

THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE PROBLEM.

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A large part of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, the central part in fact, can be seen to be centred on the private language question. Two main things are, from our point of view, shown in that long section from remarks 143-317 in which this topic is discussed: (1) that a word can only possess determinate meaning, i.e. have a sense, if it is used according to a rule and (2) that identifying the rule according to which it is used can be done on the basis of the conduct of the user and requires no access to 'inner' or 'mental' states as part of this.

The private language argument is another manifestation of skepticism. The problems which it poses do not have anything very interesting to do with the question of whether Robinson Crusoe, all alone on his desert island, might have been capable of creating a language of his own, one which was 'private' in the sense of being a language known to and spoken by no one but himself. Though some do suppose that this is what the question is about, it is certainly not the one that Wittgenstein grapples with. The thought that the Robinson Crusoe case might be relevant to Wittgenstein's problem is perhaps inspired by the attempt (which we maintain is unhelpful, if not mistaken) of interpreting Wittgenstein as putting forward constructive doctrines rather than taking therapeutic steps to eliminate problems.

Wittgenstein's argument against the private language view, construed in a constructive way, would seem to maintain that language is a public and social phenomenon, that it has an essentially collective character and that, of course, would make the Crusoe case relevant, for if someone like Crusoe could create his own language, then in that case it would have been produced by an individual and language, though it might normally be so, would not be essentially collective. Crusoe is only relevant to an argument in which it is supposed that the point is whether a private language might exist, even though one does not, to our knowledge, do so at this time. The languages with which we are familiar are community property alright, and there may be no known language which is actually private, but does language have to be a communal construction?

Wittgenstein's attention is directed to an argument which raises a rather different question: can there be anything other than private languages? It does not grant that the extant tongues of humanity, French, German, English and so

on, are community property, but precisely tries to raise doubts about this. In the sense appropriate to this context, a private language is not one which just happens to be spoken by one speaker but is one which is necessarily confined to its speaker for it cannot be learned by anyone else. It cannot be learned by anyone else not because its speaker is isolated from others (or for other reasons, such as the keeping secret of the language) but because of its nature as language. The question is not, however, are there some languages which are of such a nature that they are of necessity private? It is: is it in the nature of language in general for it to be necessarily private, incapable of being learned by anyone other than its speaker?

The familiar languages of our everyday life might appear to settle that question clearly and definitively. The tongues we speak in our routine lives like French, German and English, are ones which are spoken by multitudes of speakers and have been for a long time. These languages are passed on from generation to generation, hence they are frequently and naturally learned by children from their elders.

The skeptic is not one to be discomfited by such seemingly indubitable facts. The skeptic's policy is precisely that of trying to introduce doubts where there seems to be, as in this case, no room for them. The power of skepticism is that it can create problems in cases where there seems to be a quite clear cut and unquestionable answer to its queries. The skeptic's capacity to unsettle these indubitable assumptions depends upon the use of the words 'know', 'certain', 'sure' in particular.

To say that we speak the same language is to say that different speakers use the same words with the same meaning, and it is at this point that the skeptic's argument finds its point of entry. It seems that we do all speak the same language, all we speakers of (say) English and that we do use the same word in the same way, but can we be sure that we do mean the same thing by the same word. The skeptic takes it that to say we know something is to say that we are sure or certain of it, and if there is room for doubt, if we cannot be certain that we use a word in the same way as other speakers, then we cannot say that we know we use a common language. Perhaps we do not, perhaps we all use words in different ways from each other, perhaps each one of us uses each word in different ways from everyone else, perhaps each of us speaks a private language, one which is unique to us though we appear to be speaking the same tongue.

The skeptic's argument feeds on a conception of meaning and of its relation to our experience. I, as a speaker of a language, know what the words I use mean because I know what sorts of experiences I apply them to. I can recognise 'red' and I regularly use the word red for things that, in my experience, look the same colour. I am consistent in my use of the colour term 'red', and that much I can be sure of. Can I however, be anything like as confident that I am consistent in my use of the colour term 'red' with others who also use the term. Do they use that term 'red' to apply to the same kind of experiences as I have come to apply it to? And how am I to tell? One way might be to see if we call the same things 'red', to see if we are consistent in our judgements of colour, one with another. This won't do, though, because we think that the test of the meaning of a word is not whether we use it in the same way, i.e. to apply to the same things, but whether or not it applies to the same experiences. That we make matching judgements on the colour of things does not enable us to set aside skeptical doubts, for the question remains: how do we check that the other person's experience is the same as ours? Sure enough, we judge the same things to be red, but does something which looks red to me look what I would call red to another person, perhaps they see things which look red to me as looking what I would call 'green' or 'pink striped'. How do I know that they don't, what way do I have of checking on that. They have their experiences and I have mine, I cannot have their experiences nor they mine. Their experiences are 'inside' them and I cannot get to inspect them so perhaps they do see the world differently from me, and therefore mean quite other things by the words they use - I use red for this kind of colour, but someone else means 'green' by it. The language is now private in the sense of being inaccessible to me - I cannot find out what experiences people use words to identify and so I cannot learn to use the words to identify the same experiences as they do.

Wittgenstein's undermining of the private language argument involves him in trying to re-establish just what the private language argument has denied, viz, that if we use words in the same way, then we use them to mean the same thing. The question of what kinds of experiences we have when we use a word is one which Wittgenstein wants to maintain has nothing to do with the question of its meaning. If he can persuade one of that, then one need not take the step that the skeptic needs us to, of supposing that the facts relevant to settling the question of whether we use words in the same way are 'within' us and hence concealed from our fellow creatures. Wittgenstein therefore initiates

a campaign against the idea of 'the inner' which gives the skeptic the crucial toehold, and his campaign against that is often quite mistakenly understood to be a campaign against the existence of the things -like thoughts, feelings, images in the mind's eye and sensations, which we think of as being 'inner occurrences.' He is, therefore, often understood to be teaching a kind of behaviourism which says 'there is only conduct, there is no inner life' but this is flatly wrong and results from failing to see what argument is required to counter the position which he is undermining. Whether we do or do not have sensations is not what is in question, what is at issue is whether the question of their nature is relevant to understanding the meaning of words? Wittgenstein does not want to show that there are no inner events, states or processes, but to show that these are not the basis for our language and that many expressions which appear to refer to 'inner processes' do not in fact do so.

He is, therefore, at pains to show that there are many psychological 'processes' which are not accompanied by and do not require any inner occurrences or identifiable experiences. Thus, we read in Investigations 165-71 that reading does not involve some event or process going on in our minds, and Wittgenstein tries to show that we do not find anything going on inside us when, as we are invited in 171 we

'just read a few sentences in print as you usually do when you are not thinking about the concept of reading and ask yourself whether you had such experiences of unity, of being influenced and the rest as you read. Don't say you had them unconsciously! Nor should we be misled by the picture which suggests that these phenomena come in sight "on closer inspection". If I am supposed to describe how an object looks from far I don't make the description any more accurate by saying what can be noticed about the object on closer inspection.'

Since the temptation to treat all psychological phenomena as consisting in, involving or being accompanied by some inner events or processes is a strong one and requires much and persistent rooting out, Wittgenstein naturally throws his weight behind showing that the appeal to inner things is often misplaced and that they do not play the part of explaining or otherwise making more intelligible the way we do things. To sustain this position there is no need for him to deny that there is anything to what we might call 'an inner life'. Holding

(a) that it is mistaken to try to deal with everything in terms of a dichotomy of 'inner' and 'outer' and that

(b) 'inner' occurrences are of little relevance in understanding the

nature of meaning of language and that, therefore,

(c) there would be language even if human beings had no inner lives is very different from saying

(d) there are no phenomena of the sort that are colloquially spoken of as 'inner' ones.

The passages concerning 'understanding' and 'how to go on' which begins in paras 138-151 and which is picked up again in 179-84 are directed against the supposition that to understand something (to know what a word means, to see how a formula is to be continued) involves some kind of event or feeling, consists in something specific happening 'within' one. 153 says

'We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding which seems to be hidden behind the coarser and therefore more readily visible accompaniments. But we do not succeed; or, rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all those cases of understanding - why should it be the understanding?

and just to reinforce the point, in 154 it is clearly indicated that the point is not to deny that there are mental processes, but to contrast those which are properly to be identified with mental processes and those which are not, however much it might seem that they are things which seem to be suitably so called. 'Understanding' seems to be just the sort of thing that could be rightly called a mental process, but it is not:

'Try not to think of understanding as a mental process at all.... In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.

(A pain's growing more and less; the hearing of a tune or sentence: these are mental processes.)

Hence, there is no need to feel that the private language position is to be defended because it is the bastion of an inner life, the alternative to which is acceptance of some form of behaviourism. Wittgenstein is not concerned either to give things to us or to take them away from us, he is not trying to rule things in or out of existence, he is trying to get us to see their significance somewhat more clearly, as clearly as we can.

The argument against the private language position is given its pivotal statement in Investigations 206 -7 where we are asked to

'suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them, and so on?

Let us imagine that the people in that country carried on the usual human activities and in the course of them employed, apparently, an articulate language. If we watch this behaviour we find it intelligible, it seems "logical". But when we try to learn their language we find it impossible to do so. For there is no regular connexion between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions; but still these sounds are not superfluous, for if we gag one of the people, it has the same consequences as with us; without the sounds

their actions fall into confusions - as I feel like putting it.

Are we to say these people have a language: orders, reports and the rest?

There is not enough regularity for us to call it 'language'.

It is the emphasis upon regularity that is most important in this passage, but that is not a point which is to be taken as being directly against the private language argument, but as one which is, initially, shared with it but which can then be turned against the idea of a private language. A language is not a set of random sounds, assorted yelps which emanate from creatures in the course of their activities. Sounds which comprise words-in-a-language (whether it is to be private or public)

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are used with regularity, are used 'the same way' on different occasions.

~~HERE~~ The argument is, then, that a private language is possible, that a speaker can use words in the same way on numerous occasions and yet the regularity which is involved in this cannot be detected by ~~others~~^{anyone} than the speaker.

The place in which to cast doubt on the private language is just ~~here~~, by suggesting that if only ~~the speaker~~ one person uses the words, then

there is no way in which that one can be sure that they are used in the same way on different occasions and that, indeed, it becomes pointless to ask whether or not they are used in the same way at different times?

The private language argument against its plausibility, we have already suggested, from the picture of how words are used to mean, one which links it to our inner experience. Thus, it seems possible that I can use the word red to mean a colour of a certain kind quite consistently, but can never ascertain if someone else uses that word for the same kind of colour because I cannot check whether they experience the colour to which ~~I~~ I refer by 'red' as looking the same as it does to me.

For arguments sake, Wittgenstein grants to the private argument language much that it would seem to require. Thus, he is prepared to consider, as he does in Investigations 257 what it would be like if one could sharply separate 'inner' and 'outer' in these matters and thus to ask

'What would it be like if human beings showed no outward signs of pain (did not ~~give~~ groan, grimace etc)?

The point of granting that, however, is to consider the consequences:

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in 258 we are asked to

'Imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. - I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. - But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. - How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation - and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. - But what is the ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be. A definition surely seem to establish the meaning of the sign. - Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. - But "I impress 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".

The objective of the next phase of our discussion must be to 'unpack' this particularly dense and critical passage.

W The question is; how does a speaker give a determinate meaning to a sign? A sign is to 'stand for' a certain sensation (and we will not worry about any difficulties there might be in that idea) but how is it to do this? The idea of a diary is a tempting one because it makes it look quite straightforwardly simply associates the sign with the sensation, writes it down when the sensation first occurs. Now one has established the connection, ~~but~~ Nothing could be simpler. Could it? But between what and what has one established the connection? What kind of a sign and what kind of a sensation are being associated here? ~~The~~

The point of the diary exercise is not simply to make a unique association, to record the one occasion on which that sign appeared, it is rather, to lay down some rules of use, to make a connection between this sensation and others like it, others which we might even call 'recurrences of the same sensation' and thus to lay down connection between this use of the sign 'S' and other, subsequent uses of it to record recurrences of the same sensation.

The difficulty here is that in setting down "S" in the diary when the sensation occurs we have not set down any rules for subsequent use of the sign "S", we have ~~not~~ devised no basis for settling the question of when, in the future, the sign is to be used again and hence we have not settled the question of which sensation the sign was being applied to.

Wittgenstein, as is well known, made much of the comparative character of the notion of 'the same' and of the point that when we want to say that two things are the same the accuracy or otherwise of our judgements will depend upon the standards according to which we are using ~~the~~ the word 'same'. Thus, if we ask some children to go out and find three things each of 'the same' colour, when we are teaching them basic colour vocabulary, we may send them out to find three red things and be happy to count maroon and scarlet as 'the same' but if we send someone out to get some materials which are 'the same' colour as the curtains, we shall be highly unlikely to tolerate the fact that they are also 'red' as sufficient to ensure that they are the same colour. We shall want the same ~~the~~ colour here to identify the same shade of red. The simple making of an entry in a diary with the intention of making that same entry whenever the same sensation recurs does not amount to a resolution of the question of when we are to use the word again.

~~Now~~ Suppose that a sensation occurs and we place the ~~mark~~ mark 'S' in the diary, we have made an association of the sensation and the mark but have we therefore given the mark a determinate meaning, is it genuinely in use, here, as a sign? If so, what kind of sign? Is it the name of the

sensation for example, and if it is, of which sensation is it a name? Is it to function as a proper name, such that this sensation is called 'S' the way that my dog is called 'Dog' or is it a ~~name~~ name in the sense of being a common noun, such that it is the name of a sort of sensation, usable for many different instances of a kind, in the way that 'cat' is the name for the kind of creature I saw in my garden last night and for plenty of other animals? After all, if 'S' is the name of that sensation which occurred at the same time as the entry in the diary then will it be a word with only one use. Will that sensation ever recur? For even if we are using 'Sp' as a proper name, we leave open the problem of how 'S' is to be used as the proper name of a sensation. We have an idea of the use of a proper name such that only one specific dog is to be called by it, 'Dog' is the name of one identifiable dog (at least as far as we are concerned); other people's dogs may also be called Dog, but that does not bother us unless there is some danger of our Dog and their Dog getting mixed up. Such is not the situation with ~~a~~ the use of proper names for sensations however, ~~because~~ and so we have the question, even if the word is meant in this individuating, title giving proper name sort of way, what is it being given to? Which sensation is being singled out by it?

Suppose that a sensation, something like an itch occurs in my left arm at exactly two p.m. on the afternoon of Thursday the 14th May (setting aside all the problems arising from the fact that the one thing we haven't done in the case under question is left any room to make such definite suppositions). Nonetheless, suppose.... The sensation occurs, the sign is entered in the diary. What does the sign stand for? Does it stand for the something like an itch ~~sensation~~ occurring in my left arm at exactly two p.m. on the afternoon of Thursday the 14th May? Because if it does then we certainly shall not have to worry about fixing the further use of the expression 'Sp' because there won't be any. There will not be any more sensations of something like an itch at that time (and perhaps place, in the lecture room on the third floor whilst talking to a third year undergraduate class etc). ~~But~~ However, presumably what we are after is not sounds that memorialise solo occurrences but something like the names for things that do occur in our ordinary language, and so we are putting down the sign 'S' as a sign for a certain sort of sensation; Still there are questions: what sort of sensations, one's that are something like an itch or ones that are something like an itch in the arm - is it their sensation character or location or both that our name is to single out? And if we say that it is that 'something like an itch' feeling which we intend to single out, just how do we identify subsequent occurrences of the same kind - must it be exactly like ~~the first one~~ in its feeling-quality, exactly like the first one to count as the same - and

in a moment we shall want to ask, and exactly how did that first one feel? - or could it be somewhat like it? And how different could it be before we decided it wasn't the same at all? Is it to be very like, but a little different from the first one, or can it be somewhat similar and still sort of itchy but quite a bit different from our first one?

The question of what the sign is to mean (even in our private vocabulary, even taken as referring to an inner experience) is, then, a question which is inseparable from a question as to how it is to be used and thus from questions about the rules of use.

The individual, imagined to be keeping the diary, is not associating a ~~word with~~ sensation with a sound, but is actually attempting to introduce or initiate a pattern of association, a pattern which involves the use of the sound in a certain definite way, ~~and~~ (in this case, to refer to a certain sort of sensation). The ~~xxx~~ diary example seems plausible because ~~we~~ at all only because we presume that the sign 'Sp' would have a determinate meaning, and our difficulties begin when we ~~x~~ try to specify, to determine, what ~~these~~ that meaning is. Part of Wittgenstein's strategy is, then, to ~~top~~ undermine the idea that one could simply set up a ~~word~~ word with a definite meaning, without having to assign it some rules of use.

Hence, the gist of the passage is that the 'association' of sign and sensation is empty, that the making of the entries is a kind of ceremony, an ~~idle~~ ceremony in the sense of something idle, without real point. For one cannot pick out the sensation? How does the diarist individuate it? ~~Crucial~~ Crucial to the idea that a successful association of ~~word~~ sign and sensation has been established is the requirement of consistency of use, but one cannot arrange for subsequent consistency with a first use which is not itself determinate. If we have not established, for our first use, some rules which govern it and subsequent uses, then we have not used that sign in a definite way on the first occasion, have not really used it as a sign at all. ~~Wittgenstein~~ Wittgenstein brings out the 'future oriented' aspect of our efforts to establish the association; But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future.' Since, however, the question of just which sensations are to be identified by the sign have not been addressed, let alone settled, there is no basis on which we can be said to succeed or fail in using the sign 'in the same way' on subsequent occasions.

One might say, when the sensation occurs and I make the mark 'S', I know what kind of sensation I am trying to identify and I will be able to recognise the same sensation, one that feels to me just like it, or enough like it,

to be able to say, that's the same sort. I am the judge of my sensations, of which one is like which other one? and the difficulties that Wittgenstein is trying to introduce are one's which are not really there. I identified the first sensation and I will just be able to tell when others like it come along?

On what basis? On the basis of memory, I will remember that first sensation and will recognise a more recent occurrence as being like it? But isn't memory fallible, isn't it possible to make mistakes, to recall things wrongly? ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ to ~~mistake~~ leave one with vaguenesses and uncertainties of recollection. Isn't it possible, on the one hand, for one to make a mistake in recollection, to remember something with considerable confidence as being a certain way and yet to be, for ~~one~~ all one's confidence, wrong? Isn't it also possible to find oneself uncertain; one does not remember the sensation all that well, one cannot now really say just what it was like, ~~just~~ whether it really was just the same as this or something significantly different.

~~Notice~~ It is no use saying, but one's memory isn't wholly fallible, one doesn't always make mistakes. Wittgenstein wants to say, one can only make mistakes where it is possible to tell the difference between making ~~xxxxxxxx~~ doing something right and doing something wrong and, in the case of the diary, one does not have any means of telling the difference. All that one has is; one's memory, The sensation has been and gone, it is some time in the past, one cannot take that out and compare it with the present sensation, one can only compare the present sensation with the recollection of its predecessor and one's memory of that is what it is, but is it right or wrong? The only thing one could test it against is one's recollection, but that is precisely what needs testing in this case and so one can only say; this seems right to me, this seems the same sensation as I had on a previous occasion to me. That, of course, may be quite right, this does seem to be the same sensation, one feels strongly that it is the same sensation but that is not what is at issue: the question is, is it the same sensation? Well it seems to be. But is it? There is no way of knowing. Hence, there is no way of checking whether one's usage is consistent from occasion to occasion or whether one's memory ~~x~~ is playing one false and one is acting in a quite erratic way, ~~xxxx~~ doing something quite different on one occasion than one has on ~~xxx~~ the previous one, and something yet again on the next.

Notice, Wittgenstein is not saying that one is making mistakes, that one's memory is deceiving one, he is saying that it makes no difference because it can make no detectable difference and therefore the whole issue of consistency

cannot arise.

What about the diary. Isn't that of any use? One has, after all, made entries into the diary, one has recorded 'S' when that sensation has occurred. No, it is no use, for the diary may be intended to record the occurrence of the same sensation (and hence might tell one on which days - March 14th, May 6th, July 19th etc) one had felt what one supposed to be the same sensation, but the diary does not record the sensation, only the fact of its occurrence and the entries in it presuppose the reliability, the consistency of one's recollections. One might well end up with a puzzle. One opens the diary and finds 'S' entered there. What is it for, what was one putting it down for. One cannot really remember. Was it a certain sort of sensation, which one, might it have been this... The diary is of no real help. It would create the same problems as one's marginal notes in books do. One has put an exclamation ~~mark~~ mark, there by the side of that paragraph. One reads the paragraph but cannot now see what it was about it that led one to make that exclamation. One can read the ~~paragraph~~ again and again and try to remember, and one can perhaps begin to see, from the paragraph, that back then one would have been ~~shocked~~ by such an idea, the exclamation mark is a sign of amazement and disapproval - but one's memories simply are not strong, one cannot really recall what it was meant to draw attention to. The same goes for the sign 'S', it does not dispense with our need to rely on our memories, cannot serve - as diaries often can - to record what we shall otherwise forget. In this case, since the sign is 'private' one whose meaning is (again overlooking all the objections) determined only by a resolution on our part, one whose meaning depends upon our capacity to recall what that resolution was, something which there is no assurance we can do (correctly).

The ~~■~~ treatment of words in a language has, then, insinuated the idea that ~~they are~~ for them to be words with a definite meaning is for them to be words which are used in the same way on ~~the~~ different occasions, and that he further been used to implicate that the regularity is of a ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ 'rule following' kind. ~~The~~ It is not that we use a word and that we happen to use it in the same way on some next occasion and again, at a later time, it turns out that we use it again in the same way such that, after a period of time someone inspecting our pattern of usage could detect the similarities between them, could find that our usage did in fact exhibit a pattern. Recall, after all, that in the 'private language' case the whole point is that no one else could possibly discover or detect the

pattern we were following - this is like the ~~philosophical~~ case of the alien language in supra. ~~Next~~ Wittgenstein is suggesting that it is integral to the idea of using a word on one occasion that one is, on that occasion, using it in the same way as one will on others, using it now in accordance with a pattern that will govern this and subsequent uses and that, therefore, in introducing a new word one is introducing a pattern of use, laying down intentions for some sort of future use.

But can't the speaker of the private language have some intentions as to future use, can't that user introduce 'S' with an intention to use it in the same way on future occasions. But in what does that intention consist, in what can it consist; in having some feelings of determination or ~~something~~ something of a similar kind, certain sorts of feeling associated with the writing down of S.

~~The~~ If the example of the entry 'S' into the diary has been accepted as adequate for the presentation of a private language argument, then Wittgenstein has done what he was warned about often in philosophy. When, in conjuring, the conjuror asks someone to check that everything is normal and above board, one can be sure - he says - that the decisive move has already been made, the steps necessary to deception have already been taken. Wittgenstein, by getting the example of diary keeping accepted as a basis for seeing how the 'private language' argument could work has succeeded in showing that the diary example is much too bare for it to do for the introduction of a word in a language. ~~We~~

~~Really~~ Wittgenstein's aim is not to suggest that language is impossible, but to suggest that it is impossible on the basis ~~of~~ of the terms the private language will allow. ~~W~~ There is no question that we have a language, and that we are able to introduce new words but that is because we can do so much ~~more~~ than the private language speaker - we are not confined to simply having feelings and other 'inner' occurrences - we can take action in the world and can rely upon things other than our own feelings to do this. We can indicate an intention to use a word in a certain way because we are not confined to ~~have~~, the making of private, inner resolutions, to having intentions in the form of feelings ~~and~~ of determination, because we can plug the pattern of use we are trying to introduce into the language that we already speak and that we share with others. We can specify our intentions for the use of a new word, we can specify the rules that ~~are~~ to guide its use. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that we can say in so many words what the pattern of use of a word is going to be. It means, rather, that we can give to others examples of the kind of use that is to be made of it, that they can see the force of those examples, can grasp how they are to be applied

and can be checked out by others for our subsequent consistency in such use. ~~Giving~~ 'Giving a rule' for the use of some new expression such as 'red' does not mean saying (for example) hereafter the word red will be used to refer to that colour which, viewed under normal light, by normally sighted persons is given by the light of wavelengths... 'Giving a rule, in Wittgenstein and Winch after him, might ~~x~~ consist in ~~giving~~ someone a sample, one would give someone a rule for the use of red by giving them a sample of the colour and saying 'I mean this kind of colour by the word 'red'. Thus, one can lay down intentions for the use of ~~a~~ word by giving a sample and, perhaps, showing how that sample has to be used, to comprise a proper usage - one might want to use that sample in the context of contrasts with other samples to show which colours ~~would~~ and which would not be so called. One thus lays out one's intentions, to use the term to cover these but to exclude these colours...

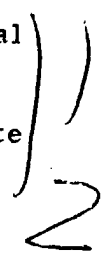
The diarist in our imaginary example has no way of forming intentions for the use of the sign 'S', ~~the simple expression of forming~~ but the making of the first entry in the diary cannot, if it is to name a sensation, be made without an intention to go on using that sign 'S' in a certain way, but the making of it in conjunction with the sensation cannot provide such an intention.

We bring out this point because it does enable us to show, for other purposes, what is meant by 'following a rule' in Wittgenstein's writings, and that way that that involves no more than the use of words in a way the capacity to make uses of words which are such as can show, can example, to others, the pattern ~~of~~ with which that word can be used. ~~Thus~~ The analogy with chess pieces will, as so often, do very usefully here.

The bishop in chess is used 'according to a rule', i.e. when playing chess one moves the bishop in certain ways, it is used in a patterned fashion. When one plays, one moves the bishop diagonally over varying numbers of square of the colour on which it is placed at the start of the game. One's movements of the bishop do not follow the specific moves of any previous player, one makes those moves in the light of the requirements of the game one is playing, in strategic placement of the bishop in this game, but one does move the bishop in the same way, i.e. diagonally, on squares of its colour, as all other competent players of the game do. When one is teaching someone the game of chess, however, one does not have to take someone through all the possible moves with the bishop, ~~nor~~ nor does one have to give them some elaborate verbal instructions in ~~what~~ - what the moves that can be made are. One can show someone the pattern of


movement, the rule for the use of the piece, simply by giving them a ~~concrete~~ demonstration of how the bishop can move, pushing the bishop along a couple of diagonals, the moves being made being offered and understood as exemplary of the kinds of moves that the piece can make. We can perform actions which can be taken by others as demonstrations and which are understood not as making a specific move, performing a specific action but as showing the pattern of use. We need not therefore think of 'rules' as in any way mysterious or as being elaborate and implicit instructions.

~~ONEXXSIDXMXSTXINEXXXFYMMENIXXXXMBENXNEXIXXXIXXINENXTN8~~ The attack on the private language argument has indicated, then, that it is problematical (at least) as to whether a speaker of such a language would be able either to lay down rules for the use of expressions in it or to discriminate between rule following and rule breaking uses of words in the language and thus whether there would be any difference between a private language and a series of random yelps. Surely enough, if the sounds were a pattern of random yelps, without any consistency, then surely enough they would not be possible to be learned by anyone else, but there would not be enough consistency/regularity in their use for them to qualify as a language. Keeping it private means it doesn't comprise a language, maintaining that it is a language will make it hard to maintain that it isn't private, that it can be learned by someone else.



The remaining obstacle to the case against a private ~~is~~ language in this context is the connexion of terms in the language with inner experience. Inv 293 takes this up: 'If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain means - must I not say the same of other people too?' The privacy of language results from ~~the~~ the privacy of what it talks about, the inaccessibility of my experience to anyone else, the inaccessibility of their to me. But, 293 continues,

'Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. - Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. - But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? - If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box ~~would~~ has no place in the language ~~game~~ at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. - No, one can ~~not~~ "divide through" by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.



. That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.'

The conjuring move is made with the word 'beetle', for that is a word which, in our ordinary language, has a determinate meaning, is used as the name for a certain kind of creature. Hence, the 'beetle in a box' case seems to give us a paradox, because people are seen as using the word in the same way, to refer to the creature in the box, but Wittgenstein is suggesting that some of them might be using the word and there might be nothing at all in the box. However, this is presupposing what ~~is~~ to be established, namely the meaning of the word 'beetle'. We ~~cannot~~ cannot take it over from our ordinary language and use its meanings there, for the question is whether it does have a determinate meaning and what that might be? ~~There is, in this case, to be allowed~~ There is, in this case, to be allowed enough regularity in the use of the word 'beetle' which is used as a name for whatever is in the box, but we have to establish ~~just~~ just what the word means. How are we to do that?

By considering the way that the word is used, by seeing how the speakers use the word in the language, - we can ~~accept~~ accept the example if we can allow that we can see from their behaviour, from their actions, how they are using the word 'beetle', as a name for the thing in the box. But, if they are using the word 'beetle' as a name for 'the thing in the box' and yet each has a different thing in the box, then they do not mean the same thing by the word 'beetle' so presumably it would be, in the way that 'pain' or 'red' might in our vocabulary, something different for each speaker, i.e. its meaning would be private, and the thing meant would be inaccessible to anyone except the speaker. We cannot look in the box.

But all that we have established ~~is~~ that the word is used to mean 'whatever is in the box', we have not established that it is used to mean 'this kind of thing that is in the box.' The word beetle, as we normally use it is employed to apply to a certain sort of creature, and so if someone were to say that they had a beetle in a box ~~then~~ and it transpired that they had nothing in the box then they would indeed be misusing the expression, but in our imaginary example it is not established that the word 'beetle' is used to refer to a definite kind of creature by any of its users, all that has been given is that it is used to refer to whatever is in the box, and that might be nothing at all. It does not, in that context, matter what is in the box for it makes no difference to the ways in which the people in the language community talk to each other.

But surely the way in which the people talk to each other must be affected by the nature of the thing in the box? If they have different things in the box, then surely that fact will make a difference? But if it does

if it makes a detectable difference then the thing in the box will no longer be private, others will be able to discover what kind of thing it is, and thus learn how the speaker is using the word, what kind of creature it is naming.

Notice that we are also allowing, here, that it has been established that the speaker is using 'beetle' not as a proper name, as the name for my particular creature, in which case there is no problem arising from the fact that the creature in my box is something different from the one in yours. We are taking it that each speaker is using 'beetle' on the assumption that they are using it to name the same kind of thing as other people call 'beetle' (as it is our assumption that we use the word 'pain' to mean the same kind of sensation other people call pain.)

Allowing, then, that the speakers are using the word 'beetle' intending it to mean a certain kind of creature, ~~but with~~ each supposing that everyone uses it to refer to the same kind of creature but, in fact, everyone having different sorts of creatures in their box, Wittgenstein's point is that these differences would show up, people would ~~realise~~ realise that the things in the box were different, that they were not using the word for the same things. But how, since the beetles are kept private? ~~Private only~~ Private only in being kept from public view, from the gaze of others, but not thereby being insulated from the world outside the box. If there is some kind of creature in the box, then each possessor of a box will have to make some arrangements for the interaction between the creature and the outside world, will have to provide for the feeding, cleaning, health, reproduction of his creature, they have to respond to and provide for the needs of the creatures in the box. But if the creatures in the box are all different, then their needs will be different, their ways of life will be different (for that is what we mean by them being different kinds of creatures) and what will do to feed one will not do to feed another, things that will be healthful to someone's creature will be harmful to another's, the ~~waste products~~ waste products they create will be different and by examining what goes into and what goes out of each other's boxes we shall be able to establish that there are differences, and what some of those differences are - that one is carnivorous, this one is herbivorous and so on, we shall be able to determine, by enough examination of the behaviour of the caretaker what the nature of the creature is (except for what it looks like, but identifying creatures by what they look like is something ~~valuable~~ valuable only where we can see them). Indeed, we might even go further and suggest that with ~~the word 'beetle'~~ a community organised

in that way, teaching someone how to use the word 'beetle' would give little, if any place, to the fact that one can see the thing in the box, that one can look inside it, one could learn about the word and its meanings just as well by examining how other people used it and related to the things in their boxes, ~~xxxxxx~~ and the fact that one could see into one's own box would not give one a 'privilege' of any sort ~~over~~ others,

The word 'beetle' used as a word in a language would not simply be used in isolation, it would be used in conjunction with other words in the same language and part of the way we use a word, part of its pattern of use, is its combination with other words in that same language. We do not, if we use the word beetle, ~~xxxx~~ do no more than exclaim 'beetle' every so often, we produce sentences featuring the word 'beetle' such as 'I've just given by beetle a plate full of chips' and thus the differences, if they were differences, between our individual beetles would show up here too, in the ways we talked about them:

'I think I'll go and let my beetle out for a ~~xxxx~~ walk,'

'Oh, I could never do that, it would probably fly away'

'Mine can't, it doesn't have wings' ~~etc.~~

~~Again, if the xxxxxx~~

Applied to the case of 'pain', then, ~~xxx~~ the supposition which is the 'conjurer's move' in the private language argument is that 'it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain" means', which sounds like a reasonable one because I am the one that has, that feels, my pain, but why should we suppose that we learn the meaning of the word pain on the basis of our feelings alone, any more than we need, in the end, suppose that 'being able to look at the beetle' is any kind of advantage in or basis for the people learning how to use the word 'beetle' in the imaginary example?

It is important to repeat that Wittgenstein is not trying to stand things on their head and to suggest that the fact that we feel pain, that each of us can have painful sensations, is wholly irrelevant to our use of the word pain. His objective is, of course, to establish that there is no reason - contra the skeptic - to suppose that we have different sensations when we have painful sensations. We learn our language because we have the same sorts of sensations when certain things happen to us, we learn the word 'pain' and use it ~~in~~ in the same way because we feel the same things when kicked, pinched etc. ~~xxxx~~ but we are not taught the use of the word pain solely by having the word associated with our sensations. To teach someone what kind of thing a pain is we might well, as Wittgenstein suggests, prick him with a pin and say "See, that's what pain is" (though he does also suggest that we might explain the

word by gestures, but the use of the word is not confined to our own sensations, for it is quite normal for us to say of others, 'He's really hurt' or 'he's ~~writhing~~ writhing in pain', or ~~that~~ 'that kick was agonising' and part of our learning how to use the word pain is learning how to apply it to others, to their ~~behaviour~~ behaviour. We see someone strike their thumb with the hammer, seize the hand in the other, blow on it, tuck it between their thighs, put the thumb in their mouth, double up and roll their eyes and we say 'Wow, that's hurting'. ~~We see someone strike~~ We are often taught the use of the word pain ~~by~~ not by our own sensations, but by relating it to other people's actions, we are taught what pain is by being told it is what we feel when we are kicked, pinched, bitten etc and to say of someone that the pain they must be feeling is so intense that it is far greater than anything we have ever experienced, that we cannot imagine quite how that must feel.

The idea that the word 'pain' is used from my sensations alone is misleading, because the word is used to ~~describe~~ ^{apply} the reactions of others and the ~~sensation~~ learning of ~~the word~~ how to use the word pain in the same way as others is learning, therefore, to apply it to the actions and circumstances of others which are, themselves, quite public, so that we can check the consistency of our use with those of others. This does not entitle anyone to ask as in § 307

'Aren't you really a behaviourist in disguise? Aren't you at bottom really saying that everything except human behaviour is a fiction?'

and in 304

"But ~~surely~~ you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain-behaviour accompanied by pain and pain behaviour without any pain?" Admit it? What greater difference could there be? "And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a nothing." Not at all, It is not a something, but not a nothing either! ~~The~~ conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said.'

The emphasis upon learning to apply the word 'pain' and other sensation words on the basis of the ~~behaviour~~ of others is not to be construed as a kind of behaviourism, since what we are learning when we are learning to apply the word pain on the basis of the ~~behaviour~~ of others is not to describe their behaviour but, of course, to describe what they are feeling as that is shown by the way they are behaving. There is all the difference in the world for us between (say) ~~writhing~~ a footballer rolling and writhing on the ground in agonising pain, and a footballer ~~writhing~~ rolling and ~~writhing~~ writhing on the ground having taken a dive and just faking pain, and it is a difference that not only exists but a difference which we can tell.

A great difference between Wittgenstein and a behaviourist, is that the behaviourist supposes that the relation between the 'behaviour' and the 'sensation' is an inferential one, that we can observe the behaviour but only infer (guess at) the sensation whereas Wittgenstein does not acknowledge that situation at all, we can watch someone's suffering, as we do when we watch their writhing; we do not see someone writhing and wonder if they are suffering (though we may in some cases we do not generally do this), rather we see that they are writhing-in-suffering and there is no need for inference here. The behaviourist position is a great aid to the skeptic because the skeptic can find room for doubt in the inference that the behaviourist makes: the person can be seen to be writhing, but we have to infer (guess at) what they are feeling, and we might, might we not, infer wrongly, might guess wrongly? But, this is the kind of thing that goes on in the imagination of philosophers and social scientists, not in the real life of people and when we see someone's suffering we do not doubt, we do not infer, we react without hesitation, thought or question:

Inv 303: just try - ~~x~~ in a real case - to doubt someone's ~~xxx~~ else's fear or pain.'

If there is not merely a real difference, but all the difference in the world between 'pain behaviour without the pain' and 'pain behaviour accompanied by the pain' and if people can simulate pain behaviour, how can we be sure they aren't ~~simulating~~ always simulating?

From their behaviour, but if their behaviour is simulating pain? The behaviourist view again misleads, it gets us to look on 'behaviour' much too narrowly, as though we were enabled only to observe the writhing and rolling of the footballer and to decide whether or not he is in pain but we are not restricted thus, we can observe the flow of his conduct and the context of the rolling and writhing, can see what happens to him before and after the falling - ~~did~~ was that really a vicious kick that was given him, did the boot make contact at all, is he quickly to his feet and running on as though nothing had happened, does he limp for the rest of the game. Seeing something happen to a person which would really hurt and seeing them then giving off pain behaviour there is no room for doubt but that they are in pain - seeing people, for example, suffering from advanced cancer and denied pain killing aid and behaving as though they were in intense pain we shall have no question as to whether they are in severe pain.

Of course there is room for doubt, ~~xxxxxxx~~ in some cases, there are things which hurt someone but surely not so much as the reaction of this person, all this screaming and yelling, would suggest - perhaps they are putting it on. Again, on the football field, we can't quite see what happened, whether the boot did make contact, and the player on the ground is

notorious for his theatricals..Such occasional doubts are a long way from the systematic ones that the skeptic would invite us to feel.

The conceiving of the problem in terms of a relation between 'inner' and 'outer' creates the problems from which the private language problem arises, and one finds oneself faced with those who, like the protagonists of the private language argument, want to give primacy to the inner or those whom, like the behaviourists, want to give ~~exit~~ to the outer and one appears, therefore, condemned to ~~waxerxxbetweenxthexxixw~~ choose (or waver) ~~hexidexixw~~ between those two sides of the argument but Wittgenstein does not see why one should accept these terms.

~~The~~ Both sides of that argument take it that the only connection between inner and outer is that provided by our guesswork, our inferences, and they may not -very likely will be -unsound. Both ~~thexpxxix~~ those who favour private language and behaviourists agree ~~x~~ that we cannot know what connection there is between our using of sounds (words) and their meaning (the inner mental content that they have) which is why, of course, behaviourists want to leave 'meaning' out of the picture altogether.

Wittgenstein declines to choose sides on those terms. There is a connection between our sensations and our behaviour which is not inferential, for it is an organic one; we human beings are ~~apab~~ capable of learning language from one another because we have a good many common responses, because we react to things in the same way. We are apt (with some rare exceptions) to feel the same sorts of things when treated in the same sort of way, and if kicked, bitten, pricked, we are likely ~~m~~ to feel the same thing, to feel pain, and to react by giving off 'pain behaviour'. ~~ixix~~

Our pain behaviour is not an outward sign or ~~index~~ of our sensation of pain, it is part of our reaction to hurt and injury. When we are, say, burned we do not feel a pain in our hand, but snatch the hand away from the pain- to feel this and act that way is part of our natural reaction to certain kinds of circumstances. We do not have two reactions, one that of feeling a sensation, the other that of moving our body in a certain way, but only one - that of feeling-a-stabbing-pain-in-our-stomach-and-doubling-over-in-agony, or that of feeling-a-sudden-pain-in-the-side-and-gasping-with-hock. @

Our pain behaviour is not, then, something that we are taught, it is part of our natural response to discomfort and hurt, it is something we see in children before they have language or even before they communicate to any significant degree with other humans - if we pinch them, drop them or otherwise injure ~~them~~ we shall find that they react by screaming and howling ~~and~~ making the most awful din. When we hear the crying start in

Behav. Monism,

the garden we rush out to see which of the children has hurt themselves, ~~and we~~ We do not learn, are not taught, these reactions to pain and when we begin to learn language we are taught to control these natural reactions, to stop crying and screaming and howling and to replace them with verbal responses, to say 'I've got a pain' or 'My leg hurts'. ~~and~~ Thus the learning of the vocabulary of pain is absorbed into the pattern of our natural, organic, human reactions to circumstances and hence the word 'pain' is not to be thought of as ~~having~~ having a primarily descriptive function, used to name a certain sort of sensation but, instead, to be thought of as having an expressive use, much more akin to the cry or scream - ~~it is~~ "It hurts" isn't a description of a sensation, it is ~~itself~~ itself an expression of the sensation, a part of our pain behaviour, as in 'Oooh it hurts' or 'God, that stings'. This is not to say that we can't use pain to describe a sensation, there is a slight pain in my ankle' but it is to say that it does away with the problem of how it is that we can learn to use the word pain in ways that ~~are~~ are the same as those of others, for ~~our~~ our learning of how to use it is tied up with the training of our responses, we are taught when to say 'My leg hurts' rather than just scream and one's natural responses to ~~pain~~ pain circumstances are not inner and unobservable, but outer and observable and we can be shown when to use the word relative to those circumstances and responses - thus, when we fall down and start to cry, we are picked up and told 'There there, it doesn't hurt, see, there's nothing hurt, there's no scratches, it's all right, there's no need to cry.'

There are other problems which are connected with a private language, but these are ones which arise in connection with the related problem of 'following a rule'. We have discussed, above, the skeptic's queries about the way in which language is used to mean, relative to the problems of consistency in usage, and we have indicated that for an individual to use a word in a way which is consistent enough to be called a word in a language is to use it with enough consistency for someone else to discover what the pattern of use is, what kinds of circumstances will legitimate its use, and therefore that the emphasis upon the inwardness of experience is not enough ~~to~~ to justify the idea of the inaccessibility of meaning. The skeptic has ~~another~~ another possible line of argument which is this: though one has detected some consistency in the pattern of behaviour, can one be sure that one has detected the right pattern? A person uses a word in a particular way, goes on in a certain fashion, and one thinks one has picked up from them the pattern, but what is to ensure that they will not, on the next occasion, that they use that expression, go off in a completely different

direction? They may, so far, have used red for this, that, and the other, but what is to ensure that tomorrow they won't suddenly call that green lamp 'red'? These issues have to do with questions about what is involved in following a rule, and are the occasion for separate treatment.