raw feels. Perhaps "sometimes my raw feels seem to be green when they are in fact red".² Being able to imagine this case becoming actual establishes that there is no necessary connection between sincere avowals

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 119.

2. *Op.cit.*, p.119.

and present sensations and feelings. Of course when in fact we have plenty of cases of mistaking raw feels, the above result is of pretty small moment, as if one said "it is possible that there are dogs" when everywhere dogs are abounding. Only if such mistakenings are rare does the E.E.G. argument start to have force.

The autocerebroscope then is not front line support in the case against incorrigibility. Most of the cases of mistakes that it would show up are already shown up by memory, and so the instrument is not needed. E.g., the case of "the man in a train wreck who fails to size up properly his own feelings, believing himself to be in pain when, actually, he is only feeling sorry for himself".¹ On reflection he remembers that he was confused and not in pain at all, but only feeling sorry for himself. Or the example of the drunk patient, having a history of self deceptive malingering, who when he crashed his car at night picked himself up, staggered all over the road and jumped into the blackberries yelling, "I'm dead, I'm dead". On reflection he would probably remember that at the time he was having sensations of one sort or another and that therefore his statements amounting to denial of consciousness permanently were false.

The autocerebroscope may however be of some use as an aid to memory, acting as a jolt to our memories, making us remember, or giving us a reason for trying to remember where before we had none. Or in situations where we cannot remember what happened, e.g., after the development of amnesia surrounding the time of an accident the autocerebroscope record may be our only evidence for the occurrence of a mistake.

1. G. Sheridan, VI, "The electroencephalogram Argument Against Incorrigibility", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.6, No.1, January 1969, p.62. (He heard of this case from Professor Urmson.)

11. Sheridan's Objection to the E.E.G. Argument

Sheridan considers an objection to the E.E.G. argument against incorrigibility. "A Wittgensteinian might readily reply that the presence of evidence of the sort just mentioned would constitute a *precluding* circumstance, a circumstance in which a person's avowal would not normally be taken as criterial evidence of his sensation."¹ Now Meehl gives a list of precluding circumstances - lying, mis-speaking, aphasia, slovenly language training, previous misreading a German-English dictionary,² "having a Freudian slip, being drugged, obeying a post-hypnotic suggestion".³ Sheridan against his own position reduces the impact of the E.E.G. argument to another item on this list.

Meehl suggests that the list so far cannot be claimed to be complete, so the incorrigibility thesis reduces to the triviality "An egocentric raw feel tokening is legitimate unless something causes it to be made illegitimately".⁴ Sheridan indicates that the Wittgensteinian reply may be that we distinguish between countervailing evidence to a person's avowal, and evidence which precludes us from taking his avowal as criterial. Thus autocerebroscopic data alone may be countervailing evidence, and so the avowal remains criterial, whereas evidence of brain malfunction precludes taking the avowal as criterial. This sort of approach seems to be in line with what I said before about Meehl's treatment of the problem of one brain state type giving rise to different raw feels red and green in different persons, where the avowal remained criterial. For these, there was only the countervailing evidence of the autocerebroscope. Sheridan

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 66.

2. P.E. Meehl, *Op.cit.*, p. 110.

3. *Op.cit.*, p. 132.

4. *Op.cit.*, p. 133.

then concludes that probably the E.E.G. argument is stronger if it restricts evidence to autocerebroscopic data (countervailing evidence) and leaves out the brain malfunction (precluding evidence).

Rather than this I think we are left with a dilemma. On the one hand the autocerebroscopic data alone are only countervailing evidence and thus the avowal remains criterial or incorrigible. On the other hand the brain malfunction precludes us taking the avowal as criterial or incorrigible.

But surely the important point is that the claim that an avowal is incorrigible or criterial depends upon another claim which is corrigible, viz., that there is no precluding evidence. To establish that one would have to establish that the list of possible precluding evidence is complete and that none of the members of the list applied in the particular case.

12. An Empirical Claim is the Basis for the Logical Exclusion of Doubt

The same point can be got at in a different way. The sceptical arguments against the logical possibility of empirical knowledge can be countered by the antiseptic by an appeal to the use of the word "know". When "know" is used in the context of knowing such and such an empirical fact ("Men have landed on the moon", or "the speed of light is approximately 186,000 miles per second") such knowledge is not supposed or expected to have the certainty which concerns logically necessary statements. It is not in everyday parlance expected that empirical knowledge has the certainty of mathematics or the certainty of definitions (e.g., a triangle is a plain figure bounded by three straight sides) or the supposed incorrigibility of first person sensation statements "I am in pain".

The knowledge that I have a hand is not known with the certainty of mathematics, definitions or first person sensation statements, but to talk of it not being knowledge because of a logical possibility of being wrong or an extremely unlikely empirical possibility of being wrong, is not in accord with our normal usage of the word "know".

Also the certainty of first person present tense sensation statements is not known with the same certainty as mathematics or definitions. We break off this class of statements from other empirical statements because one kind of mistake is not possible. Logically if no claims are made beyond the present state of affairs, then mistake in that area is ruled out, i.e., if no claim then no mistake. But we have seen that there are many other ways in which first person present tense sensation statements can be wrong, and this is something we find out empirically.

I said that "if no claims are made beyond the present state of affairs then mistake in that area is ruled out". But it is an empirical claim that in these cases no claims are made beyond the present state of affairs, so the logical point here obviously rests upon an empirical claim. Logic alone has not precluded mistake.

Could we be wrong then in our empirical claim (that no claims are made beyond the present state of affairs)? I suppose it is logically possible to be wrong here, or that there is a minute empirical possibility of being wrong. (E.g., perhaps the other mistakes possible are possible because they are claims beyond the present state of affairs). But that does not stop us saying "I know I am in pain". But neither does it give the ground for saying that logical doubt is ruled out here and so to speak of knowledge in this context is senseless. The doubt is ruled out in the first place empirically and

the logical point rests on this.

13. Shutting Out Doubt

Wittgenstein's final move now is that "Doubting has an end"¹ and "But, if you are *certain*, isn't it that you are shutting your eyes in the face of doubt? - They are shut."² In Malcolm's words "There is a concept of certainty in these language games only because we stop short of what is conceivable".³ Of course the reasonable thing to do is to stop doubting, but it is hard to see why this should make an avowal incorrigible or criterial.

Need we say that endless doubts preclude the concept of another's being in pain. Malcolm⁴ indicates that the endless doubter would have no criterion of another's being in pain. But he might be able to imagine criteria, e.g., the avowal said in appropriate circumstances and all his doubts removed. He has criteria of others being in pain as he has criteria for something being a unicorn. Just as we have the concept of a unicorn without there ever being an actual one, so we can have a concept of another being in pain without him ever being in pain.

What are we to say when we shut our eyes in the face of doubt and take someone's avowal as criterial, and then find out that he had a brain malfunction. According to the old concept of pain he was in pain, and that still must stand. So we will have to have a new concept of pain which involves as a criterion having precluded brain malfunctions.

So in a way Wittgenstein has allowed for new doubts by allowing

1. *P.I.*, II, p. 180.

2. *P.I.*, II, p. 224.

3. *Modern Studies in Philosophy*. A collection of critical essays. *Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations*, Editor, George Pitcher, p. 88.

4. *Op.cit.*, p. 89.

for new concepts. But we might reply to him as he replied to us on a different occasion - There is "no objection to adopting a symbolism ... What, however, is wrong, is to think that I can *justify* this choice of notation."¹ In other words, trying to shut out doubt by fixing criteria does not remove doubt.

14. Criticism of One of Armstrong's Points

Armstrong uses Wittgenstein's argument against the function of "I know" in "I know I am in pain" to support his argument against incorrigibility. I think this is a wrong use of the argument for Wittgenstein does not want to establish that "I am in pain" is corrigible, but that the claim of incorrigibility is really a claim about rules, e.g., "... it means nothing to doubt whether I am in pain! ... we shall think something like, he does not know what the English word 'pain' means ..." ² Also I have indicated that this claim possibly and spuriously rests upon the incorrigibility thesis itself.

If "I am in pain" is corrigible as Armstrong is trying to establish then "know" should have a function in "I know I am in pain". But the corrigibility of "I am in pain" is supposed to rest on Wittgenstein's thesis that "know" has no function in "I know I am in pain". So if "know" has no function here, then know does have a function here - which is nonsense. So Wittgenstein's argument does not support Armstrong's against incorrigibility.

15. The Incorrigibility Thesis does not support Grammatical Rules

The main purpose of Wittgenstein's appeal to rules was to explain away the metaphysical. The incorrigibility of avowals was supposed

1. *The Blue Books*, p. 66.

2. *P.I.*, § 288.

by the metaphysician to be a basic truth about reality, a basis on which to build. Wittgenstein's appeal to rules was supposed to make the metaphysician's claim not a claim about reality but a claim about language.

But we saw first that the incorrigibility thesis was not itself strong enough to make Wittgenstein's appeal to rules plausible, and then later that the incorrigibility thesis itself was false. Thus the original stimulus to Wittgenstein's appeal to rules in the context of the incorrigibility thesis has been rendered harmless.

VI. THE EXPRESSIVE USE HYPOTHESIS

1. The Expressive Use Analysis as a basis for the Senselessness of "I know".

Of course if Wittgenstein's analysis of "I am in pain" as an expression analogous to natural pain behaviour were right, this too would be a ground for saying that "know" has no function here. At least it would have no normal referring function. Its only function could be emphasis in the form of additional pain behaviour, "I know I am in pain" perhaps being more impressive to others than just "I am in pain".

2. Criticism of Cook.

Cook in his article "Wittgenstein on Privacy"¹ tries to show what Wittgenstein meant by saying "I know I am in pain" is senseless. He does this by pointing out the case where it would be pointless for someone to say to someone else "I know it is raining" as opposed to just "It is raining", i.e., the case where the informer is in as good a position as anyone would normally want to tell if it was raining, and the other person could see that he was in that position. This sort of pointlessness he says would be a case of senselessness. It would however still be possible to convey something by "I know" if the person who he is informing was not in a position to see how certain the informer was. It is different with "I am in pain" however, for no one can doubt that the informer is in the position to tell that he is in pain. So the addition of "I know" here is really senseless.

1. Wittgenstein, *The Philosophical Investigations*. Ed. G. Pitcher, pp. 286-323.

Cook's second example is that of comparing "I feel a pain in my knee" to "I feel a stone in my shoe". We want to say, he says, that the man with a pain in his knee must know he has a pain, whereas there is a possibility that there is not a stone in his shoe. But this is the wrong contrast he says. The contrast is that it makes sense to speak of ignorance and knowledge, doubt and certainty, in the case of the stone in the shoe, but it is nonsense to speak in this way of the pain. He says that he has only tried to clarify Wittgenstein's point and that to argue for it he would have to somehow show the "in corrigibility" (in inverted commas) of first person sensation statements such as "I am in pain".

There seem to be two main ways of taking the sentence "I am in pain":

1. "I am in pain" refers to a pain,
2. "I am in pain" is an expression of pain.

If we use "I know" in the first case it seems possible to misclassify an experience such as pain. There are experiences which one may not be certain as to whether it is a pain or a tickle, or both. One is certain here that one is having something, but whether to call it a pain or not is doubtful. There is also the case where the pain is very slight. Sometimes here you may not be certain whether you have the pain or not. A slight pain may not be noticed at first. However, in the case of a full blooded pain it is unreasonable to doubt that it is pain. Here one could say that one is certain that one is in pain. But it is just this expression of certainty that Cook says Wittgenstein is denying. As the expression of uncertainty is said to be senseless, so too then is the expression of certainty.

Now Wittgenstein is denying not only that the word "pain" names

a private sensation; but also that the sentence "I am in pain" is a proper descriptive sentence at all. The words "I am in pain" rather are words which replace the natural primitive expressions of pain. One reason then that Wittgenstein says that "I know I am in pain" is senseless is not that the word "pain" refers to a private item about which the expression of doubt is senseless, but rather that "I know I am in pain" is grammatically misleading. It is something like saying "I know that ouch".

Cook then is saying that first person sensation statements are somehow "incorrigible" and that it is this which makes expressions of doubt and certainty about them senseless. I have argued that in any case it is conceivable to doubt whether one is in pain or not. But I think Cook's attitude is ambivalent. On the one hand he talks in terms of showing, not proving "incorrigibility" and that this might be done in a Wittgensteinian fashion by an analysis of grammar. On the other he feels that counter-cases of someone making a mistake about being in pain need answering. The Wittgenstein of *The Blue and Brown Books* is responsible for this ambivalence. For the counter-cases can easily seem to assume that "pain" refers to a pain, as "rain" refers to rain, and the answers seem to be that you just cannot be mistaken about any such pains we refer to.

But the answer should be that "pain" does not refer to pain, so mistakes are ruled out by the grammar of the word "pain". (There might be a further question as to the appropriateness of the expression of pain.) In other words, Cook is here in danger, as Wittgenstein was, of arguing for incorrigibility for reasons other than grammatical ones. As if the case of pain was like the case of it raining only in the case of pain one can argue that empirically or

logically there is no situation in which when in pain I do not know I am in pain. I think considerations like these are important, but if you are taking Wittgenstein's other line (expressive use), they should not be, for he stops at the expression of sensation and says that knowledge and doubt do not apply to that. (Empirical questions would become important again if it be allowed that you can ask questions about the appropriateness of the expression.)

3. A Paradox in Wittgenstein

If Wittgenstein thought that "I am in pain" was incorrigible because all empirical doubts had been excluded, or because of the rules of "know", then he would be in a paradoxical position with regard to the private language arguments. The paradox is that on the one hand "I am in pain" is incorrigible, and on the other hand "I am in pain" cannot be said to be correct, for the concept of correctness just does not apply. This is because of the absence of public checking, although he makes it look as though it is a memory problem. Wittgenstein gets out of this paradox by showing that "I am in pain" is incorrigible because the concept of "correct" does not apply to expressive behaviour. Which really means that it is not incorrigible at all, only that it looked as though it was because we were not clear about its grammar.

4. Possible Analogy between the Analysis of Thought and Pain

How can one reject Wittgenstein's private language arguments and still retain his rejection of knowing that one is thinking by apprehending inner speech or other imagery? For if we reject the private language arguments then perhaps we should say that we know what we are thinking by a recognition of an inner private item. One

might say "I know I feel hot" and similarly one might say "I know that I just had the thought that a concrete slab in the ground is cheaper than conventional flooring" or "I know that I had the thought of the opening bars in Mahler's 3rd". Declarations of sensations and thoughts seem to be on a par, both are descriptive of what private events just occurred.

But Wittgenstein sees thinking as being a much wider concept than description of inner events. We tell that others are thinking not by apprehending their inner processes, but by seeing their words in an appropriate context. The behaviour and environment must fit the words, and if they do not then we are being deceived, not that it is ever easy to tell.

We often tell in our own case that we are thinking not by an inspection of an inner process but by nothing at all. We just know straight off, as we sometimes know our intentions not from any occurrence in the mind, but just straight off. Wittgenstein does not reject that inward speech and imagery do occur, but only that recognition of such things are the sole basis for attributing thoughts to someone, even ourselves. For Wittgenstein the meaning of "thinking" is given by the use. There is no essence to thinking. It is not the inner process alone. It is doubtful whether the inner process could count in the concept at all, to be consistent with Wittgenstein's private language reasons. But at least now the concept of thinking is more general, to cover more than just the occurrence of a private item. So now we realize that I may be mistaken when I say "I know that I was just thinking such and such", for further reflection may make me realize that one was thinking something else, e.g., of Mahler's 2nd. instead of Mahler's 3rd. symphony.

May not the analysis "I know that I am in pain" show that similar mistakes are possible? What I wanted to say was this. That there were those who held that by private access to their thoughts they could hold that a sincere statement describing just those thoughts must be true. Through Wittgenstein's analysis it is found that the truth of a self made statement describing one's own thoughts often depends upon behavioural criteria as well, or perhaps entirely, or perhaps on no criteria at all. Here we have not changed thought, nor the meaning of the word "thought", but have by analysis elucidated some of the criteria for the truth of statements about thoughts.

So if someone now says "I know what I was just thinking" this turns out to be a statement which is not incorrigible as first thought but as true or false depending perhaps on appropriate behavioural criteria. So it turns out that "I know" here has a use.

How is the person who says "I know I am in pain" then supposed to know that there is not another Wittgensteinian analysis of "pain" analogous to the analysis of "thought". For if there was one then he could quite well be wrong in saying "I know I am in pain". Indeed it is held that the truth of "I am in pain" depends upon one's behaviour or disposition to behave in a certain way. If you are smiling and happy it is not a pain but a pain-like sensation.

5. The Expressive Use Analysis must extend to "I".

To help support the expressive use analysis I suppose one could extend the reasoning leading to seeing "I know" as redundant or functionless in "I know I am in pain". One could go on in a Wittgensteinian fashion - what does "I" refer to here? Surely not to myself, for who else could be having the pain if it is me sincerely saying

that I am in pain. If there is no one else that could possibly be the I but myself, then "I" as a referring word in "I am in pain" is redundant, understood and functionless. What about "am"? It appears to refer to the present moment. But if sincere then it could not be otherwise than the present moment so "am" is redundant. "In" has no referring function here anyway and "pain" is similar to "I", in that the sensation could not be other than pain if I am sincere in what I say. So it too should be eliminated. The referring function of "I know I am in pain" has been shown to be non-existent, and so it remains to say what function it has. Well, expressive use is all that is left.

Wittgenstein does make moves of this type in *The Blue Book* where he makes it clear that the possibility of error concerning whether it is I or someone else who feels the pain when I say "I am in pain" is ruled out logically, by the rules of our grammar.

"On the other hand, there is no question of recognising a person when I say I have toothache. To ask 'are you sure that it's *you* who have pains?' would be nonsensical. Now, when in this case no error is possible, it is because the move which we might be inclined to think of as an error, a 'bad move', is no move in the game at all."¹

This idea is then mysteriously linked to the statement that the word "I" here has no normal referring function to the person but that it functions as part of a moan.

"To say, 'I have pain' is no more a statement *about* a particular person than moaning is. 'But surely the word 'I' in the mouth of a man refers to the man who says it; it points to himself; and very often a man who says it actually points to himself with his finger.'

1. *The Blue Book*, p.67.

But it was quite superfluous to point to himself."¹

We get the idea that by saying "I am in pain" the "I" is only serving to attract attention to himself, that it does not refer to himself.

A good case could be made out for error being ruled out logically, a case which may weaken if certain other considerations are taken into account. One may be uncertain that I am I.

Imagine a Christian martyr about to be crucified. He may believe that he himself is about to feel the same pains as Christ did. He may even imagine himself to be Christ, so completely does he identify himself with Him. As the nails go in he says "I am in pain" and means that He, Christ, is in pain, for that is who he thinks he is. But in fact it is not Christ in pain, but the martyr, so he was wrong when he said "I am in pain". Here there is a question of recognising a person.

It is true that one can imagine himself to be someone else having certain feelings. Usually one is not completely under the spell of one's imaginings, but it is possible that one could be deluded completely. Sometimes in certain situations one can wonder whether it is me who is here. On first arrival in a strange place one has only heard of one might wonder, "Is it really me who is now in Singapore?" Analogously "Is it really me undergoing this agony?"

Thus here I do not think that error is ruled out logically, but if it was then "I" becomes logically redundant. This means that the function of "I" whatever it is is already catered for by someone saying in appropriate circumstances and with appropriate behaviour "Am in pain". But this does not mean that the whole circumstances -

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

surroundings, behaviour and linguistic behaviour - do not contain a reference to a person, whether a person is a mind or body or a human being. The existence of this referring function is still to be decided, but if it does exist then "I" still has this referring function, whether logically redundant or not. The fact that error has been ruled out, by that fact alone we cannot say that "I" does not refer to a person.

The same applies to the argument concerning "know". If "know" is logically redundant here that does not mean that "know" has no reference when used in "I know I am in pain", rather the reference of "know" is already part of the reference of "I am in pain", for it is held, falsely I believe, that the grammar of "pain" is such that when I say correctly "I am in pain" then by definition I know I am in pain.

Wittgenstein gives us several reasons for the adoption of the expressive use analysis of "I" in "I am in pain". Firstly, he eliminates the I along Humean lines "... that of which I said it continued during all the experiences of seeing was not any particular entity "I", but the experience of seeing itself".¹

But this sort of elimination of the I does not show that "I" does not refer to a person. It just shows that a person is not some experience accompanying all other experiences.

Then he tries to show that the idea of a real I that inhabits my body is connected with misunderstanding the grammar of "I". "I" has two uses, one as object, e.g., "I have a bump on my forehead", and one as subject, e.g., "I have toothache". He then says that error is possible with respect to the use of "I" as object, but not with uses of "I" as subject. But we said before that this impossibility of

1. *The Blue Book*, p. 63.

error has nothing to do with the expressive use analysis. When I say "I am in pain" I am not informing myself that it is me who is in pain, but telling others. (Although in coming out of a state of bewilderment I may say "Yes it's me who is in pain, who is feeling this".) For others my statement shows that it is me and not someone else who is in pain.

Then he says "I" does not mean "the person who is now speaking". But this is only a corollary of the expressive use analysis, for there "I" does not mean anything, whereas "the person who is now speaking" presumably does.

Next it is said that "The mouth which says 'I' ... does not thereby point to anything".¹ Yet "I" serves to attract attention for others, and to distinguish me from other people. It seems to be a verbal quibble to say that "I" then does not point to me, does not refer to me.

Now although "The man who cries out with pain, or says that he has pain, *doesn't choose the mouth which says it*"², that does not make "I" not refer to himself.

Then we are reminded that a person may feel pain in another person's body. "I" then may be used to refer to my body, but that does not mean that when I usually use "I", I do not mean this person.

Another reason given is that "by 'I', I don't wish to pick out one person (from amongst different persons)".³ Well, for myself I do not, for it is obvious to me, but for someone else my statement about myself is useful in picking one out from amongst others. Wittgenstein

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 68.

3. *Op.cit.*, p. 68.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 68.

says that this is a special use, but there seems to be no conclusive reason for why this is so.

As "I" used as subject does not refer to a person's bodily characteristics, neither does it refer to an ego or a mind. If we say it does, Wittgenstein indicates that this use of "mind" is not our normal use of it.

In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein asks "why need the pain have a bearer at all here?!"¹ By eliminating the idea that it is the soul or the body which has pains we are inclined to think that "I" can refer to nothing at all. But Wittgenstein's important conclusion seems to be that "Only of what behaves like a human being can one say that it *has* pains".²

Now it may be asked what in all this does in fact show that "I" used as subject does not refer to a human being, myself. We have a list of peculiarities and the idea that "I" used as subject is like moaning, but there seems to be no conclusive connection between them.

There is a tension in Wittgenstein between emphasising facts which escape notice because they are always before our eyes, and exposing widespread false ideas of language. Here the tension is towards the latter.

6. Does Wittgenstein Reject the Expressive Use Hypothesis?

It is important to see that if Wittgenstein is to say that "I am in pain" is like a natural expression of pain, then he has to explain away the apparent referring functions of "I" and "pain". We have seen how he tries to do it with "I". Now how does he go with "pain"? Let us begin by getting clearer on what Wittgenstein said about the

1. *P.I.*, I, § 283.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 283.

analogy with natural pain behaviour. He is concerned with how words refer to sensations.

"Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain behaviour ... the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it."¹

Here the child is being taught to refer to his own sensations, when to say "I am in pain". Only the word "refer" here is cryptic, for we have the result that my words do not refer to my sensations at all. Nor do they refer to the natural behaviour associated with sensations. Rather they "replace", "are connected with", "are used in the place of", the natural expressions of the sensation. They are a new pain behaviour.

In "'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'", Wittgenstein essentially puts forward the same views.

"Roughly speaking: the expression, 'I have toothache' stands for a moan but does not mean 'I moan'." It is "a substitute for moaning", "replaces moaning". He goes on "Of course 'toothache' is not *only* a substitute for moaning - but it is *also* a substitute for moaning".³

Presumably he means part of the function of "toothache" is also to describe the behaviour of another person having toothache. The analogy between moaning and "toothache" is made more explicit on p.258. "You wouldn't call moaning a description! But this shows you how far the proposition 'I have toothache' is from a description, and how far teaching the word 'toothache' is from teaching the word 'tooth'."⁴ This is similarly expressed, but with the emphasis on

1. *P.I.*, I, § 244.

2. *The Private Language Argument*, Edited by O.R. Jones, 1971.

3. *Op.cit.*, pp.257,258.

4. *Op.cit.*, p. 258.

"I" in *The Blue Book*. "To say 'I have pain' is no more a statement about a particular person than moaning is."¹

On p. 274 of "'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'", we find that "I have toothache" does not describe my behaviour. "In order to be able to say that I have toothache I don't observe my behaviour, say in the mirror. *And this is correct*, but it doesn't follow that you describe an observation of any other kind. Moaning is not the description of an observation."² This is not to say that I could not if I wanted to describe my behaviour. There is nothing to stop one doing that. That would be what Wittgenstein would call an abnormal or unusual use of "I have toothache", akin to "He has toothache". It is just that "I have toothache" does not refer to that behaviour. It is a substitute for that behaviour.

This is not to say that the type of behaviour I exhibit is not important. If I said "I have toothache" and observed to my surprise that I had behaved as if I had none, then I would try and find out why there was this inconsistency. I must have been lying perhaps. So the type of natural behaviour still remains important to the correctness of the unnatural verbal behaviour. Kurt Baier³ cites a case of someone who has had a prefrontal leucotomy, and says he is in pain when he has none of the normal behaviour of someone in pain. Here we might be at a loss as to what to say. A pain-like sensation without the behaviour appropriate to that particular sensation just would not be pain. It is said that morphine alters the appreciation of pain so that it is no longer unpleasant, while the sensation itself

1. *The Blue Book*, p. 67.

2. "'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'", *The Private Language Argument*, Edited by O.R. Jones, pp. 274, 275.

3. Kurt Baier, "Pains" in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 40, No.1, May 1962 (pp.1-23), p.23.

stays the same. We would say that he was no longer in pain. (Note that this does not deny the existence of pain-like sensations with no pain behaviour.) For in § 534 of *Zettel* Wittgenstein says "Only surrounded by certain normal manifestations of life is there such a thing as expression of pain".

In *The Brown Book* he talks about "artificial devices" - presumably words purporting to refer to emotions.

"... we think of the utterance of an emotion as though it were some artificial device to let others know that we have it. Now there is no sharp line between such 'artificial devices' and what one might call the natural expressions of emotion."¹

Here we are left with the feeling that the artificial devices may refer to the emotions and in *Zettel* we find "No, 'Joy' designates nothing at all. Neither any inward nor any outward thing."² This seems to indicate that Wittgenstein often wavered in the direction of the referring model, but refused to accept it. We should note that Wittgenstein began his explanation of how words refer to sensations with the words "Here is one possibility".³ Does this mean that there are other ways that words refer to sensations? e.g., that words name or describe the sensation.

In the middle part of Part I of the *Investigations* he seems to hold to the expressive use hypothesis, e.g. § 256 "*How* do I use words to stand for sensations? - As we ordinarily do? Then are my words for sensations tied up with my natural expressions of sensation?"⁴ The general trend of this passage shows that the answer to these questions is "Yes", i.e., my words for sensations are ordinarily tied up with my natural expression. In § 288 we find "if I assume the abrogation

1. L. Wittgenstein, *The Brown Book*, p.103.

2. L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, § 487.

3. *P.I.*, I. § 244.

4. *Op.cit.*, § 256.

of the normal language game with the expression of a sensation..."¹

But in Part II of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein talks of fear, pain and grief and seems to indicate that sometimes "I am afraid" can be a description of a state of mind. He begins section (ix) with a note on observation, the main point of which is that "I do not 'observe' what only comes into being through observation. The object of observation is something *else*".² This is similar to Ryle's viewpoint on observation, one that I criticised earlier. Nevertheless the important thing conceded here is that one can reflect on one's pains and say as a result of observation "A touch which was still painful yesterday is no longer so today".³ Yet he is still against observing an ongoing pain and saying as a description "I am in pain". That is still a cry, a moan. But that pain could, I think, Wittgenstein would allow, be compared with a previous pain and described thus "A touch which was still painful yesterday is less so today". Here do we make an observation of yesterday's pain and compare it with today's? Do we also then observe today's pain for the purpose of comparison? Wittgenstein's answer is that it depends upon the context. But I still get the impression that he still holds onto the expression of the sensation as the beginning of the language game. "What I do is not, of course, to identify my sensation by criteria: but to repeat an expression. But this is not the *end* of the language game: it is the beginning."⁴ We do not find out what I am referring to when I say "I am afraid" by observing what accompanied the speaking. Expressing fear shows what fear is.

His concluding paragraph of Section (ix) is "But if 'I am afraid'

1. *Op.cit.*, § 288.

2. *P.I.*, II, p. 187.

3. *Op.cit.*, p. 187.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 290.

is not always something like a cry of complaint, and yet sometimes is, then why should it *always* be a description of a state of mind".¹

In other words, "'I am afraid" may be a cry or a description depending upon the context, the game being played.

Nevertheless I still find Wittgenstein quite unclear here. On the one hand "I am afraid" is a description of a state of mind, but "In a concrete case I can indeed ask 'Why did I say that, what did I mean by it?' - and I might answer the question too; but not on the ground of observing what accompanied the speaking, and my answer would supplement, paraphrase, the earlier utterance".² There is a refusal to allow that one can observe one's ongoing fears and pains, and yet now he allows that one can describe them. For he has already told us that observing is "Roughly: when he puts himself in a favourable position to receive certain impressions in order (for example) to describe what they tell him".³

It is difficult to see how one can describe one's pains and fears without observing them. The general trend of Wittgenstein's thinking here seems to make description dependent upon observation. If "A description is a representation of a distribution in a space (in that of time for instance)"⁴ then surely "I have toothache" could qualify as a description - the ache is distributed in the space of the tooth. It seems doubtful that Wittgenstein would allow this, for one would here not be observing in Wittgenstein's sense. It is like casting a glance at an inward and ongoing sensation, at something which is too much like what comes into being through observation, only there is no object of observation with respect to which we can try to put ourselves

1. *P.I.*, II, p.189.

2. *P.I.*, II, p.188.

3. *P.I.*, II, p.187.

4. *P.I.*, II, p.187.

in a favourable position. In line with this approach he indicates that saying "Red" or presumably just "ache" would not qualify as a description, which is in line with his definition of a description here, for these words do not represent a distribution in a space. On the other hand "a cry, which cannot be called a description, which is more primitive than any description, for all that serves as a description of the inner life".¹

Donagon² takes this passage to mean that Wittgenstein largely abandoned his expressive use hypothesis. I have tried to indicate that although this abandonment is far from clear cut, if Wittgenstein has conceded that "I am afraid" may sometimes be a description of a state of mind then he may also have to concede that we can if not observe, at least describe our present sensations.

Malcolm takes the view that Wittgenstein by stressing the expressive function of pain utterances was stretching ordinary language to illuminate "the hidden continuity between the utterances of that sentence and - expressions of pain".³

No one now denies that there is some truth in the expressive use hypothesis, at least with respect to pains. When I say "I have tooth-ache" the purpose of my utterance is rarely to describe where my ache is. It may be used to evoke sympathy, or to get treatment for it, or to let others know why I'm looking dreadful and not moving my mouth much. The main reason for this I suppose is that pains affect our normal functioning, and we have a strong desire to be rid of them. Giving accurate descriptions of their character and place has purpose

1. *P.I.*, II, p.189.

2. Alan Donagon, "Wittgenstein on Sensation", in *Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations*, Ed. Pitcher.

3. Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations", in *Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations*, Ed. Pitcher, p.83.

in medical textbooks but for the sufferer his main purpose is to gain relief. His descriptive account, if any, is for that end. So the verbal expression of pain may be a cry, it may rarely be purely a description, or it may be both.

Sheridan¹ and Donagon² give the example of a patient telling the doctor the details of his pain. In this situation the help that you are going to get depends upon the accuracy of your description. It is vital for the patient that he describes his pain accurately, i.e., the words function largely as a report. Sheridan also makes the point that the words used to describe the pain "sharp", "dull", "throbbing", are derived from other contexts in which their use is descriptive. As "stabbing" is used to describe the action of stabbing so it is borrowed and used to describe the type of pain brought about by such action.

What about sensations other than pain? For the majority of sensations there is much less obvious natural behaviour expressing them. One can find examples on either side. With tickling there is giggling; with feeling hot, sweating and fanning oneself; with itching, scratching; but with a sense of vibration, a feeling of warmth, having an afterimage, there may be no characteristic behavioural response. The latter cases, however, do arise in a particular surrounding. Vibration may be felt in the presence of machinery, warmth while lying in the sun, having an afterimage after looking at a bright light. These sensations are communicated by pointing out the circumstances in which they arise. If there was no characteristic behaviour and no particular circumstances then the sensation could not be communicated. The

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1. G. Sheridan, "The E.E.G. Argument Against Incurability", *op.cit.*
 2. A. Donagon, *op.cit.*

expressive use hypothesis helps us to see this. But it is stretching it too far to say always "I have sensation such and such" replaces the behaviour and, or, circumstances in which that sensation is had.

It is interesting to note that the expressive use hypothesis is supposed to get us out of problems of one's own present sensation reports being incorrigible, and how such reports are criterial for others in ascribing pain to me. Malcolm¹ indicates that it is nonsensical to ask how does one know when to cry, so it is analogously nonsensical to ask how one knows to say "I am in pain". We need to remind ourselves of the reasons against taking avowals as incorrigible and note that the relevant difference between the natural and the verbal behaviour is that the natural behaviour is less voluntary than the verbal. But this need not stop something going wrong with brain mechanisms, nor stop the man in the train accident displaying inappropriate natural behaviour. The "incorrigibility" of the natural behaviour still depends upon the corrigible statement, "My brain is functioning normally".

So the incorrigibility of avowals does not follow from the expressive use hypothesis, and it follows from this, that others taking my avowals as criteria for my being in pain, no longer stands.

Wittgenstein's adoption of the expressive use hypothesis stems from the apparent senselessness of doubting whether one is in pain. But also as support he has further powerful arguments against the possibility of referring to or naming or describing some private item called "pain". To an examination of these argument I now turn.

1. Norman Malcolm, "Knowledge of Other Minds". In *Essays*, Ed. Pitcher. p. 383.

VII. THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENTS

1. The First Private Language Argument - Memory

On introducing the private language arguments Wittgenstein makes clear just what sort of private language he is attacking. He is not against the fact that a person can "write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences - his feelings, moods, and the rest - for his private use".¹ We can do that in our ordinary language, it is a language game we normally play. What he is against is that those words giving expression to inner experiences name or refer to private items, that the words of a private language "refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language".² The word "cannot" here indicates that the private language he is against is one which is necessarily private, one for which it is logically impossible for someone else to understand. The contingently private language is allowed for because it is "tied up with ~~my~~ natural expressions of sensation",³ and thus may be understood by someone else.

The private language problem seems to be set up easily enough. "But suppose I didn't have any natural expression for the sensation, but only had the sensation? And now I simply *associate* names with sensations and use these names in descriptions - "⁴ ("Associate" is in italics because Wittgenstein does not believe that such an association can be set up.) He has to "assume the abrogation of the normal language game with the expression of a sensation".⁵

So in § 258 Wittgenstein puts up the case of the private diarist,

1. *P.I.*, I, § 243.

2. *Op.cit.*, § 243.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 256.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 256.

5. *P.I.*, I, § 288.

who tries to associate the sign "S" with the recurrence of a certain sensation. The first point that is made is that an ordinary ostensive definition will not be possible here. Why? Because one cannot in the ordinary sense point to a sensation. One does not, by concentrating his attention on the sensation point to it. This is reiterated in § 411 - "Here confusion occurs because one imagines that by directing one's attention to a sensation one is pointing to it".¹ I get the impression that by "pointing" he means directing my material arm at a material object. Thus in § 398 one can as little own the visual room as point to it. The material room may not have an owner, but the visual room cannot have an owner, i.e., no one may be pointing to a material room but no one can point to the visual room. In § 400 the visual room is likened to a new sensation. Thus private sensations are put already into a realm where pointing cannot reach them. For instance on p.50 of *The Blue Book*² one does not point to the pain but to the place of pain; "the act of pointing *determines* a place of pain". If "I wish to indicate the place of my pain, I point".³ Directing one's attention to a sensation does not then point to the sensation, but to the place of the sensation.

I am not sure of what to make of this distinction between pointing to a sensation and pointing to the place of a sensation, but it seems from the nature of the case that the private diarist should not be able to physically point to the place of the sensation, for that would count as behaviour expressing the sensation, which has been ruled out here. All he should be allowed to do is to concentrate his attention inwardly. - But where does that get him? This leads to

1. *P.I.*, I, § 411.

2. *The Blue Book*, p.50.

3. *Op.cit.*, p.68.

the second point, the problem of memory.

"But 'I impress it on myself' can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion *right* in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'." ¹

The point here is that memory stands unsupported in establishing the connection between the sensation *S* and the word "*S*". There are no other criteria for the correct application of "*S*". In the public case we have the testimony of other people, dictionaries, and the like. But in the private case memory is not backed up by anything. And memory concerning public items is amply shown to be wanting, e.g., "Imagine that you were supposed to paint a particular colour "*C*", which was the colour that appeared when the chemical substances *X* and *Y* combined. Suppose that the colour struck you as brighter on one day than on another; would you not sometimes say: 'I must be wrong, the colour is certainly the same as yesterday'? This shows that we do not always resort to what memory tells us as the verdict of the highest court of appeal."² So memory, already unreliable in the public case, is being trusted with the job of remembering the rule "'*S*' names sensation *S*". "But might I not be mistaken, can my memory not deceive me? And might it not always do so when - without lying - I express what I have thought within myself? - "³

In § 265 we find that "justification consists in appealing to something independent".⁴ Once again memory is called into question. Firstly I try to remember the train's departure time, and then to check this memory, I form a mental image of the time table. But this is not

1. *P.I.*, I, § 258.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 56.

3. *P.I.*, II, p. 222.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 265.

an independent justification for memory is still the final court of appeal. " - No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually *correct*. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be *tested* for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory?"¹ An independent justification would consist in producing a time-table.

But with sensations there is no dictionary to produce. On attempting to make the rule "'S' means sensation.S" one could try and remember the sensation S several times and after each time say "that is called 'S'". Then on a new presentation of a sensation one might name it "S", and to check this call to mind sensation S and the words "that is called 'S'". This is very much like the case of the imagined time-table except that there is no real time-table to back it up. It is true that looking up a table in the imagination is not the same as looking up a table, impressions of rules are not rules², but the nature of the case is that all there is to go on is memory.

It is interesting to note some things that Wittgenstein says about justification. Firstly if a justification is required for the use of a word then it must be something public, so that my memory alone is not enough to justify the use of the word "S". The use of "S" "stands in need of justification which everybody understands".³ "For if I need a justification for using a word, it must also be one for someone else."⁴ My memory, which is fallible, is no justification for someone else, not even myself.

But the other end of the scale of need for justification finishes with a sort of bedrock justification. "If I have exhausted the

1. *P.I.*, I, § 265.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 261.

2. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 259.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 378.

justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'.¹ Justifications may go on, but cannot go on forever, so in the end one must just stop asking, and act. One must shut one's eyes in the face of doubt. As with explanations further justifications are only needed to prevent misunderstandings.²

But Wittgenstein also indicates that sometimes there may be no justification for the use of a word. "The primitive language game which children are taught needs no justification; attempts at justification need to be rejected."³ This it seems is the bedrock from which all justifications start. We just say "This is simply what I do". He indicates that our sensation language is similar to a primitive language game. "What I do is not, of course, to identify my sensation by criteria: but to repeat an expression. But this is not the *end* of the language game: it is the beginning."⁴ This is preceded by "To use a word without a justification does not mean to use it without right".⁵

Summarising this, if sensation words are thought of as replacing primitive natural expressions of sensation, then such uses need no justification, but if sensation words are thought of as referring to private items, then a justification is required which in the nature of the case is not satisfied because all there is to go on is an unreliable memory.

But there is room for another trend here. One might say that in the use of a sensation word to refer to a private sensation the justifications reach an end when we rely on our memory. To be sure, it is

1. *P.I.*, I, § 217.

2. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 87.

3. *P.I.*, II, p. 200.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 290.

5. *P.I.*, I, § 289.

unreliable, but what else is there? There is no other justification, so a weak one will have to do.

Although Wittgenstein regards memory as unreliable, in § 386 he does seem to place some reliability on memory. "But I do have confidence in myself - I say without hesitation that I have done this sum in my head, have imagined this colour. The difficulty is not that I doubt whether I really imagined anything red." But the difficulty is the problem of "the translation of the image into reality". One still cannot ask "'What does a correct image of this colour look like?'"¹

This passage indicates to me that no matter how much confidence I have in my memory, no matter how reliable it is, I still cannot tell whether my image is correct. "The *deep* aspect of this matter readily eludes us."² It has eluded us because having an unreliable memory is not the deep aspect. Rather no matter how good one's memory is for private objects, there is no public check that the memory is reliable, and this public checking is required for correct usage. The deep aspect is that public checking is required to make a distinction between correct and incorrect memories.

We shall now consider Ayer's³ objection to the argument on unreliable memory. Taking the example of the time-table he points out that on production of the page of the time-table he still has to trust his eyesight, recognise the figures, and if he consults others, remember what their words mean. At some point we must terminate at some act of recognition, and this is as much a problem with the public objects as with private ones.

Take Wittgenstein's example of the colour C produced by the

1. *P.I.*, I, § 386.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 387.

3. A.J. Ayer, "Can there be a Private Language?" in *Essays*, Ed. Pitcher.

combination of chemical substances X and Y. You still have to rely upon your memory that you really have X and Y, and not some other substances. You have to remember that X and Y are called "X" and called "Y". "... since every process of checking must terminate in some act of recognition, no process of checking can establish anything unless some acts of recognition are taken as valid in themselves."¹

The idea that there is a Cartesian demon foiling every deliverance of memory is as much a problem in the public case as in the private one. Ayer's Crusoe alone on an island invents names for his sensations and birds etc. If he makes a mistake Ayer says there is a slightly greater chance that he will detect it in the case of a bird, for the bird may reappear, whereas once a sensation is had, that's it. But Ayer takes this back, for we do say that the same sensation has returned, and we do have to rely upon memory to say the identical bird has returned. It seems doubtful that for Crusoe he would be more likely to detect mistakes in the case of material objects than in the case of his sensations. In fact the identification of a pain seems much easier than identifying a bird.

Ayer's point is that somewhere one must stop asking whether a memory is correct or incorrect and just take it as correct. One could go on checking for ever, so it is practical to stop somewhere. This is a problem in the public world as well as the private. Ayer is happy for the process of checking to go on *ad infinitum*, but for Wittgenstein it stops. Reasons give out. It is strange that Wittgenstein is quite happy to terminate the chain of justifications with public objects, but with private objects his attitude is different. The chain of justifications ends, but not in the private case with saying "This

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 257.

is simply what I do'."¹ E.g., why do I have the rule "This is called 'red'?" Answer - this is what I do. (cf. "'I have learnt English'").² But why do I have the rule "This is called 'pain'?" Answer - that would be a private rule and "it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'".³ Rather, I just repeat the expression of pain.⁴ So the justifications end in a different way in the private case. For it is said that there is no distinction between correct and incorrect here. You cannot ask either then whether it is the correct expression of pain or not. It is just what we do. So how does the expressive use hypothesis help here? It does not, so we might as well say that pain is called "pain" and say that that is what we do.

With respect to § 202, even with public rules one has to eventually think one is obeying a rule. The reasons give out. So any public checking ends in the same way as private checking which puts them on a par.

Now I have indicated that although Wittgenstein appears in several places to place great stress on the unreliability of memory, it also appears that this was not in a straightforward way the "deep aspect" of the matter. But Ayer's valid criticisms here do deal with Wittgenstein's deep aspect.

Kenny⁵ criticises those who take Wittgenstein's argument as based on scepticism about memory, and I presume that he would count Ayer amongst them. Their argument he says ends with the problem of being sure that you have the correct private item which you are calling "S". In contrast to this Kenny says that it is not a problem of knowing if it really is S but knowing what I mean by "S". The trouble with

1. *P.I.*, I, § 217.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 202.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 381.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 290.

5. Anthony Kenny, in *The Private Language Argument*, Ed. O.R. Jones.

this is that to settle whether it really is S, one has to settle what I mean by "S". To settle what I mean by "S" I can look up a table in the imagination, which leaves us trying to decide whether the private memory image of an S really is an S, which gets us back where we started. The public case too ends up in this way, and for both we should say, "my spade is turned".¹ Kenny's point that it is a problem of what I mean by "S" is seen therefore to still be a problem of memory.

Ayer seems to skip over another point that Wittgenstein was getting at. Crusoe has criteria for identity of sensations and material objects but Ayer notes "his criteria of identity may be different from our own; but it is reasonable to suppose that they will be the same".² Wittgenstein's second main private language argument concludes that far from its ever being reasonable to suppose that my criteria for the identity of my private objects are the same as your criteria for your private objects, I cannot even suppose that I have criteria for identity of my own private objects. The notion of "same" in my supposed private language just does not get a grip.

Rhees criticises Ayer's views

"This is not a question of whether I can trust my memory. It is a question of when it makes sense to speak of remembering; either a good memory or a faulty one. ... There is just no rule for what is the same and what is not the same; there is no distinction between correct and incorrect;"³

Thus it makes no difference what I say, for I say nothing. Rhees backs this up by an appeal to the general nature of language, rather than specifically considering the problems of memory, identity and correctness, and it might be well to consider the impact of Rhees' article now.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 217.

2. A.J. Ayer, "Can there be a Private Language?", in *Essays*, Ed. Pitcher, p. 261.

3. R. Rhees, "Can there be a Private Language?", in *Essays*, Ed. Pitcher, p. 273.

2. Criticism of Rhees.

Ayer imagines Crusoe to be isolated from other human beings from birth, and inventing a language of his own, the words of the language being names of things such as birds and sensations. The idea is that sensations in this situation are just as easy to name as birds, and that it is hard to see that the introduction of Man Friday into the environs would either make it more difficult for Crusoe to name his sensations or to somehow take away the meanings of Crusoe's words for sensations.

Rhees criticises Ayer here. He says that for Ayer's Crusoe it is unintelligible to think that he could invent a language for himself. For language is a social phenomenon. More than one person is necessary for the existence of a language. For language to have meanings, for it to be understood, for the notion of mistake to make sense, the words of the language must be used in a social context, with different people playing different rôles. The activity of Ayer's Crusoe may be as similar as you like to a Crusoe who was isolated after he had learnt a language, and yet Ayer's Crusoe would not be using a language while the trained Crusoe was. We would regard Ayer's Crusoe as we would regard a tape recorder or a machine.

This seems to me to be an incredible position, and yet it is also taken up by A. Manser.¹ He says there are two points in Rhees' argument - "first, language must play a rôle in some way of life, second, it must involve public rules".²

That Ayer's Crusoe does not use words in some rôle of life is shown by such facts as these:

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1. Anthony Manser, VI. "Pain and Private Language", in *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Edited by Peter Winch.
 2. *Op.cit.*, p.168.

"Why not? He calls the edible bird *ba*, and when he sees the inedible one he says "ba" and kills it."

"That is not a mistake in following the meanings of words. He could have made the same mistake without using words at all." ¹

Well, presumably anyone with a public language could make the mistake of killing the wrong bird, whether he has misidentified it or not, or even if he used no words. But does this show that his words had no use at all, or that no mistake in naming occurred? His killing of the bird depends upon his saying "ba". The mistake in naming causes the mistake in killing, and that was the use of "ba" in this case. If he had not said "ba" it is most likely that he would not have killed the bird.

I am here appealing to common sense. There is no logical tie between saying "ba" and killing the bird. It is an empirical one, and a most likely tie too. But of course the answer will be that no matter how plausible you make the appearance of using a language, how much his words appear to play "a rôle in some way of life", still it cannot be called a language because of the second point that there are no public rules, no public checking by other people.

Now it is most difficult to see why this public checking is required. The claim is that without a basis of public checking the private language has no rules, the user of this language does not follow rules, the expressions have no meaning, no use, and are not understood, and no notion of mistake can arise. Now from Rhees' article I find it desperately hard to see why this is so, for it seems rather to be put forward merely as a statement of fact, rather than something to be argued for. Ayer has said "After all some human being must have

1. R. Rhees, *op.cit.*, p. 283.

been the first to use a symbol".¹ He says that it is "conceivable" that a lone person could invent a language for himself, that this may be "psychologically impossible", but not self contradictory. Against this Rhees says that the notion is unintelligible.

Now it is strange to find that what Rhees is talking about is not to be found so much in the middle section of the *Investigations* (§ 243 onwards). It is scattered throughout, but is also in rather more concentrated form in the first few pages of the *Investigations*. What is in these sections must be read with the private language arguments in mind, for then we see the purpose re private language of much that is said in them. That is, not all that is said is a straight cut criticism of the *Tractatus*, nor just an account of how the public language game gets going.

Firstly it should be noted that the most primitive language game, that in § 2, already has two people builder A and builder B. Wittgenstein does not start with one person inventing a name or even a word for his own use. The beginning is a primitive social situation. The words of this primitive language game are not names, for a child being taught the language game "cannot as yet ask what the name is".² Wittgenstein works towards the idea that the concept "name" cannot be applied to the noises of a character like Ayer's Crusoe, but that it applies to noises uttered in social situations. "Naming is something like attaching a label to a thing."³ That is part of it. But a noise becomes a name when that label begins to have a use. The mere act of naming does not thereby show the use to which we are to put the name. Wittgenstein even takes this to the point of contradiction - "*nothing* has so far been done, when a thing is named. It

1. A.J. Ayer, *op.cit.*, p. 259.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 6, and cf. § 27.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 26.

has not even *got* a name except in a language game".¹ In other words, labelling together with a social use are the requirements of a name.

It takes a particular social training for a child to ask "What is that called?" He does not just spontaneously create a concept of a name for himself, but is taught the concept of a name by learning to use names. A later developmental stage is the language game of inventing a name for himself. This can only occur after he knows how names are used, when he knows what to do with a name. Ayer's Crusoe then has never undergone any social training, does not know how to use a name, so that any "name" he invented for himself would just be a noise.

Wittgenstein draws on analogy between naming and chess here. Naming the king does not show what the rules governing the moves of the king are, and analogously it does not show what the rules governing the use of the word "king" are. One must know how to play chess, and also how to use a language.² Otherwise, what would you do with the king, and analogously what would you do with the word "king". Knowing how to use a name, knowing the rules for its use, is expressed as showing "the post at which we station a word"³ which is later reiterated in the private language area at § 257 together with the idea summing up the earlier parts of the *Investigations* - "one forgets that a great deal of stage setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense".⁴

Examining the way language gets going and is taught is meant to show that a being like Ayer's Crusoe could not invent a language with names, rules, meaning and understanding. This is why Rhees says that the idea of anyone inventing language is unintelligible, and that "it

1. *P.I.*, I, § 49.

2. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 31.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 29.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 257.

is absurd to suppose that the marks he uses means anything; even if we might want to say that he goes through all the motions of meaning something by them".¹ The concepts "language", "meaning", "rule", "name", and "understanding" just do not apply to the noises of Ayer's Crusoe.

This is where that *non sequitur*, § 52, comes in. (It is not really a *non sequitur* for it follows private language type comments in § 51.) If one is convinced that the spontaneous generation of a mouse cannot occur, then it is pointless to examine the grey rags and dust it appeared to come out of. Similarly a language cannot arise from a single, totally asocial being. If it appears to have done so, then one can say that it has not, no matter what the case looks like.

The question is - Is this type of reasoning fatal to the idea of a private language?

"But first we must learn to understand what it is that opposes such an examination of details in philosophy."² This is done by examining our concepts of "language", "name", etc., by seeing how such words are used by us. "... if the words 'language', ... have a use, it must be as a humble a one as that of the words 'table', 'lamp', 'door'."³ By carrying out this examination we do not find that the concept "language" is bounded by strict rules, but that it is a "family of structures more or less related to one another".⁴ Although an inexact concept, our examination has purportedly shown us that certain features are part of the concept and that these exclude others. There must basically be learning and training, and these concepts involve a social situation. The concept "language" does not apply to a being who has never been part of a social situation. And if the concept "language"

1. R. Rhees, *op.cit.*, p. 278.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 52.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 97.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 108.

does not apply to him, then he logically cannot have a language. So it is superfluous to carry out an empirical investigation on Ayer's Crusoe's noises to see if they are language.

Similarly we might examine the concept "mouse". Mice are creatures resulting from parent mice, not arising "by spontaneous generation out of grey rags and dust".¹ The concept "mouse" excludes spontaneous generation. So if a mouse-like creature did come into being as described by Wittgenstein, then it would not be called a mouse, but something else. Whatever it is it is not a mouse, no matter how mouse-like it is. But would not one be inclined to remark here "Now you are only playing with words".² For one would say that given the concept "mouse" it is logically impossible for the creature to be a mouse, but that there is no logical impossibility that a mouse-like creature could arise by spontaneous generation.

Wittgenstein's attitude in § 52 seems to differ from that of § 80, where he discusses the possibility of a chair which appears and disappears mysteriously. Here the rules for the use of the word "chair" do not cover this situation, so as yet we do not know whether to call it a chair or not. This does not stop us using "chair", but neither does it exclude the possibility of a chair appearing and disappearing mysteriously. If we applied this case analogously to the mouse, it would seem that in fact the rules for the use of "mouse" are not tight enough to exclude the spontaneously generated mouse-like creature from being called a mouse, although not tight enough to say that it is a mouse either. There are just no rules to cover this case. This is another example of tension in Wittgenstein - between having some measure of exactness in our concepts, and not being everywhere

1. *P.I.*, I, § 52.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 67.

bounded by strict rules.

So now having passed from the chair to the mouse I go back to language. The noises of Ayer's Crusoe are mysterious. They have arisen spontaneously with no training by others. His use of these noises may seem very much like our own use of words. But what are we to say of his noises? Are they names in a language, with meaning? The answer is that the rules we have at the moment do not cover this situation. That we can apply the words "language", "name", "meaning", here is neither excluded nor agreed upon. It comes down to making a decision - to call it a language or not. But whatever the decision it does not alter the fact that it is logically possible for Ayer's Crusoe to make noises very much like our own, and this makes the decision look unimportant. To refuse to call his noises a language is playing with words.

3. The Second Private Language Argument - Sameness

In a second private language argument Wittgenstein centres his arguments around the use of the word "same". It will come out that many of the points made concerning memory will appear again with identity. In fact it is difficult to separate the two arguments, for they are often inextricably mixed. For example, in "'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'" a person tries to name a colour for himself. "But how does he know that it is *the same colour*? Does he also recognise the sameness of colour as what he used to call sameness of colour, and so on *ad infinitum*?"¹

In the *Investigations* also Wittgenstein talks of recognising sameness. "'Before I judge that two images which I have are the same,

1. "'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'", *The Private Language Argument*, edited by O.R. Jones, p. 245.

I must recognise them as the same'."¹ It is not difficult to connect up "same" and "memory" by running along the chain of words "same", "identity", "identify", "recognise", "recognition", "memory",

Now the notion of sameness comes from the public language game. Wittgenstein considers a case where a pupil's use of "same" does not correspond to our own. In § 185 the pupil obeys the rule "+1" and arrives at the series of cardinal numbers. When he reaches 1000, we order him to carry on in the same way but to use the rule "+2". He goes on 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012, ..." and no matter what we say he says he is going on in the same way. It is natural for us to understand the rule "+2" in a certain way, but reactions can be different. Here we say the pupil does not mean by "same" what we mean by it. It is because of our natural reactions, our common behaviour that we all have the same concept of "same".

When a pupil has not got the concept "same", "I shall teach him to use the words by means of *examples* and by *practice*. - And when I do this I do not communicate less to him than I know myself".² The pupil is encouraged to act with the examples in the correct way. There is the possibility that his reactions will be different from ours, but usually they are the same. There is not an endless series of explanations to explain why I react the way I do. "My reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons."³ The public teaching ends then in our use of words being correct ultimately without reasons. That is the way we act.

The private language problem of sameness arises when I try to say whether any two of my private sensations are the same. This comes

1. *P.I.*, I, § 378.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 211.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 208.

out best in the following passage:

"What is the criterion for the sameness of two images?
 - What is the criterion for the redness of an image?
 For me, when it is someone else's image: what he
 says and does. For myself, when it is my image: nothing
 ... And what goes for 'red' also goes for 'same'." ¹

That is, I have no criteria for the sameness of my two images. This is followed up in § 378 by the point that I have no reason to suppose that "same" is used correctly in this context.

"' Before I judge that two images which I have are the same, I must recognise them as the same'. And when that has happened, how am I to know that the word 'same' describes what I recognize? Only if I can express my recognition in some other way, and if it is possible for someone else to teach me that 'same' is the correct word here.

For if I need a justification for using a word, it must also be one for someone else." ²

But of course in the nature of the case I cannot express my recognition in some other way. If I try and compare the inner images to outward colours, I still have to say that the images are the same as the material colours.

Someone else cannot teach me that "same" is the correct word here. I am the only one who has the two images, so whatever I say, "same", or "different" no one can check me. Whatever I say, if I think it is correct then it is correct. So to say that my use of "same" is correct is to make a mockery of language. For to use language there must be a distinction between correct and incorrect usage. Here I do not need a justification at all for there is none. I have no criteria for sameness here. If I try to say they are the same then they are the same.

Here I still have the right to use "same", but it is akin to an

1. *P.I.*, I, § 377.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 378.

expression of pain, rather than the naming of a feature of the world. What seems strange here is that "red" and "same" are used as names with respect to public objects but with respect to private images Wittgenstein must say that they are not names in the same sense. He does not deny that "pain" is a name for example,¹ but it is not a name in the same sense that "book" is a name - "we call very different things 'names'".² What seems strange is that "pain" and "same" should be names in the same sense with respect to private objects. For at least "same" is used to describe public objects, whereas there are no public pains. We have only one model for words associated with private items, the expressive use model.

The idea of having no criteria for the colour of an image occurs elsewhere. "But how is he to know which colour it is 'whose image occurs to him?' Is a further criterion needed for that?"³ The answer is "no" - you say your image is red without criteria.

"How do I know from my *image*, what the colour really looks like?"⁴ Answer - I do not know from my image, I get the knowledge of the correct colour from the public language game.

Why is it that "same" is important to the private language argument? One reason is that if one cannot refer to a private relationship of sameness then neither can one refer again in the same way to a private object such as pain. Comparisons of pain sensations or red images involve comparisons of sameness. To call a book "red" I might just say straight off "the book is red", but to justify that I have to decide whether the colour the book has is the same as the colours I have previously and rightly called "red". Similarly to justify

1. Cf., *P.I.*, I, § 244.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 239.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 38.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 388.

calling the private sensations S, "S", I have to decide that the present sensation S is the same as sensations I have previously called "S". This relationship of sameness is a private one, and recognising that relationship is logically basic to saying on the presentation of a sensation again that it is S. "The use of the word 'rule' and the use of the word 'same' are interwoven."¹

So if one has succeeded in naming a private sensation S on one occasion, if one is to use that name on a second presentation of the sensation one must recognise that the new sensation is the same as the old. Even if you succeeded in making the rule "sensation S is called 'S'", Wittgenstein would hold that you could not use it because you have no notion that you are correctly recognising sameness of private objects.

But presumably if you succeed in making the rule "sensation S is called 'S'", then you would succeed in making the rule, "the relationship of sameness is called 'same'". And it is clear that both the naming of S and the naming of sameness are rejected by Wittgenstein on the same grounds, that there is no correct or incorrect naming and recognition in both cases. So my attempt to make either the problem of naming sensation S or the problem of recognising sameness more basic to the private language arguments fails.

But one might think that unlike redness, we have an infallible paradigm of identity, the identity of a thing with itself. So surely we can get a notion of sameness going in the private case. But Wittgenstein replies "Then are two things the same when they are what *one* thing is. And how am I to apply what the *one* thing shews me to the case of two things?"² In other words, the concept of "same"

1. *P.I.*, I, § 225.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 215.

applies to two or more things, not to one thing, so one thing will not produce a paradigm of sameness. "'A thing is identical with itself' - There is no finer example of a useless proposition."¹

Wittgenstein has another way of expressing the impossibility of a private ostensive definition of "same". He says "Always get rid of the idea of the private object in this way: assume that it constantly changes, but that you do not notice the change because your memory constantly deceives you".² This move occurs in other places. In § 270 it does not matter whether I identify the sensation right or not. In § 271 a person is imagined to regularly call different things pain, although his use of "pain" is otherwise like ours. In § 293 he imagines that the private beetle in the box might be constantly changing. So I cannot name the private object correctly.

So with my two red images I assume that their sameness is constantly changing, so that they are now the same, and now not, only I do not notice the change. To say then that I am correct in saying they are the same is wrong, for they may not be the same. No one can check whether I am wrong or not, not even myself.

Now it is interesting to see that the argument concerning sameness and the argument concerning memory both end up with the same point, that because there is no public check on the supposed naming of the private object it makes no sense to speak of that naming being correct or incorrect. So it would seem that both arguments should stand or fall together (unless there are other reasons that I do not know of for one rather than the other).

1. *P.I.*, I, § 216.

2. *P.I.*, II, p.207.

4. Correctness

This problem of applying the term "correct" meaningfully is expressed in different ways in many places. In the public case we do have a right to use the term "correct". In § 145 Wittgenstein considers a pupil learning to continue the series of natural numbers. How far does he have to continue the series before we have the right to say that he knows how to do it correctly. Here he says there is no limit. Similarly, how many times does a pupil have to use a word as we do before we can say that he uses it correctly. There is no limit here, that is, there is no distinct number of times which once reached we have the right to say "correct". But that is not to say we never have the right. We do say correctly of the pupil "he is reading" but you cannot state which was the first word he read unless you define a limit.¹

When a pupil has learnt to use a word correctly he finds out that he is correct by being told "that's right" by his teachers. Then he might be able to invent names for public objects and say that he has applied the names correctly. But to justify this he will ultimately appeal to what he has been publicly taught is correct. "Why do you say you are correct here." The reasons end with "That is what we call 'correct'".

With respect to private objects Wittgenstein reiterates many times that a person has no right to say whether his usage of a term is correct or incorrect. He has never been taught to use the terms "correct" and "incorrect" in his private language, so he cannot appeal to the reason "That's what we call 'correct'". All he can say is "That is what I call 'correct'". He can only think that he is correct.

1. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 157.

"And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule."¹

In the private case "whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'".² This is similarly expressed in § 201 "if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here".³ This contrasts with the public case in which we distinguish between "seems right" and "is right". As there is no such distinction in the private language, "is right" would not have the same meaning as in the public case, for it would just mean "seems right".

We should however clarify Castañeda's⁴ claim that for Wittgenstein it is impossible to make mistakes in a private language. If we postulate that such mistakes are possible then they may be occurring unwittingly all the time, i.e., I cannot tell if I have made a mistake or not, so for me I cannot correctly apply the word "mistake". For a private language user it is logically impossible for him to say he made a mistake, for the notion of "mistake" does not apply in a private language.

Castañeda sees the problem of possibility of mistakes, i.e., of saying meaningfully that you are correct or incorrect as the private language argument. He examines Malcolm's⁵ unpacking of Wittgenstein's argument, a *reductio ad absurdum*, and concludes that Wittgenstein must show that in the private case there cannot be an appeal to something independent to check correct usage or not.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 202.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 258.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 201.

4. Hector-Neri Castañeda, in *The Private Language Argument*, Ed. O.R. Jones.

5. Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations", in *Essays*, Ed. G. Pitcher.

If a private language is to consist only of sign "E", Castañeda says that private languages are impossible. He seems to accept this on two counts, although he says he is making the same point. Firstly, a language as a necessary condition for being a language has a systematic structure, and Wittgenstein's private language has none. Secondly, assuming that a systematic structure is not a necessary condition of a language, Wittgenstein's private language argument works. Presumably this is because there can be no independent checking with such a simple private language.

But to give a private language a fair go he assumes that it should have "(a) connectives, (b) inferential terms, (c) copulas, (d) quantifiers, (e) numerals, etc."¹ Then a private language user can correct himself "in essentially the same way as we normally correct our linguistic errors".² He gives a list of the things we can resort to, to check our application of private terms, and this results in a controversy between Castañeda and Chappell,³ the upshot of which is that Castañeda continues to uphold the principle that you cannot require a private language to meet conditions which are not required for a public language..

For example, a public language user can correct his mistakes without recourse to other peoples' opinions, so a private language user should be able to do the same. The mere logical possibility of the existence of a public check is no actual guarantee that an isolated speaker of a public language is speaking correctly. And the private language user needs not pickup the concept "correct" from a public language game, for he may gain it by means of a drug, or he may be born with it.

1. Castañeda, *op.cit.*,

2. Castañeda, *op.cit.*,

3. V.C. Chappell, *The Private Language Argument*, Ed. O.R. Jones.

Another example is what Castañeda calls an "infinity of doubts". The correct application of a term may depend upon the correctness of another, and that of another and so on. But the certainty that I have used a term correctly in the public language game is also subject to an infinity of doubts. Here I think Wittgenstein would say that in the public case one must shut one's eyes to doubt, but then why not for the private case too?

This latter argument is very similar to that of Ayer's, when he is talking of recognition. It is assumed by Rhees and others that Ayer is merely talking about the reliability of one's memory, and not whether one can use the terms "correct" and "incorrect" with respect to one's recognition of private objects. But although "the *deep* aspect of this matter readily eludes us",¹ it would be difficult to discuss memory of private items without dragging in the deep aspect too. Ayer's answer is that the process of public checking must terminate in some act of recognition, which can be taken as valid in itself, and that there is no reason why the process of private checking should not be the same. The checking could go on *ad infinitum* but it is practical to stop somewhere. We noted that for Wittgenstein the process of public checking would not go on *ad infinitum*, but ends when doubt goes beyond what is reasonable. The doubts soon come to an end, the process of checking soon ends, reasons give out. If you still think there is a doubt when you have exhausted the finite process of checking then you shut your eyes to the doubt. The removal of an infinite process of checking here makes Ayer's case look even easier. For if the process of checking comes to an end in the public case, then there should be no reason why it should not come to an end in the private case too.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 387.

Thus in the private case of calling sensation S by the name "S", or recognising the relationship of sameness of two images, I arrive at a point where I say that there is no more checking left to do, and that therefore I seem as right as I'll ever be, so I conclude that I am right. A point is reached where "seems right" becomes "is right". Similarly in a public case of calling an object O by the name "O", or recognising the sameness of two objects, I reach a point where it is unreasonable to do more checking. As many people as you please tell me that object O is called "O", but how do I check that they really are people and that they are saying "O", and so on. It seems to me that they are saying that I'm right, so I seem as right as I can be. "Justification by experience" comes to an end. If it did not it would not be justification."¹ A point is reached where "seems right" becomes "is right".

Nor need the boundary between "seems right" and "is right" be a distinct one, and neither has the boundary disappeared altogether. There is still room for "is right" and "seems right" in both public and private cases.

5. The Need for Public Checking

One of the paradoxes of the *Investigations* is that checking comes to an end in the public case, but does not come to the same end in the private one. At least the end should be the same in both cases, so why is it not? The answer is not easy to find. It starts with the nature of Wittgenstein's approach to Philosophy, that philosophical problems are to be rendered harmless by an empirical study of the functioning of language. When we get a clear view of how words are used, the problems disappear. The Cartesian view, and the views

1. *P.I.*, I, § 485.

of the British Empiricists, and phenomenologists involve the idea of a private language, and Wittgenstein tries to remove the problematic conclusions of these views by comparing the function of our words for public objects to the function of our words used for sensations, the latter being said to be private objects.

To understand how we use words he goes back to examine how we begin to use words, how we are trained to use them. The use of words must be correct or incorrect so Wittgenstein now takes up position on the vantage point of himself as teacher asking himself whether the pupil's use of words is correct or incorrect. Then the easy way of characterising the difference between public and private language is that to check the pupil's use of a word for a public object the teacher looks to see that he is referring to the correct object, but to check the pupil's use of a word for a private object, there is no object for the teacher to check on, for it is quite beyond his experience.

I say it is the easy way because it is not clear that Wittgenstein would agree at all with this characterisation. For at times the use of a public word is not checked by just checking to see if it is the right object. In dealing with ostensive definitions of words used for public objects he says that "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case".¹ And whether a pupil has understood the definition is not determined just by looking at the object, but by seeing "the use that he makes of the word defined".² Here the use of the word seems to be more important than the correctness of the object. Still, it is logically impossible to have the correct use if you have the wrong object.

The teacher cannot judge that the pupil has correct use if there

1. *P.I.*, I, § 28.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 29.

has been only one occasion of that use. "But how far need he continue the series for us to have the right to say that? Clearly you cannot state a limit here."¹ But there is an indistinct boundary which is crossed.

When he comes to consider private objects, the teacher is not teaching any more, but is an observer of a pupil inventing words for his private objects. The observer cannot in the nature of the case tell whether the pupil has the right object. So he is left with observing a regular use. But to be a regular use there has to be a regular object, so the observer cannot tell whether the pupil's private use is correct or not. So the indistinct boundary is never reached in the private case.

Basically Wittgenstein's view is that language is a public institution, learned in a social situation, and the use of all the public words has to be publicly checkable. Our words for sensations are public words, so they too must be publicly checkable. Private objects cannot be publicly checked so if sensation words refer to private objects, those words too cannot be publicly checked. So sensation words do not refer to private objects. Another role has to be found for them - the expressive use. So public checking of sensation words ends in a different way from that of words referring to public objects, for these two types of words have quite different uses.

I would like now to place some of my criticisms of Wittgenstein's attack on private language more concisely.

Firstly, I accept Ayer's criticism that for a person to check

1. *P.I.*, I, § 145.

whether his word for a public object is correct or not ends up with the sort of checking that Wittgenstein attributes to the private diarist. The same point is reached in both private and public areas of checking, the point where a check is taken as valid in itself, and where "seems right" is replaced by "is right". So private checking and public checking have the same basis.

Secondly, the expressive use model does not get over the problem of private checking. One might try to deny that "correct" and "true" can apply to natural expressions of sensation, but it would still be correct to say that the natural expressions are appropriate or inappropriate. So that I could go through a process of private checking to judge whether my expression of pain was consistent with what I had previously regarded as appropriate or not. I would also decide an end to my checking. But what Wittgenstein decides is that the end of this private checking is the beginning.¹ This seems to be a decision to regard any natural expression as appropriate no matter what.

With the expressive use model for "pain" the possibility of mistake is supposed to be ruled out, whereas if the referring model is retained mistake would be possible in referring to private objects as it is when we refer to public objects. It is said that with our natural expression of sensations there is no room for intellectual error. According to this view crying would be neither true nor false. One could not cry in pain wrongly. When we replace our natural expressions of sensations with the expressive use of words, then with those words no intellectual mistake is possible.

But it seems to me that the mistakes possible when we considered

1. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 290.

the truth or falsity of the incorrigibility thesis could apply to the expressive use model. E.g., in the E.E.G. experiments we might find that the autocerebroscope shows that a subject occasionally makes a cry when the brain state is that of a tickle rather than a pain. The finding of a fault in the brain may show why this happens. The mistake may not be an intellectual one, but it might be said that the cry was false, or that it was not a true cry, or that the subject was wrong in crying then.

When it comes to replacing the natural expression of sensation by words used expressively a further error could occur. For could not one replace the natural behaviour by the wrong words, e.g., someone says "I am in pain" when his behaviour is consistent with being tickled and later he says he was not in fact in pain?

So it is difficult to see how replacing the referring model for "pain" by the expressive use model really alleviates problems of incorrigibility. As Wittgenstein holds to the incorrigibility thesis why not say that the beginning of the language game is an incorrigible referring rather than an incorrigible expressing? For similar problems attach to both. If "I am in pain" is a statement about my pain, then I can either legitimately ask the question as to whether it is correct, or not legitimately ask that question, and if "I am in pain" is an expression of my pain, then the same applies to questions of appropriateness. Deciding about the referring or expressive status of "I am in pain" only brings about a deciding that hardly matters between using "correctness" or "appropriateness".

A similar point, starting in another way, is as follows: "an expression. But this is not the *end* of the language game: it is the beginning."¹ So if a sensation occurred which had no natural

1. *P.I.*, I, § 290.

expression (if I had the right to call it a sensation, which I do not have¹), then a public language game would not get going at all. Suppose one day a sensation occurs and I think "S". Would that not count as an expression of S? Then we have the beginnings of a language game. The private language game could begin with a private expression. It is important to see that writing down "S" could be construed not only as an attempt to associate 'S' with the accusation, or to name the sensation, but also as an expression of the sensation.

Now we must wonder whether it is ever sensible to ask "Was that the right expression for that sensation I just had?" Surely it makes sense to say "I just said 'I am in pain' then, but that was wrong for it was a tickle which I expressed wrongly as a pain". When one starts to talk of expressing a sensation wrongly who can tell but myself - if it is the whole behaviour which is expressed wrongly and not just a part of it - that I have wrongly expressed it? When I lie I know that I am lying. "You knew you were lying", "I knew that it was a lie" have uses. I can tell when I do not express a sensation correctly. So that problems about remembering "the connexion right in the future" do not occur with remembering the expression right in the future. One's justifications do come to an end with the expression, one just uses the expression with right.² But if this is so with expressions then it is hard to see why it should not be so with association, namings, etc.

Malcolm says "... the sensation behaviour. They are the 'outward criteria' (580) with which the sign must be connected if it is to be a sign for a sensation *at all*, not merely if it is to be a sign in a *common language*" ... "sensation behaviour, ... is what *makes* it refer

1. Cf. *P.I.*, I, § 261.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 289.

to a sensation."¹

But making a mark and having sensation behaviour are physical public events, so it is hard to see how one should be less of a creator of a bond of reference than the other. Of course his mere making of a mark does not tell us anything about the sensation. It, the sensation, is not put into relationship with anything else but the mark, if the making of the mark is not in any way related or unrelated to other public events. I cannot put myself in any special position or situation that he was in so that I might have the sensation. No duplication of his special surroundings for myself is possible if I do not have any idea about what special surroundings are appropriate. But then if I knew what the surroundings were and had a sensation the name could be public, not private.

But for him there need not be any particular sensation behaviour, nor any particular surrounding for the occurrence of the sensation. He need not know whether it is related or unrelated to anything other than the mark. All he need do is recognise the sensation and give it the same name as before. He relies upon his memory.

Thirdly, the expressive use model could be extended to words which on the face of it have the referring model of use. "How does a human being learn the names of objects?" we might ask. There are characteristic expressions of being aware of a book. A child turns its eyes in the direction of the book, extends its hands and picks it up, fumbles, opens it and looks at it. When the child has been taught the word "book" and has learnt to use it in different situations, may he not have learnt a new book behaviour? These expressions one might say are the beginnings of the language game. For I do not identify

1. N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations", in *Essays*, Ed. G. Pitcher, p.97.

the book by criteria, but repeat my expressions of being aware of a book. ("No criteria here" - that sounds strange, but it might be just because red patches and pains are more simple than books.) But can I not say "I know I am aware of a book"? "No" we might say, on this model that just means "I am aware of a book" and that that is an expression replacing natural behaviour.

It all sounds pretty implausible, doesn't it? So why should it sound so plausible for sensations? But how do the teachers know that the pupil is aware of a book. They see his behaviour and they are aware of a book themselves, and that is all. If they are trying to teach him to refer to books by the word "book" how are they to know that he has got the use of the word right? Here there is no demand that they make more sure than they can be that he is aware of the book. They take it that he is. This is where they begin. But that does not stop the referring model so why should it in the case of pain? For the only difference in the two cases is that the teachers may not at the time be feeling pain themselves.

Fourthly, the public object as well as the private would be got rid of by assuming that it is constantly changing, only no one notices the change. I start with myself. "I cast a sidelong glance at the private sensation"¹ and name it "S". If I do not notice it constantly changing then really I am calling different things by the same name "S", when I think it is the same thing. I think I am correct when I am not. And there is no one to correct me. I have no way of deciding whether I correctly use "S" or not. So there is no way of deciding whether "S" refers to the private sensation.

The case is different we might think if I call public object O

1. *P.I.*, I, § 274.

by the name "O" but I do not notice it constantly changing. (E.g., the flashing colours of Canopus) For then other people who notice the change could correct me. And indeed this is a different case. But what if other people do not notice the change also. This is just a change in the number of people not noticing the change, from one to many, so it differs from the case of one person not noticing the change merely by being less likely to actually occur. But if it does occur the case is just like the first, so we have no way of deciding whether we correctly use "O" or not. So there is no way of deciding whether "O" refers to the public object.

What if the private item named "E" was in fact constantly changing, only I was unaware of this change? If any practical consequences followed from the changing, then I would be aware of the possibility of the changing. But with no practical consequences following from the changing, then what does it matter if there is that changing. As in the nature of Wittgenstein's case there is no hope of finding out further that you are wrong, then it is hopeless to worry about it. If you feel that "E" is the correct name and there is no possibility of being proved wrong, then you must be right.

We have asked whether the objects in the public world are constantly changing. Suppose that the colours of objects appear to us to be stable, but in fact they are constantly changing. As long as no practical consequences follow from this then it does not matter. It would be different if to others colours began to constantly change, whereas for me all was the same. Then there would be a clash to be resolved. (If everything became a chameleon.)

In both the public and private case we must reach a point where it is sensible to give up doubt. An hallucination which is as good

as reality is reality.

Here we see another example of tension in Wittgenstein - tension between feeling that doubts in the private case are real doubts and that doubts in public cases are unjustified.

6. The Beetle in the Box Argument

The beetle in the box argument of § 293 is relevant here. There is no agreement amongst authors on what is the conclusion of this argument. Nor do I think it is clear what the conditions of the argument are. I suppose that the size and weight of the boxes must be the same, or else the person with a match box might have good reason to think that the person with a coffin carried a different sort of beetle. I presume that although everyone's beetle may be different, no one has anyway of telling whether his beetle is different from the others. So what we said about the contents of our boxes and the way we behaved with them would have to be the same. If I said that my beetle was red with six legs and you said yours was green with eight legs we would have reason to believe that our beetles were different. These provisions bring the argument in line with the actual case of attempting to name sensations, e.g. § 271, where each of us could be calling different things by the same name but all of us so far as we can tell, use the word in the same way.

Now it is clear that the beetles might be anything at all, constantly changing, all different, or even nothing, but it is not clear, whatever ~~the beetle is~~ why it "drops out of consideration" or "cancels out", why it has no place in the language game. For if my beetle stopped changing, became different, instead of nothing became something, or instead of something became nothing, i.e., if it did actually drop out or cancel out, then my behaviour would change. For each

person the object still has a place in the game. If the beetle dropped out, people would throw away their boxes and never use "beetle". What drops out of consideration is not the object, but I am left with the feeling that something must drop out. Perhaps it is that the nature of the case excludes us finding out that our beetles are different, so considerations of whether they are the same or different have been dropped out of the case. If the provisions of the case are such that it is possible for some new technique to be discovered for seeing into other people's boxes, then considerations of whether our beetles are the same or not still have a place.

Let us try and set up a parallel to the beetle in the box argument for public objects. Suppose everyone's box is transparent and everyone says what a beetle is by looking at any beetle. Suppose everyone had something different in his box, or that the beetles were constantly changing, or that all the boxes were empty, and now we stipulate that these facts have no effect on the way people behave with respect to beetles, for they all think they have the same sort of beetle, that they are not constantly changing, and that they are not nothing. If we construe the grammar of the word "beetle" on the model of object and designation, it is hard to see that the beetles drop out of consideration as irrelevant. The word "beetle" designates what they think a beetle is.

According to Donagon,¹ Wittgenstein made a mistake in saying that the object drops out in the case of sensations, for the existence of that which accompanies natural pain behaviour is cardinal to the meaning of pain words. "What is irrelevant is not the existence of the object, but what it happens to be."² But we can imagine a person

1. Alan Donagon, "Wittgenstein on Sensation", in *Essays*, Ed. Pitcher, p. 347.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 347.

who only behaves as we do when in pain when he has nothing, and when he has what we would call pain, he behaves as if not in pain and has been taught to say "I am not in pain". So if "pain" was to designate a private object that object could be nothing. What is hard to see is why even a nothing should drop out.

Pitcher rightly avers that Wittgenstein is "denying a particular thesis about language, namely that the word 'pain' names or designates this something that the person feels",¹ but goes on to say that for Wittgenstein in our actual language "The private sensations whatever they may be play no part at all".² Cook³ criticises him on this, saying that the object only drops out if you "construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation'",⁴ and the object does not drop out if the model is expressive use. I find it hard to see that changing the model makes any difference to the dropping out. But that aside, Cook then says that to give an account of the public language game with sensation words we must "reject the view that sensations are private. In Wittgenstein's words we must reject 'the grammar which tries to force itself on us here' (*P.I.*, 304)."⁵ But these two rejections obviously do not amount to the same thing. If sensations are public why bother with the expressive use model, for public ostensive definition could then be used, so that you would have the model "object and designation".

For Malcolm the private object "can have no part in determining whether the person who has it understands the word".⁶ This may be true,

1. George Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, p. 298.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 299.


3. John W. Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy", in *Essays*, Ed. G. Pitcher, p. 321.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 293.

5. J.W. Cook, *op.cit.*, p. 322.

6. N. Malcolm, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

but it does not go against the model of object and designation. That you have no idea of what someone else might be naming does not mean that he is not naming a private object.

Winch¹ emphasises the difference between the *Tractatus* view and the *Investigations* view of the relationship between object and name. In the *Tractatus* a simple correlation is set up between object and name. The *Investigations* asks how this correlation is set up. How do I know which object the word is supposed to correlate with? To find out that we have to see the use of the word in a variety of situations. The grammar or the use of a word gives the lie to the object it names. Thus the use that a word has is seen to be primary and so the object drops out of consideration as of secondary importance. Here is the analogy with the beetle in the box.  Just concentrating your attention on X and saying "X" does not name an object whether the object is private or public. The reference to an object is not just problematic in the private case. The object in the public case drops out as well, only here because it is of secondary relevance, whereas in the private case it drops out because public inspection of it is not in the game. Winch then says "For this reason it seems to me that it might be a symptom of confusion to insist too vehemently and for too long that 'pain' is not the name of an object. Of course it would be equally confused to insist too vehemently and for too long that 'pain' is the name of an object."² "Pain" can name an object, and just which object is shown by the language games into which "pain" enters.

I think that Winch is stretching it a bit if he thinks that Wittgenstein would agree with him. Wittgenstein wanted to deny that

1. Peter Winch, "Introduction: The Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy" in *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*.

2. P. Winch, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

"pain" is the name of a private sensation. But he does show that there is another parallel to the beetle in the box argument for public objects.

The public object does have a part in determining whether a person understands a word. If the pupil uses "slab" for blocks instead of slabs he is naming the wrong objects. But what if I think he is correctly using "slab", only where I see slabs he sees something else, then he is still naming an object although I have no idea what it is. So long as I always think he is using a word for a public object correctly, what he is really naming makes no difference to me.

If Wittgenstein was right about private objects he could also say "Always get rid of the idea of a public object in this way: assume that it constantly changes but that no one notices the change because their memories constantly deceive them".¹

7. Wittgenstein's Difficulty of Talking About Private Objects

Wittgenstein is in a peculiar position with respect to the private language problem. For if you cannot refer to private objects, how can you state a *reductio absurdum*? How can you postulate a private language and reduce it to absurdity?

Wittgenstein "would like to say" that sensations are private, it is just that nothing can be said of them as private objects, so he has to "show" that sensations are private by an examination of grammar. For him nothing can be said about private objects, not even that they exist. That is why when he mentions them he usually uses italics. Nor does he deny that sensations are private objects. "The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said."² But that only follows if we accept

1. Cf., *P.I.*, II, p. 207.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 304.

the beetle in the box conclusion.

One of Wittgenstein's problems is not to make it look "as if there were something one *couldn't* do. As if there really were an object, from which I derive its description, but I were unable to show it to anyone -"¹ His move is to yield to this urge and use it as a picture, and then to see if there is any application for the picture.

There is still trouble for him in even getting a picture for any word from our public language has a public use. So in § 261 he cannot call "S" the sign for a sensation, for "sensation" has a public use. The same goes for "something". "So in the end when one is doing philosophy one gets to the point where one would like just to emit an inarticulate sound."² (But "sensation" here should not refer to a public object either - rather it is an expression of sensation.) The temptation in using the picture is to say something about the existence of private objects. The conclusions of his argument preclude him from doing this.

It would be wrong to agree with Castañeda that Wittgenstein was attacking "the idea of a private object".³ He was attacking "the grammar which tries to force itself on us".⁴

One should also be careful in agreeing with Chappell that Wittgenstein "is not trying to show something about language, but rather about sensations or mental phenomena. Linguistic considerations are the means, but an understanding of the latter is the end."⁵ He was against these philosophical views which construed sensations as

1. *P.I.*, I, § 374.

2. *P.I.*, I, § 261.

3. Castañeda, *op.cit.*, p.138.

4. *P.I.*, I, § 304.

5. Chappell, *op.cit.*, p.168.

private objects about which we could be certain, and tried to dispel these views by an examination of language. He was not trying to show something about sensations as such, but about philosophical views of them. "It shows a fundamental misunderstanding, if I am inclined to study the headache I now have in order to get clear about the philosophical problem of sensation."¹

1. *P.I.*, I, § 314, and cf. § 274, § 370. II, p. 204.

VIII. PRIVATE EXPERIENCE

1. Water Boils in a Pot

Much more is made of § 297 than appears to be literally in it.

"Of course, if water boils in a pot, steam comes out of the pot and also pictured steam comes out of the pictured pot. But what if one insisted on saying that there must also be something boiling in the picture of the pot?"¹

The pictured steam does not come out of the pictured pot, so "comes out of" must be wrong here. Steam coming out of a pot is pictured, but the picture loses something of reality, for a static picture cannot have as part of the picture the motion of anything coming out. A movie film would be needed for that, but even then the motion is an illusion.

But apart from that the last sentence I suppose means just what it obviously says. There is no "something boiling", i.e., water boiling in the picture. But neither is there steam coming out, nor a pot.

In this metaphor water boiling is pain, steam coming out is pain behaviour, the pot is the person's body. A picture or a movie film of someone in pain has no pain in it. Language too is like a picture. "He is in pain"; "He *has* something....."² "'Yes, but there is *something* there all the same accompanying my cry of pain'";³ those sentences are like pictures, but in saying them there is not displayed the pain or the something. (If I try to refer to my pain and say "I am in pain", even if that utterance was a picture it would not show you what my private object, pain, was.)

1. *P.I.*, I, § 297

2. *P.I.*, I, § 294.

3. *P.I.*, I, § 296.

The person uttering the statements on § 296 is supposing that he is conveying information about his pain to someone else. § 297 shows that he does not show someone else what his pain is like by uttering those sentences, for the pain is not in the picture. The sentence "I have a beetle in my box" does not contain a beetle.

So Pitcher is right here. "The liquid in the pot is no part of the picture."¹ Pitcher then goes on to talk about "language games which involve the picture do not contain references to the contents of the pot".² Rather, if you use the picture in a language game then that picture does not contain the contents of the pot, i.e., the words "references to" should be deleted, for the language game involving the picture may contain references to the contents of the pot. The problem of reference is not the concern of § 297. That is dealt with in § 300 and § 301.

It seems obvious that this does not mean that you cannot talk about your pain, or the type of liquid that might have been in the pot - as rightly pointed out by Donagon.³ Although Donagon's criticism of Pitcher does not seem to notice that Pitcher does say "It would be absurd to start talking about the liquid in the pictured pot ..."⁴ i.e., it would not be absurd to start talking about the liquid in the pot. Donagon should not have said "It is true that the pictured pot does not contain, as a part, pictured boiling water".⁵ - that is not in question there. (Anyway part of the picture could be pictured boiling water - if it was drawn from above with the lid off.). Rather it is true that the pictured pot does not contain as a part, boiling water.

1. G. Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, p.300.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 300.

3. A. Donagon, "Wittgenstein on Sensation", in *Essays*, Ed. G. Pitcher, p. 330.

4. G. Pitcher, *op.cit.* p.299. 5. A. Donagon, *op.cit.*, p. 330.

Donagan goes on to interpret § 300 and § 301, and says that a picture or *Bild* of pain does not enter into the language game with the word "pain". Rather an imaginative representation or *Vorstellung* "of pain certainly enters into the language game in a sense; only not as a picture".¹ The words "in a sense" here may indicate that it is not as simple as that even. It is not clear for instance what the relationship is between the picture of the behaviour, the paradigm of the behaviour, and the words "He is in pain". "He is in pain" is partly an imaginative representation of his pain, and it seems to be implicit that it is partly a picture of his pain behaviour, although the sentence is altogether more like what Donagan would call an imaginative representation and not like a picture. It is difficult to make out whether Wittgenstein is talking about the word "pain" being a picture or an imaginative representation, or whether involved in some language game with the word "pain" there are pictures or imaginative representations of pain, used perhaps for teaching.

But what is said in § 300 is not a repetition of § 297 (water boiling in a pot). When Kenny deals with this subject he criticises Pitcher for saying that Wittgenstein means "that sensations do not enter into pain language games".² And indeed it looks as though Pitcher may have said this, for "pain language games do not contain references to our private sensations, since these, like the contents of the pictured pot, cannot be talked about".³ For of course there are no contents of the pictured pot, so there could not be references to them and nor could they enter in. Now Wittgenstein was against pain language games containing references to private sensations, but not because private sensations are like the contents of the pictured

1. *P.I.*, I, § 300.

2. A. Kenny in *The Private Language Argument*. Ed. O.R. Jones, p. 224.

3. G. Pitcher, *op.cit.*, p. 300.

pot. Rather, the referring model is the wrong model, and the expressive use model is the right one. So Pitcher was wrong to say that private sensations "play no part in our language games",¹ although he is right in attributing to Wittgenstein the point that "nothing can be said about them".²

Then Kenny says, "What Wittgenstein is denying is not that *sensations* enter into the language game, but that *pictures of sensations* do."³ But this is what is denied in § 300, not in § 297.

I think that in § 297 Wittgenstein is denying that sensations literally enter into sentences containing the word "pain" (that is not to deny that sensations enter into language games concerning the word "pain"). Producing a picture of the pot does not produce the pot, and so even if you could picture a sensation, that would not produce the sensation.

2. The Private Language Arguments Work Cryptically

Perhaps the private language arguments do work in a cryptic sort of way. As soon as someone has named or made a noise expressing a supposed private sensation, that sensation is related to something public, the name or noise, and so the sensation itself becomes in a way public, just as someone's pains are made known to us by their public behaviour.

The necessarily private sensation is not to be relatable to anything public, or else it becomes not necessarily private. So it is impossible to name a necessarily private sensation. This indicates that the language game we play with sensations is a public one, not

1. G. Pitcher, *op.cit.*, p. 300.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 300.

3. A. Kenny, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

a private one. For a language game to be private, there must be no expression, no natural behaviour, perhaps not even a spoken word. This still makes no sense of the passages in the *Philosophical Investigations* on naming the sensation S, for there you are allowed to write down "S" on a page of a calendar.

Still it is important that the sensation be related to something important if a public language game is to begin. But that is not all. To understand someone else's feelings you have to have feelings yourself.

3. The Need for Experiences of Your Own

Take Manser's¹ example of the discovery of the feeling of an electric shock. The electric shock, a new sensation, is given the sign E. He says this is not a name, but a mere code word for what I get from such and such a device, or for the description in terms of existing sensation vocabulary. I could communicate my meaning to others.

Communication through the word "machine" seems alright. I look at him and see what he is looking at, i.e., the machine, and he says "machine" and I say "machine". Then I put my hand on the machine and jump back and say "electric shock", and he does likewise, and I see him and hear him say "electric shock". In this way what he means by "electric shock" is just as mysterious or as obvious as what he means by "machine".

But when I talk to a middle-aged man and he has psychological problems, the whole of his life is beset by some peculiar attitude or feeling or whatever it might be, and no matter how long we talk

1. A. Manser, *Pain and Private Language*, in *Studies*, Ed. Winch.

that day I can get no closer to understanding what he is talking about. What am I trying to understand here? Am I trying to know his feelings, have them? Or am I trying to have feelings of my own in circumstances similar to his, only I cannot because I am not middle-aged and am not a hard pushing successful bulldozing contractor. It is as if I stood in front of the machine, put my hands on it, but felt nothing, and had no reaction. What is it then that he is feeling? Here what he calls an electric shock is a complete mystery to me. Whatever he is naming or expressing I cannot apprehend it.

So it often happens that others try to communicate some feeling, the feeling of experiencing God, the mystical oneness with the *atman*, the feeling of standing on a mountain top, the feeling of fear that incomplete knowledge may kill someone, the feeling of responsibility, all these I may at one time regard as beyond my ken, and at another time I know or understand what is meant. Now, in trying to understand the feelings of a child, I may fail, because I have forgotten the feelings I had.

What seems to be needed to understand what someone else is talking about is to latch onto some experience of your own and give it the same name as he gives his, whatever it is. Whether we are talking about the same thing or not depends upon whether we find clashes or not. We tend to judge anyone else's feelings and motives by our own.

There is a feeling of no rapport. It is not just the cases where someone has an experience but exhibits no behaviour whatever, not even saying anything about it, but it is also the case where there is as much behaviour as you would want, and yet perhaps even when you put yourself in the appropriate situation, you can get nothing at all which

might be what he is talking about.

Where do we seem to end up then? About squares and circles there is little doubt that we are referring to the same thing. With colours it is a little less certain, for some of us are colour blind. With sensations such as pains and aches we are probably as certain as with colours. With feelings like experience of God, oneness with the atman, and others indescribable there is a lot of doubt, for many of us have never had the feeling. There is some doubt in all cases. Each of us could be experiencing totally different things, and yet communicate as we do now.

4. The Importance of Wittgenstein's Insights

But has not Wittgenstein shown something important about our use of public sensation words? By just casting an inward glance at the private sensation you are not going to be able to give it a name which has a public use. Pitcher agrees that the natural expressions associated with sensations are needed to begin public language.¹ Such expressions may even form part of our concept of a sensation, a self ascription of pain without appropriate behaviour or disposition to that behaviour would not be called pain.

As soon as my words for sensations are tied up with the natural expressions, then my language becomes public. Others can correct me. The trouble is that the demand for correct public usage led to a denial that a person could have a correct private usage. But not only that, for it was consequently shown that the public word for a sensation could not refer to any sensations regarded as private objects behind the public natural expression, and that such private objects

1. G. Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, p. 291.

could not be talked about at all. Such private objects are shown not to be part of my concept of a sensation at all.

5. Teaching Expressive Use

But how does Wittgenstein go when he tries to teach a child to replace his primitive natural expression of pain by the words "I am in pain"?

Some people think that "droll" means "funny", others that it means "boring".¹ In the case of the ostensive teaching of "droll" the situation before us is a play, and it happens to be a bit funny but also a little dull or boring. The teacher says that it is droll. The pupil has to pick out the features that the teacher is referring to. With most words the pupil picks out the right feature, but with other words some people pick out some other feature. They also seem to get by with their unusual use of the word without other people ever picking up the error, so that correction comes to them as a surprise. Why did they pick out the wrong feature? Mere sounds of words are able to evoke feelings. In the case of "droll" the mere sound of the word evokes the feeling of boredom, depression, dullness. Also it happens that things referred to as droll often have, apart from their amusement, a fair share of those elements. So we have here a combination of the emotional feeling that the sound of a word evokes and the fact that there are other features which tend to be of the universally accompanying type. (It would be interesting to know how someone found the emotive power of the word "droll" who thought that it meant that something was "ecstatically hilarious". Emotive power of the sounds of words probably depends upon emotions associated both with our use of these words and words similar in sound to them.) In

1. Prof. W.D. Joske told me of this peculiarity.

these circumstances then one can pick out the wrong features and fail to be corrected.

What of the word "belated"? For a long time I thought that this meant "out of breath" or "puffed out". This word has no particular emotive power on me, but I failed to see its simple obvious relationship to "late". Possibly I learnt the word at a time when a objective feature like a person panting was more obvious than a not so well spelt out relationship between the expected time of arrival and where the hands of the clock actually stood. In any case, many people who are late also happen to be short of breath from having run to try and meet a dead line. So there is a more or less universally accompanying feature of belatedness which I wrongly took as the meaning.

Suppose someone is a diffident person and when told he is diffident he is not sure about what is being said of him. He thinks that what is meant is that he is indifferent (the words seem similar anyway), perhaps to the feelings of others, and too much centred on his own thoughts. So he understands wrongly for a while, until one day he looks up the dictionary to find that he merely lacks confidence in himself.

With some words, in the early stages of our life it is difficult to pick out at all which features the word is supposed to refer to. How does one know the meaning of being responsible or irresponsible until one has actually been conscious of being responsible for bringing about some state of affairs such as a mistake in car design which in all probability kills a few people, or being responsible for the upbringing of a child, or for an argument, or the school magazine. One has to feel responsible to understand the meaning of "responsible". One must have a consciousness or an opinion of one's self if one is

to know what it means to be conceited, and this only comes at a certain age. New experiences are had as we grow, and where they cannot be named or described by one's present linguistic armament new words are to be learnt, new rules to be acquired.

All these examples show some of the places where ostensive definition may fail, where we may pick up the wrong rules or have problems learning the rules.

Now the interesting thing about picking out the wrong features, i.e., gaining the wrong rules, is that in the case of sensations one may do just that. In the case of being taught the word "pain" the child may tread on a nail, and when the child yells out and withdraws the teacher sympathises and says, "You're in pain, here, where does it hurt?" Perhaps the child sees someone tread on a nail and cry out "Ouch that hurts". Mother may go to cut his toenails and he says, "Ow, it hurts", before the scissors have even taken the first clip. She tells him to grow up. "It hurts" is not far from "It is painful" which is near "I am in pain". These expressions are used in slightly different circumstances. I think according to Wittgenstein the rule to be learnt would be "don't express your pain by yelling and withdrawing, but say 'I am in pain'". One is not to learn the name of a sensation here, but the rule which concerns substituting an unnatural expression for a natural primitive one.

But what is it that stops the child from learning the wrong rule, i.e., might he not here pick out a feature of the situation, i.e., his private sensation of pain and name it "pain". In fact it would be a very sophisticated child who rejected the obvious feature when he is in pain and learned only the rule of using a more sophisticated expression of pain, or a particularly dull child who could parrot

words in the right situation but not learn rules of the naming type.

I am suggesting then that there is nothing to stop most of us from making a mistake in our use of words with respect to private sensations. Instead of or besides the rule about how to express pain, we also learn the rule which says "pain" is the name of the sensation pain. A survey may show that most people are of this opinion.

If the private language arguments are right then most of us have learnt the wrong rules concerning sensation words. Which leaves us with a paradox of an area of language where the majority of the speakers are using the wrong rules.

6. Telling that Someone is Apprehending

Is there a difference between the way we find out whether someone is seeing something, and the way we find out whether someone has a sensation? Consider the following examples.

(a) The Spanish sailor who wrote down that he saw islands 450 miles south of Tasmania. Did he see them? No, there are 2000 feet of water there. He must have seen an iceberg.

(a)' The man in the train accident. Was he in pain? No, there was nothing wrong with him, he was not in the pain he thought he was.

(b) Did Cook see Australia? Yes, it is there.

(b)' Did the electric shock hurt him? Yes, it hurts me.

(c) Did he see the punch coming? No, his head was turned the other way.

(c)' Did he feel the pain? No, he was anaesthetised, or, he has leprosy.

(d) "Did you hear that?" - "Well I'm not deaf, am I!"

(d)' "Did that hurt?" - "My Oath!"

These examples show that in most cases we find out whether someone is in pain or not in just the same way that we find out whether someone sees something or not.

Sometimes we do not in a straight forward way use the argument from analogy to understand the feelings of another. E.g., a man has a phobia, he cannot stand anyone tapping his fingers on the desk, or tapping the desk with a pencil, etc. So he goes through avoidance behaviour and says he gets a feeling of disgust and a desire to get away. Does he have these feelings? Here we have a case where we ourselves do not have the feelings or behaviour in that situation, so we cannot use the argument from analogy. But we do not doubt him. Compare the pain of a hand in the fire. For fingers tapping substitute your hand in the fire, for avoidance behaviour, withdrawing the hand, and for the feeling of disgust, the feeling of pain.

Problems seem to arise when we compare cases like him having a book in his hand and him having a pain in his stomach. When he says "I've got a book in my hand" I confirm this by seeing the book in his hand and seeing his eyes looking at the book, i.e., book-seeing behaviour. But when he says "I've got an ache in my stomach" I do not confirm this by feeling the ache although I do see his hand on his stomach (i.e., pain behaviour). But the reason why I do not feel an ache in his stomach is that my stomach nerves are not connected to his stomach. If they were so connected in the right way then I would also feel the ache. Now if the world was so constructed that I could not see the book in his hand, but could see his eyes looking at where I think the book is, then I would be as suspicious of his statement that he could see the book as I would be about his reliability.

So I would test his reliability by putting other objects that I could see in his hand. Similarly with the stomach ache, I would test his reliability with respect to other pains. We would both put on tight hats and see if he has a headache when I do; I would jab him with pins and see whether he has a pain when I do; I would see whether he complained of stomach ache every time he has gastroenteritis as I do whenever I get gastroenteritis; I would see if his hand in the flames caused him to say he has a pain as I do when my hand is in the fire. If he is reliable then I know he has a stomach ache just as well as I know he has a book in his hand when I cannot see the book.

The normal case of the book is wrongly contrasted with the stomach ache, and should be contrasted with the case of us both having our hands in the fire, or both rolling in the nettles. The stomach ache is wrongly contrasted with the normal case of the book, and should be contrasted with the abnormal case of the book, or with the case of one man seeing a cave of diamonds before an earthquake destroys it, or the view of the sides of his nose seen from where his eyes are.

If anyone remarks that pains just cannot be handed around from one person to another like a book, then I would reply that they can be talked of being handed around as little or as much as smells and tastes are. One could also reply that books do not appear by a pin jabbing my skin, nor by us grasping the terminals of an electric shock machine.

To know that he is seeing a book in his hand or is seeing the side of his nose from where his eyes are, I do not demand that I have his visual sense data. Nor do I demand that I have his pain experiences to know that he feels the pain of the flames too or that he has a stomach ache.

7. Pain Patches

Strawson¹ hints that the problems of sensation can be explained by "the difference between the ways colours and pains enter into our lives".² He considers some unrealized possibilities. Firstly he considers Wittgenstein's example of pain patches in § 312 - "the surfaces of the things around us (stones, plants, etc.) have patches and regions which produce pain in our skin when we touch them".³ The pain would not be ascribed to the sufferer but to surfaces.

The second example is that people feel pain in certain regions, so they ascribe pain to the region.

In these cases instead of ascribing pain to persons one ascribes it to surfaces or regions. The point of these examples presumably is to make it less tempting to ascribe pain to the mind of the person. But it does not seem to be noticed that there are already cases very like pain patches, e.g., stinging nettles, and flames, which are painful. There are already lots of things that are painful, e.g., inflammations, bruises, piles, broken legs, etc. Pain stands alongside heat swelling and redness in the list of cardinal signs of inflammation. There is a distinction between attributing pain either to the body or to material things other than the body, and a further distinction between attributing pain either to material things or to the mind. We already have enough material things to attribute pain to without having to attribute it all to the mind.

8. Pain and Sense Data

I think that behind Wittgenstein's attitude to sensations is

1. P.F. Strawson, "Review of Philosophical Investigations", in *Essays*. Ed. Pitcher, pp. 47-49.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 47.

P.I., I, § 312.

that they are in the same realm as sense data, and that for him they are equally problematical. He wants to say that we cannot refer to sensations or sense data but that they enter into language in a different way. Instead of this I see sensations being in many instances much more in the realm of ordinary material objects, and consequently that language relating to sensations and material objects is more similar than Wittgenstein allows. His emphasis is mainly on the differences. This leads me to think that sometimes sensations may be as public or as private as material objects. This is not the same as Cook's view that sensations are public,¹ for his view denies that "pain" refers to pain.

When a sensation is a private one, that privacy is like the contingent privacy of the destroyed cave of diamonds, not like the Wittgensteinian necessary privacy where sensation behaviour is defined out of the game. That you do not get a public language game about necessarily private sensations does not mean that you do not get a public language about contingently private sensations. I have tried to show elsewhere that even a necessarily private sensation could be referred to. (E.g., in my sections on "Correctness" and "The need for public checking". This view is later expanded and qualified in my sections "Contingent and necessary privacy" and "Necessarily private objects again".)

When I started reading the pro-Wittgensteinians I often had the feeling that they were merely repeating his views rather than making them clearer. Now that I have come to some terms with his views, and have been filled with the jargon, I hope that in the places where I have tried to state the Wittgensteinian side, I have not fallen into

1. J.W. Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy", in *Essays*, Ed. G. Pitcher, p. 322.

the same trap.

At this point in my work I began to reflect more on the notion of a private object, and have gradually produced what I now realize to be an expansion of the ideas of the last few pages on the privacy of sensations. I was amazed on re-reading what I had written nearly four years ago now, to find so much of the basis of my thoughts in the following pages.

I should add too that I had thought one could have a necessarily private language, but on further reflection I do not think that one will be found. This does not however negate my criticisms of the private language arguments so far.

IX. TYPES OF PRIVACY

1. Contingent and Necessary Privacy

I wish to make a distinction between private objects of two types, those which are contingently private, and those which are necessarily private.

Contingently private objects are objects which for some reason just happen to be accessible only to one person. Objects which at some time happen to be viewed only by one person are contingently private for that time. A lone person in a room has an exclusive view of the objects in it, and is looking at contingently private objects. They are also potentially public objects, in that if someone else comes into the room, he too may view them. It is rather difficult to find ordinary objects which one would class as public, and yet which in fact happen to be always contingently private. A private space such as a cave visited only by one person, or a meteor seen only by one person for a short time before its destruction would be examples. Thus one looks for private places and transitory things.

Access by others to contingently private objects might be restricted by circumstance, in which case access by others is empirically possible, or the access might be restricted by laws of nature, in which case access by others is empirically impossible. For instance, it is empirically impossible for two people to look effectively down an ordinary monocular microscope simultaneously. The magnified object is contingently private from time to time. First one person looks and describes, and then the other. With an extra eye-piece two people can look at once, and the magnified object is no longer contingently private.

Now to consider the definition of a necessarily private object. To be consistent this should be one where access by others is logically impossible. An object which would fit this sort of definition could be the sort of pain Wittgenstein is talking about in *The Blue Book*¹, where the two people are sharing a common painful hand, and the grammatical rule is made that nevertheless "... 'my pain is my pain and his pain is his pain' ".²

One gets the impression that one could have had the whim instead to make the grammatical rule "... 'we both have the same pain', ... " ³ But we are not told by Wittgenstein just what it is that makes us decide on which grammatical rule is to be made. The decision does not seem to rest on how the rule fits with other facts about the case for he says "(It would be no argument to say that the two couldn't have the same pain because one might anaesthetise or kill one of them while the other still felt pain.)" ⁴ For the former grammatical rule would fit that fact, and so would the latter!

Perhaps a better guideline would be to choose the rule which was most consistent with other rules governing similar circumstances. E.g., if there is a boil on the hand then the respective rules are "my boil is my boil and his boil is his boil", and "we both have the same boil". Wittgenstein I believe would choose the latter, for he does say in the example that "'We feel pain in the same place, in the same body...' " ⁵

But in *The Blue Book* Wittgenstein regards pain as a personal experience, and problems of pain language are explained by grammatical rules. There appear to be two persons with a personal pain experience

1. *The Blue Book*, p. 54.

4. *Op.cit.*, pp. 54. 55.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

5. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

3. *Op.cit.*, p. 54.

each in the case of the common hand, so the rule accepted would be the former.

But if one thinks of a slightly different example then a different conclusion is reached.

A peculiar feature of pain is that it is usually placed at the same spot where the stimulated pain nerve fibre ending is. (This is not so with phantom pains and referred pains.) In contrast visual objects such as a gold tooth are not placed at the eye.

So that if you detach your right forearm at the elbow and temporarily attach his injured right forearm in its place then it might be objected (probably unreasonably) that you are feeling his pain through his pain receptors and not your own. To observe his gold tooth you just look with your eye, not his detached eyeball transplanted in place of yours (although this might be done). Perhaps one could further postulate then that when the forearm transfer occurs your pain fibres and endings move into his forearm more or less replacing his, or lying alongside his.

I bring up this example because it seems to show up the bias of Wittgenstein's example of two people sharing a common arm. He says that his pain is his and yours is yours, and his example points to this conclusion. With my example one is more inclined to say that you are feeling his pain.

Think if people could regularly place their appropriate pain fibres into the appropriate place in someone else's body, e.g., the pain fibres of my right index finger into his, or the pain fibres of my stomach into his when he has the gripes, I might be able to tell whether he really has got a sore finger or abdominal pain.

What would one say? "Now, I've got the sore finger"? Or "No, he's not malingering, I felt his pain"? It is not my finger, nor my stomach, and so this favours the latter.

Wittgenstein does not deny that one can conceivably feel pain in places other than in one's own body, e.g., in a table perhaps, or in someone else's tooth.¹ But for Wittgenstein it is still one's own pain, not someone else's. But if he can go so far as this, i.e., feeling pains in other's bodies, why cannot he go a little further and feel others' pains?

I think that which conclusion one reaches here depends firstly upon the example one invents, and secondly upon regarding pain in a biased sort of way as a personal experience. So pain is not necessarily private.

In § 253 Wittgenstein says "In so far as it makes *sense* to say that my pain is the same as his, it is also possible for us both to have the same pain".² I do not think that in this section Wittgenstein indicates anything radically different from the passages in *The Blue Book*. He seems to indicate that it makes sense to say that two people have the same pain, i.e., pain in corresponding places, or in the same place (e.g., Siamese twins). He does not state that two people can feel the one pain, and I take it that he would regard this situation as one where it does not make sense.

In the pain nerve transfer case I suppose the pain is in his arm, not mine. But suppose we rule that whose pain it is is determined by whose nerve fibres are being stimulated, and not by whose arm it is. Then my nerve fibres are being stimulated, so it is my pain, and his never fibres are being stimulated, so it is his pain also. And

1. Cf., *The Blue Book*, p.53

2. *P.I.*, I, § 253.

is there one pain or two?

Or suppose a cup falls on the floor and we all feel pain in the table.

The trouble with Wittgenstein's common arm is that it is not really or exclusively mine nor his. It might be regarded as ours, or as belonging to neither of us.

It begins to look as though whose pain it is is determined by which decision about rules you care to make, and this is so in some cases. The various cases require new decisions to be made if the old criteria result in contradictions. The decision is, however, made against our background of language experience.

Suppose then that you and I have a boil each in the middle of our backs. I can see your boil and you can see mine, and suppose further for the moment that neither of us is to see the boil on his own back.

Now suppose that we make the rule that your boil is the one you see and my boil is the one that I see, so that the boil on my back is your boil and the boil on your back is my boil. Whose boil it is is determined by who sees it, and not by whose back it is on.

Then following the analogy with the pain case (e.g., Hospers'¹) it is logically impossible for me to see your boil. The quotation from Hospers' book is:

"... whose pain it is would be determined by
who feels it, not by whose body is injured.
 In this case it is *logically impossible* for
 me to feel your pain."²

The second part which is the supposed consequence of the rule, it will be shown, does not follow from the first part, which is the rule.

1. J. Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, pp.298,299.

2. J. Hospers, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

On p. 54 of *The Blue Book* Wittgenstein characterises this impossibility as being explained by a "grammatical statement about the use of such a phrase as 'the same pain'. You say that you don't wish to apply the phrase, 'he has got my pain' or 'we both have the same pain', and instead, perhaps, you will apply such a phrase as 'his pain is exactly like mine!'"¹; i.e. Wittgenstein is more explicit in ruling that one is not to use the phrases "He has got my pain" and "we both have the same pain" here. In the case of the boil then, for Wittgenstein, the rule should exclude the use of "he has got my boil" and "we both have the same boil".

Now we must examine what happens when with the aid of mirrors I see your boil on my back and you see my boil on your back. What was your boil alone on my back is now also my boil, and what was my boil alone on your back is now also your boil. I see your boil and you see mine, and the logical impossibility of this has vanished (like Alice, through the looking glass!). The same goes therefore for the pain case. There is no logical reason why something like a mirror (e.g., new nerve connections made) should not be found for the pain case, so the logical impossibility goes there too.

Yet here in Hospers' case the rule is not in fact broken. We are still according to the rule. The logical impossibility was made to look as though it arose from definitions, and so was harmlessly grammatical, but really it arose from what are only empirical restrictions in the case, and so is no logical impossibility at all.

For the Wittgensteinian characterisation, one is forced by my case to say "I see your boil", and "we see the same boil", so that Wittgenstein's types of rules here must be abandoned. Similarly

1. *The Blue Book*, p. 54.

Wittgenstein's rules do not apply in my pain case.

Suppose whose boil it is is (in fact) determined as usual by whose back it is on, and let that be enshrined in a rule. Are we to say that it is logically impossible for me to have your boil? Suppose your boil is cut off your back and sewn onto mine. What was your boil is now mine. Or if that is not good enough suppose we become a form of Siamese twins with a common back with a boil on it. I have your boil and you have mine.

The facts about pain which mislead us are that he who feels the pain almost always has it in his own body, and so whose pain it is is in fact usually determined by both who feels it and whose body has the pain. But the rule that whose pain it is is determined by who feels it does not exclude two people from feeling the same pain. What excludes that are empirical facts.

If such a rule logically excluded two people from feeling that same pain, a similar rule (e.g., whose boil it is is determined by who sees it), would logically exclude two people from having the same boil.

One thing is not made into two different things by making a linguistic rule. That interpretation of the rule then should be abandoned as it can lead to absurdity.

The rules "my pain is the pain I feel", "my boil is the boil I see", and "my boil is the boil on my body" could be interpreted as excluding the words "pain" and "boil" from applying to that which is the same, felt, seen, or had by two people. But such an interpretation of those rules does not exclude that which is the same, felt, seen, or had by two people from existence, so one wonders what the practical use of that interpretation would be.

2. Pain Patches

The idea that it would all be different if people felt pain when they were in the region of certain plants etc. contrasts with my idea of pain becoming public by changes in our pain perception apparatus, in that the former is a more radical change in the concept of pain itself, whereas the latter is mainly a change in where we can put our pain nerve endings.

Wittgenstein in § 313 says that one can exhibit pain, but the preceding passage, § 312, second paragraph, indicates that this exhibiting of pain can only take place in a world slightly different from our own, a world which has pain patches. His point is that our pains in the world as it is are not exhibited "as I exhibit red and as I exhibit straight and crooked and trees and stones",¹ but that they could be exhibited thus if the world had pain patches.

From § 313 one tends to think that Wittgenstein holds after all that if one exhibits pains as one exhibits red, then "pain" may be the name of a sensation as "red" is the name of a colour. But in the light of § 312 this tendency is wrong. In § 312, first paragraph, pains are once again lumped with visual sensations (unless Wittgenstein has postulated an actual distinction between pain and the sensation of pain, which seems unlikely), and the conclusion I think he leads us to is that visual sensations are not exhibited, but that red patches are, and sensations of pain are not exhibited, but pain patches could be.

For me then there is some truth in the pain patch idea of pains but the pain patches are on our skin or in a tooth, so that the cases of the tooth and the pain (toothache) are similar, only the pain is contingently private.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 313.

3. Necessarily Private Objects Again

Now it might be conceded that two people could conceivably feel the same pain as per the pain nerve transfer case, yet it might still be said that even though the two people are feeling the same pain, yet each person has his own personal experience of that pain, and it is that personal experience which is necessarily private. Much as with two people looking at the same loaf, each having his own necessarily private experience of the loaf.

If one is still convinced that there are these necessarily private experiences, then there is a further way in which to get rid of them. We might still dream up even a further case other than the common arm and nerve transfer examples, say one where my brain is so integrated with yours that there is just one experience and two people conscious of it. Then perhaps two people can have the same personal experience of pain, and so it is once more a question of there ever being necessarily private objects. In face of a complete collapse of the category of necessarily private objects I want to leave this conclusion open to qualification for I think a useful distinction can still be made between contingently and necessarily private objects using a slightly looser and weaker concept of necessarily private objects.

Let us consider an item which is necessarily private in the strong sense, i.e., an item such that it is logically impossible for more than one person to have any apprehension of it. No such item is found, nor is an instance of it created by definition or grammatical rules. For any item I can think of, it is logically possible that someone else has some apprehension of it, and for any item that anyone else can think of, it is logically possible that I have some apprehension of it. If two or more people have some apprehension of

an item then a public language about it can get going. So for any item anyone can think of it is logically possible for it to be referred to in a public language. This rules out necessarily private language in this strong sense.

I mentioned that there is a looser sense of necessarily private items, a sense in which to go against the item being necessarily private one has to imagine some sort of brain integration such that two people have the one experience of, for example, pain, or red. Such items are necessarily private in a weaker sense. One has to imagine what intuitively seems much more difficult, i.e., one has to imagine the more difficult task of carrying out brain integration rather than the less difficult task of carrying out forearm or peripheral nerve transfers to deny that such items are necessarily private in a strong sense. (Thus it would be more accurate perhaps to say that such items are contingently private in a stronger sense rather than necessarily private in a weaker sense.)

This I think is the sort of privacy Wittgenstein is talking about when he says "The assumption would thus be possible - though unverifiable - that one section of mankind had one sensation of red and another section another".¹ Indeed one occasionally hears people, especially artists, wondering whether they see colours just as anyone else does. Wittgenstein is against us having another word to name our own particular private sensation of red, and with this I agree. What I find objectionable is the idea that pains are private like our own particular private sensation of red, and that as Wittgenstein is against another word for our private red so he is against a word naming pain.

1. *P.I.*, I, § 272.

Wittgenstein has his private language argument reasons for getting rid of the two word hypothesis, reasons like drugs which have unpleasant side effects, but I think one can quickly eliminate the word for our private sensation by pointing out that the so-called particular private sensation of red is available to public language in the ordinary way, through behaviour, and that what you get is not a private name but a public name for a public red object (or, if the case is such, a contingently private red object). When you supposedly name the necessarily private object, e.g., one's supposed private sensation of red, what you in fact end up with is a public name for, in the case of red, a public object, or in the case of pain, for a contingently private object.

What is not meant here is that one's supposed private sensation of red is a public object standing alongside the public red object for all to see, or indeed for only me to see. Rather, in the case of a public red object if you try to pick out your own particular private sensation of red and name it all you end up doing is giving a public name for the public red object.

Similarly in the case of a contingently private object such as a pain if you try and pick out your own particular private sensation of pain and name it, all you end up doing is giving a public name for a contingently private object.

In § 258 where Wittgenstein imagines keeping a diary of a certain sensation, if one thinks of him as looking at a public red letter-box and trying to name his own particular private sensation of red, it becomes more difficult to follow the drift of the whole paragraph to its conclusion. There is no more difficulty in his naming his private sensation of red here than there is in his naming the public instance of red. But there are not two acts of naming, only one, and

all you have is a public name for a public red object. One can still wonder about one section of mankind having one sensation of red and another section another, but we must also allow this to be said of pains, moods, etc., i.e., contingently private things as well, without having to say for myself that each object, sensation, pain or mood has a duplicate in the form of a necessarily private object. What I am against is the elevation or denigration of contingently private objects, e.g., some red sensations, pains and moods to the status of necessarily private objects.

There is a temptation to think that with brain integration, language is much more public than without it. I imagine my brain and someone else's linked together by the finest threads, so that our personal experiences are shared. We both sit looking at a red letter-box, throw a switch and for me the letter-box turns green and the grass goes red. For him the letter-box and grass do the same. We both say so. Or I may find that the letter-box turns a colour I have never seen before. I name it "x" or "red₁". He has never seen my colour before and calls it "y" or "red₀".

Is one committed to say that as the colour x, or red₁ is now a new public object, so before it must have been a private object of his, and from this lead on to saying that as things stand now each of us has a necessarily private language (in the weaker sense) with names for necessarily private objects (in the weaker sense)?

It is difficult to know what to say here. I think one has to witness one's allegiance to what we ordinarily call public language - that stands firm. The brain link experiment then results in objects which have a publicity hitherto unknown, which could perhaps be called ultrapublicity.

The ramifications of this example could be immense, but the point I want to make is that if someone says that what we now call public language is really a necessarily private language naming only necessarily private objects, then that language is, in view of the possibility of the brain link experiment, necessarily private only in a weak sense, i.e., not in the required strong sense.

Thus there may be a necessarily (weaker sense) private aspect of each individual's experiences, a privacy which might only be overcome by imagining situations like the brain link experiment.

I want to explore the brain link experiment type situation a little further. I said I can wonder if someone else sees colours the same as I do. Discrimination tests only go so far. Someone might not be able to distinguish red from green, high tones from low tones, but what colour does he see, and what tone does he hear? Presumably the colours or sounds would all seem monotonous, but which colour or tone. One would have to put oneself in a God's eye position, where one can have anyone's experiences.

Suppose that I find out that what I see as red he sees as my green and vice versa. I call the letter-box "red" and that red I see I call "red*", ("*" indicates that the word refers to my supposed private sensation). He calls the letter-box "red" and that red he sees I call "green*". But when I with my God's eye view have his experience of the letter-box, I would just say "You're seeing green" (not green*). The "*" seems to be a pointless tag.

Extending this further : I call the letter-box "red", and that red I see I call "red*".

He calls the letter-box "red", and that red he sees I call "green*", "x*", "dull red*", or "yorkle*".

But using my God's eye view I could equally have said that he calls the letter-box "red" and that red he sees I call "green", "x", "dull red", "yorkle" or "red**" ("**" indicates that the word refers to his supposed private sensation).

A useful distinction could be made between what I see when I say "red" and what he sees when he says "red" to the extent that I might distinguish (with my God's eye view) between the red I see and the red** he sees. In that case "red**" might mean "green", "x", "dull red" or "yorkle". But with or without a God's eye view what is the use of me distinguishing "red" from "red**"?

To make this more explicit consider this example. I am seeing a red patch. If I am seeing as usual I call it "red". If I am linked to his brain or have a God's eye view, and am seeing the red patch as he does, and it looks different from the way I see it usually, I may call the red patch "red**". If he is seeing the red patch as I do, then he may call it "red*". For me then the patch is either red or red**, and for him the patch is either red or red*, depending on the method by which we are seeing.

When I am seeing the patch as usual, there is no distinction between "red" and "red*", and when he is seeing it there is no distinction between "red" and "red**".

If I am asked what he is seeing however, I could say red or red* depending on which way he is seeing. In that way I have a use for "red*". But this is not a use which distinguishes for me my private image of red from the red I see normally.

An example whereby the above situation becomes more practical would be in the use of two pairs of glasses with coloured lenses

such that when used the colours of objects appear changed. Suppose that one pair acts differently from the other, and that I wear one pair and someone else the other. Then we rename the colours we see about us. After some time we may come to regard the colours and names as normal, after which we could swap glasses temporarily, to see what the other person is seeing. The problem with names would then be similar to the one above.

I am inclined to say that when I am seeing as usual, the word "red" does for both the public red object and my private image of red. I am undecided as to how to further characterise the relationship between a public red object and my private image of red. It seems clear however that the private sensation of red does not drop out as the beetle in the "beetle in the box" is supposed to, for if for me the private sensation of red did drop out so would for me the public red colour of the public red object.

4. The Private Language Argument and the Principle of Verification

The article by Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Private Languages",¹ exposes Malcolm's interpretation of Wittgenstein's private language argument as a disguised form of the Principle of Verification. "... a sign 'K' is not a kind name in a man's language unless it is possible to find out whether or not a thing is a K".² As this private language argument is analogous to and has similar difficulties to the Principle of Verification a private language is not ruled out.

I have tried to spell this out a little more clearly for myself. The interesting case is where I can find out whether "K" applies or

1. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Private Languages", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.1, No.1, January 1964, pp. 20-31.

2. *Op.cit.*, p. 29.

not. Consider then firstly that the analogy with the Principle of Verification is true. Then if, (a), it is logically possible for others to find out if "K" applies or not, then I do not have a private language. Also if (b), it is logically impossible for others to find out if "K" applies or not, then I do not have a private language.

Secondly, consider that the analogy with the Principle of Verification is false. Then if (a), once more I do not have a private language, but if (b), then I do have a private language.

So that the Principle of Verification be true, seems central to the claim that one cannot have a private language.

From the article I agree with the difficulty in establishing what is logically impossible. "(... , there is no familiar rule of inference which will take you from a contingent premise to the conclusion 'it is logically impossible that ...' - except the rule of inference which allows you to derive a necessary truth from *any* proposition whatever. And then of course you would have already to know independently that the conclusion 'It is logically impossible that ...' *is* a necessary truth.)"¹ (The word "necessary" near the end should probably have been left out. If "It is logically impossible that p" is true, or in other words "It is necessary that not p" is true, then "Not p" is a necessary truth, i.e., not "It is logically impossible that p" is a necessary truth.)

From here on I reason differently from Thomson. I cannot agree with her first objection to the use of the modified Principle of Verification here.² Here the emphasis is on whether it is logically possible for others to find out whether or not a word applies to

1. *Op.cit.*, p. 27.

2. Cf., *Op.cit.*, p.30.

another's private object. But if we establish that it is logically impossible for others to find out whether or not a word applies to another's private object, then by the analogy with the Principle of Verification the word is not a kind name. But in the private language case it is difficult to see how it is to be established that it is logically impossible for us to find out which things are E and which are not. For if one person has a private sensation it is difficult to find a contradiction in supposing that someone else also has it (unless the sensation is necessarily private, which begs the question).

So if one person has a private sensation and calls it "E", it is difficult to find a contradiction in supposing that someone else is able to check his use of the word "E". In other words it is difficult to show the logical impossibility of others finding out whether "E" applies or not.

So if it is logically possible for others to find out if "E" applies or not then with or without the modified Principle of Verification, "E" is a word in a language, but the trouble is that it is now no longer a necessarily private language, for it is logically possible for more than one person to understand it.

I take it then that on trying to apply the modified Principle of Verification, whether it is true or false, it is difficult to see how a language would be necessarily private. This is quite the opposite conclusion to Judith Jarvis Thomson's. She seems to conclude that there can be a private language, her conclusion being based upon the uselessness of the Principle of Verification, and thus Malcolm's interpretation of Wittgenstein's private language argument.

5. Are All Private Items Contingently Private?

In the pain nerve ending transfer case it made sense to speak of

two people experiencing the same pain. The question arises as to whether it makes sense for all feelings, moods and thoughts, for example, that the same thing can be experienced by two people. It is imaginable by definition that some of all types of contingently private things could be public. What I am trying to see is whether all private feelings, moods, emotions and thoughts can be lumped into the contingently private category.

It makes sense to say that two people are feeling depressed, but does it make sense to say that two people are feeling the same depression? Depression is not like pain with peripheral nerve endings at which the feeling is usually placed.

One approach might be that for depression as there is no transfer analogous to pain nerve transfer, then it never makes sense to speak of two people feeling the same depression exactly. Then it looks as though one just has to accept that some things are necessarily private.

But perhaps there are other ways in which depression could be a public thing. Another approach may be to regard depression as a feeling often arising in a type of person in particular provoking circumstances, and associated with characteristic behaviour, so that two similar people in the same circumstances may both be feeling at least the same sort of depression and perhaps could be regarded as feeling exactly the same depression. A pair of failed bank robbers in the dungeon may both feel exactly the same depression. Now one might say that A's depression is associated with A, so it is different from B's which is associated with B, and if one wants to make this distinction there is nothing to prohibit it. But if it does not matter who you are, in such and such circumstances you will feel depression, then there is not much point in not saying that all in those circumstances

feel exactly the same depression. The same depression may even be felt by the one person at different times, or by two people one at one time and the other at another time.

A tentative guideline may be that two things are the same if there is nothing regarded as significant to distinguish them as being different. So as with pain although in most cases of depression the depressions are in some significant respect all different, cases are imaginable where the depressions are exactly the same. In these imaginable cases the depression is no longer contingently private, but it public with respect to those individuals feeling the depression.

There is no organ of depression as there is an organ of sight. So one is not able to "look" at someone with depression and "see" depression, not even in one's self. Rather one has to put one's whole self in the other's depressing situation to feel something like the depression he is feeling. If one was able to do this completely then one might be able to feel his depression.

The general question still arises as to how one is to establish that all things which are not obviously public are contingently private and not necessarily private. Is one to go through each private thought, mood, feeling, or emotion one by one and establish that there is a way in which they all could have been public, and so therefore they are contingently private? For a start one cannot do them all, so some will have to do, and from those infer to all. Now if one finds one for which it is logically impossible that it could have been public then it is necessarily private. But I doubt that one can establish such a logical impossibility. Rather it seems logically possible that any private thing could have been public. There is no contradiction

in supposing that what is private could have been public. I do not see the world as divided into public things, contingently private things and necessarily private things. I cannot see any way of establishing that there are things which are necessarily private.

6. Types of Contingently Private Objects

There are cases of private items such as the sound of tinnitus, or the colour of an after-image, or a picture in the imagination, which can be compared to public sounds, colours and objects. These private items contrast with those for which there is no public object with which to compare, e.g., pains, tickles. If he is able to compare his private item with a public object, it is more accessible to others.

There is yet another distinction to be made between two different types of contingently private objects. Firstly there are contingently private objects such as pains where people may agree that they experience the same type of thing, a pain, things of the same sort, pains, but never happen to experience precisely the same thing, the same pain exactly. If two people experience renal colic they may even say they had the same pain, but would not mean exactly the same pain in the one place, but would mean the same type of pain, severe, and in corresponding places of their body.

Secondly, there do seem to be contingently private objects such as the bulldozing contractor's feeling (cited on p.113) where I cannot agree that I have had the same experience or anything similar to it; anything of the same sort. The unique feelings of others, the like of which I have never had, are, until I have something of the same sort, more peculiarly private than the feelings we share.

7. Same and Same Sort

When I call my pain "pain" and he calls his pain "pain", how do

we know that we are having the same sort of thing, and that we are calling the same sort of thing "pain". We never in fact have exactly the same pain and so never have one thing before us to call "pain". It is not like us both seeing the same tree and calling it "tree".

Neither is it like me seeing two trees and saying that they are the same sort of thing and judging that I am calling the same sort of thing by the name "tree". It would be misleading to infer that I make the judgement that we are feeling that same sort of thing, a pain, like that.

It is not like us both seeing the same tree but it is analogous to it. When we both stand before a tree I make the judgement that he is seeing the same thing as me by my seeing the tree there and seeing him and his behaviour, i.e., his eyes turned towards the tree, him feeling the trunk with his hands, him listening to the wind blowing its leaves. He exhibits tree apprehending behaviour similar to my tree apprehending behaviour. I do not apprehend any supposed private tree image of his.

The situation is similar with pain. He exhibits pain behaviour similar to mine. I do not apprehend any supposed private pain image of his. The only difference is that I too am not feeling his pain, whereas I was also seeing the tree. So I do not say with pain as with the tree that we are seeing the same thing, a tree, but rather that we have the same sort of thing, a pain.

The judgement that we are seeing the same tree is not like me seeing a tree from two different angles for example and calling it the same tree. Nor is it like seeing two identical trees (if there be any) and calling them the same.

This is not to say that my seeing the tree has no importance, but

its importance here is no greater than my having a pain in circumstances similar to his.

When he appears to be in pain I can doubt whether he is feeling the same sort of thing as I do when I am in pain, so too can I doubt that he is seeing the same tree as I when he appears to be looking at it.

In § 302 Wittgenstein says "If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I *do not feel* on the model of pain which I *do feel*".¹ In answer to this, the circumstances are such that there is nothing else to do but that. To imagine someone else's pain one only has one's own model to go on.

It is different when I imagine someone else's tree. I am able to go into his backyard to see it, and then imagine his tree. But when I imagine Plato's cave I am in a similar position as imagining Plato's or anyone else's pain. I have to imagine the cave which I have not seen on the model of caves which I have seen. Plato's cave is not the same as mine, but they are of the same sort.

Finally then, the sorts of things which are traditionally thought of as necessarily private are in fact better regarded as contingently private and accessible to public language. There may be a private aspect to each individual's experience, but in the strong sense there are no necessarily private objects, and there is no necessarily private language.

8. Is There a Lack of Analogy Between Gold Teeth and Toothache?²

If I am to tell whether A has a gold tooth I look in his mouth.

If I am to tell whether A has a toothache I do not tell by having

1. *P.I.*, I, § 302.

2. Cf., *P.I.*, I, § 312, and *The Blue Book*, p. 53.

his particular experience of toothache any more than I tell that he has a gold tooth by having his visual impression of his gold tooth. I ask him, observe his behaviour, and perhaps do certain tests, e.g., the tenderness of a cavity.

If his mouth is wired shut I may also just ask him if he has a gold tooth or look up his dental records.

This lack of analogy does not extend beyond the contingently private at all. Of course there is a lack of analogy between the case of a public object and a contingently private one, but it is not the sort of lack of analogy that Wittgenstein wants. There is no demand for me to have his personal experience.

As it happens I do not have an experience of pain when he has toothache and I do not tell whether A has toothache by having pain in his tooth. This might be done by having a case similar to the arm nerve transfer case, e.g., the nerves of my jaws are transplanted into his jaws. Then I can feel his toothache but even then I do not have his particular experience of toothache, peculiar to him as an individual and there is no demand that one should have his particular experience. Neither is there any such demand in the case of ordinary public objects such as gold teeth.

The linguistic demands made of contingently private objects are not to exceed those of public objects.

9. The Importance of Behaviour

I have been assuming that someone is capable of behaviour. Necessarily if the someone having the twinge was in fact incapable of showing its occurrence in any way then there would not be a public language about it. But then there would not be any private language

behaviour either.

If he is capable of private language behaviour however then there can be a public language about his supposed private items. There can be a public language about any private item. Suppose that he has a necessarily private item (e.g., Wittgenstein's E) and that he names it. This naming behaviour is then the basis for a public language about E.

What if now I also suppose that his naming behaviour is also necessarily private. No one else is of necessity to have any indication that he has named anything. He then has a private language - but it has no consequences for anyone else. This is also supposing that there is anything which is necessarily private.

10. Features of Pain which Mislead Us.

On writing about pain it is commonly said that pain is a subjective experience. By this I suppose it is meant that people vary greatly in their response to apparently similar painful stimuli.

But besides this there are a number of other features of pain which may lead one to think of it uncritically as necessarily private.

The most important feature is that pain is private, probably universally private, but as I have tried to show this privacy is contingent.

Also most people dislike pain, so it is not the sort of experience that people would want to share, even if they could. Rather the individual in pain wants to be rid of it. There are however rare cases where someone wants to feel the pain in sympathy with a sufferer.

The existence of pain is dependent upon its being felt, apart from perhaps unnoticed pains. If the existence of a pain was independent

of its being perceived, in the way that ordinary physical objects are, then it might be the sort of thing which people could share.

One's memory of pain is poor. One might remember the circumstances of pain and one's reactions and remember that it hurt, but one is not able to vividly bring to mind the feeling of pain. We would not want to even if we could. One's feeling of pain, once it is over, is private even from one's self.

We know of someone else's pain by observing his behaviour, not by feeling the pain. The publicity of his behaviour contrasts with the privacy of his pain, so that we might think that his pain must be private.

Pains are spatial, but are not manipulable in the way that ordinary physical objects are. They are not transferable from one person's hand to another's.

There is no compact anatomical organ for pain. If we had a compact anatomical organ for pain perception, e.g., a sense organ on the tip of the nose which somehow allowed us to perceive pains anywhere in the body, then someone else's pain in his body might be the sort of thing I could perceive using the compact sense organ on the tip of my nose.

Pain nerve fibres occur throughout the body whereas special sense nerve fibres are only in certain parts. Pain is felt either as is usual where the nerve endings are, though perhaps not where the actual stimulated nerve endings are, as in referred pain, or where the nerve endings would have been, as in phantom pains. Pain is not separable from this albeit scattered organ, and is attached to a person as much as a person is attached to his own body. If the world was such that

the visual objects he sees are the little images on his retinas, then as I would find it much harder to see those little images than the objects which produce them, his visual objects would be to that degree private.

The cause of pain usually acts on or in the body by direct contact. If the cause of pain usually acted from a distance, e.g., as the feeling of heat is caused by the fire across the room, then we might have learnt to regard pain as a public object at some distance from us.

Even in cases of shamming and acting pain the person supposedly in pain is in the best position to know if he is in pain. That this is always so may lead one to regard that this is necessarily so.

We can imagine a visual object which has many of the characteristics of pain. Suppose that each of us has an object in his visual field with several features, that it moves about something like an after-image, but that it is solid and regarded as part of our bodies as if actually attached by light rays between it and the eye, that it is public, but with a property, e.g., of an unusual colour which is always private and disliked, this unusual colour having obvious causes and so on. If the analogy with pain is carried far enough we have a visual object with all the privacy of pain.

We could also imagine that instead of having the feeling of pain in the toe, we instead somehow had a perception of an unusual colour or sound in the toe, the colour or sound otherwise having the characteristics of pain.

Thoughts such as these help to release the grip of pain as a necessarily private sensation.

11. FINALE

I thought I could have a private language because I thought Wittgenstein's arguments were wrong. Now I think no one ever has a necessarily private language - Wittgenstein was more or less right, but for the wrong reasons! But now, I should ask, was he right all the way? I still do not think he was.

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