

IX*—WITTGENSTEIN AND PHYSICALISM

by James Hopkins

What makes 'I think' or 'I am in pain' true? Descartes, articulating an ancient idea, said it was the existence of a thought or pain, recognised in the mind of a person. Here the mind or soul was designated by 'I' and the pain, for example, by 'pain.' At least in part, these linked ideas of truth-condition, mode of verification, and word use remain with us to the present: for the view that, say, 'pain' designates an item I recognise when I truly say 'I am in pain' is one towards which anyone even today must feel a powerful inclination.

Wittgenstein said that philosophical problems arise through misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by assimilation of the working of forms of expression (e.g. 'I feel X') in differing regions of language. Correlative with these assimilations are misleading pictures or imaginative representations of the use of words. Wittgenstein refers to one such misconception concerning the use of words for the mental when he says 'the great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something I couldn't do. As if there really were an object, from which I derive its description, but I were unable to shew it to anyone.' (374) As reference to the other contexts in which this idea appears makes clear, for Wittgenstein to derive a description from an object meant to take the description from the object in accord with a rule, to 'read off what you say from the facts . . . according to rules.' (292) His example of a paradigm case in which we do this—and to which we inevitably, but mistakenly, assimilate self-ascription of the mental—is the case where we recognise the colour of something, and would be able to enforce the giving of the description under which we recognise it by reference to such common rules for the use of words as are exemplified in a colour chart. Thus I take the force of

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Wittgenstein's 'object' in these contexts to be partly conveyed by 'object to a concept applied in recognition.' The conception of mental items as such objects I shall call the recognitional conception. And in Wittgenstein's account we are gripped almost beyond reflection by the recognitional conception, in accord with which we construe sensations as objects of recognition in construing the self-ascriptive use of words for mental items as if this were comparable to the use of words for items we perceptually recognise.

(For example consider 290, where Wittgenstein says 'What I do is not, of course, to identify my sensation by criteria, but to use the same expression again.' Here Wittgenstein expects his reader to agree that ~~he does not recognise the sensation by criteria~~; but to disagree, in supposing that there is in the language-game something as it were between this and simply using the same expression again—something like *recognising the sensation straight off* (like a colour patch, not on the basis of criteria) and taking the description from this. Thus Strawson's well-known reply,¹ accusing Wittgenstein of confusion—that a sensation may be 'quite certainly recognisable or identifiable in itself. Only of course one does not use criteria'—exemplifies adherence to the conception.)

The assimilation seems natural. As regards the mental we are able, without investigation, to say what is true of ourselves: if we did not compare this to the capacity to make true perceptual statements, we should lack account of it. And it would be expected we should take the use of other words on the model of ones which are centrally important, and which we learn to use first. It seems so plausible: just as I recognise an object as red, and apply the word; so I recognise a sensation as pain, and apply the word. Indeed it seems we hardly know how to deny our practice is the same in both cases. So we construe matters as Wittgenstein says. Austin,² for example, trying to say only what is utterly self-evident, tells us: 'Any description of a taste or sound or smell (or colour) or of a feeling, involves (is) saying it is like, one or more that we have experienced before: any descriptive word is classificatory, involves recognition and in

¹ *Philosophical Review*, 1954.

² "Other Minds", *P.A.S., Suppl. Vol.*, 1946.

that sense memory'. Here the assimilation Wittgenstein wishes to resist comes explicit and complete, and seems so natural and obvious as to be part of a truism.

Evidently the structure of objects and practices by which we characterize our recognitional use of colour words is not observably comparable to that for mental words. In the latter case we use the body and actions of a person to indicate publicly what makes a description true or appropriate; but these things are not, as in the case of coloured objects, the purported objects of recognition. Of course we ought to be able to give an accurate account of our use of words here, whatever our natural impressions about the matter. But with the picture of the soul and what it sees, Wittgenstein felt that the pull of the inappropriate physical paradigms towards which we gravitate was almost irresistible. He speaks of 'the grammar which tries to force itself upon us here'; and feels it necessary to recall that 'being unable—when we surrender ourselves to philosophical thought—to help saying such-and-such; being irresistibly inclined to say it—does not mean being forced into an *assumption*, or having an immediate perception or knowledge of a state of affairs.'

We may at the outset be tempted simply to refuse to countenance Wittgenstein's characterization and rejection of the recognitional conception. It seems to me that almost every critic of his thought has in one way or another done so; and it is difficult to accept that deep and puzzling questions should be rooted in misconstructions concerning common and long-familiar words. But the matter bears examination. And surely the worst reason for rejection, and one showing a failure of self-knowledge, would be a simple unaware compliance with the conception, a compliance which served to put it beyond examination. Really to examine the conception, I think, is to see that it is to be rejected. Whether we can effect the rejection in our own thought, given the tenacity of the conception, or whether it can be replaced by a more satisfactory account, is so far a secondary matter.

Now we can sketch the role of the recognitional conception in the problems of mind, and specifically the problem of other minds, as follows. We take it we genuinely recognise our sensations, so that when we recognise a sensation as pain we thereby establish that it is a pain we recognise. We are inclined

also to hold that we recognise our sensations independently of our behaviour or bodily state. For the recognition is based on nothing but the sensation, and the idea is not, as it were, that a person recognises his sensations *in light of* his behaviour or what happens in his body. And of course we assume we can establish the occurrence of behavioural and bodily events on their own, by examination of the body and nothing else. From this it follows—and hence we are inclined to assume—that sensations are logically independent of behavioural and bodily events, in the sense that although a certain sensation or kind of sensation may occur together with a certain behaviour or physiology, it is logically possible that either should occur without the other. For if *X* can be established to occur independently of *Y*, it follows that *X* occurs independently of *Y*, in the sense that it is logically possible *X* should occur and *Y* not; for if not, it would not be possible to establish that *X* had occurred without thereby establishing that *Y* occurred, and so it would not be possible to establish that *X* occurred independently of *Y*.

Or again, without (Cartesian) play on 'establish': we think that we so recognise our sensations that, given a sensation, we could recognise it whatever was assumed about our behaviour or bodily state. Thus even if events presently connected with a certain sensation were not to take place, we could still, given the sensation, recognise it; or, given the occurrence of those events without the sensation, acknowledge its absence. And it is clear that to think this it to take the sensation as logically independent of the behavioural or bodily events connected with it.

Finally, this consequence seems almost contained in such philosophical expressions as 'recognition based on nothing but the sensation,' 'recognition of the sensation itself,' of the sensation alone,' and so forth. Here the function of 'nothing but,' 'itself,' 'alone,' seems to be to exclude, and hence imply independence of, behaviour and body. The very articulation of our philosophical representation of self-ascription seems to imply the logical independence of sensation.

Thus the idea of recognition as the mode of verification of 'I am in pain' plausibly carried by assimilation of the use of 'pain' to that of words like 'red,' yields a conception of pain as an object of recognition logically independent of behaviour or body. But once we assume this, it becomes necessary to learn,

and impossible to find out, how sensation is in fact related to behaviour or body. Hence problems of mind-body relations, and other minds.

For, first, if sensations are logically independent of behaviour and body, they cannot be identified with them, or, plausibly, with anything physical. For plainly a thing cannot be logically independent of itself. This effectively rules out any account of the soul or pain in terms of identity with the body and its states. And this suggests that the 'John' and entails that the 'pain' of 'John is in pain' designate, if at all, items possibly substantial in themselves, which are non-physical items. And the relation of these to the rest of the world must then be investigated.

Secondly, if sensations are thought of this way—as recognised by the person who has them, but occurring in logical independence of his behaviour or body—it will follow that they are private, in the terms in which Wittgenstein introduces private language. Each person's sensations, that is, will be known only to him. Each may know his own, since he recognises them; but no one will have knowledge of anyone else's. For the only possible ground of this knowledge would be the other's behaviour or bodily state, and this could not suffice as a ground if sensations were logically independent of it. Thus the investigation necessitated by independence cannot, in virtue of it, take place.

For if two things are logically independent, we can regard the occurrence of the one as evidence of the other only in so far as we have reason to regard them as related in some evidential way. We can have reason for this only if it is possible we should find them to be related in this way. But it would not be possible for one person to find, regarding another, that sensations of a certain recognised kind were related to anything in his behaviour or body, since nothing relevant could be investigated besides this latter. (If *X* and *Y* are logically independent, so that we cannot know *a priori*, but must find out, how they are related; then if we can investigate *X* only, we cannot find out, and so cannot know, how they are related. So we have no right to assume, and cannot come to know, whether *X* bears evidentially on *Y*.) Nor would one person's belief, regarding his own case, that a recognised kind of sensation went with something in his

behaviour or body, provide a reason of significant evidential weight for the extrapolation of the correlation. For the belief would in any case itself stand in need of verification, and its extrapolation to other cases would require justification by the same kind of evidential support as would an assumption *a priori*.

This last point will stand illustration. Suppose the world were all black and shades of grey, as on old-fashioned television. Each of us has a dispenser of playing cards, which last varying lengths of time, and which he cannot show to another. The cards, like everything else, are grey on the outside; but almost every one has, on the inner face, a coloured patch; and each of us responds in certain ways to each inner face. Thus seeing my red card makes me want to cry, green to jump up and down, and so forth. We play various games with these cards, some involving pretence, each always looking only at his own cards. Among ourselves we call them, say, 'the crying card,' 'the jumping-up-and-down card,' etc.; but for each of us the important thing about a card will be its inner face, since among these are the most vivid things we see. Now one may wonder whether his crying card is like others; not, of course, in respect of being a crying card, but in respect of inner colour. One might suppose it is, on analogy with his own case; but no doubt he would regard it as quite possible that it should be different, considering there is only one case to go on.

This is a meaningful piece of reasoning, since we have assumed a basis for it, in saying cards had colours and prompted behaviour; and the conclusion is verifiable, since it merely happens that we do not look at anyone else's cards. Now suppose, overcome with curiosity, we do. We could find them all the same; or we could find, not only that different person's cards were typically quite different, but that some had apparently blank cards where we had coloured ones, or cards coloured like ours, to which they responded quite differently. At this some might say 'How surprising,' while others said, well, they always knew the evidence was pretty slim, and did we think we had known all the kinds of cards there were, and so forth. Here it seems to me both responses would be appropriate. The evidence clearly was pretty slim, and slimmer in the example than it may seem to us, since we have reason absent from the example to suppose that colours have constant causal

connections. But since that was all the evidence, what was there to do but go on it, and leave yourself in for a surprise when the hands were shown?

Now we can describe our use of the word 'pain' by saying we use it to ascribe a pain, *X*'s pain, to each person *X* to whom we ascribe pain (and analogously, for other sensation words). We therefore have no use for sentences purporting to ascribe *X*'s pain to *Y*, or, comparably, the same pain to *X* and *Y*. So we can say a sensation concept is particularly instantiated, with regard to each person to whom sensation is ascribed. In the recognitional conception, this appears as the familiar idea that no one can recognise another's sensation, or that this is logically impossible. Very clearly we should not make the evidence in the example any stronger if we tried assuming that things were as described, only it was logically impossible anyone should look at another's card. This would rule out surprise at the end, but that would not strengthen the evidence one whit.

And really the effect of this assumption would be to put the coherence of the argument in question, and thereby to weaken the evidential support of the conclusion. We could not interpret the conclusion as verifiable, nor regard the quality of the cards as analogous to colour. Rather, a special and epistemologically intractable quality would have to be postulated. So the evidential and analogic situation would be more dubious than before, where the evidence was weak enough: although since the game cannot end we should now be stuck with nothing but this dubious evidence, which might lead us (mistakenly) to attribute great weight to it.

On this view, then, no one can have significant evidence regarding the recognised kind of another's sensations; so sensations are, in the sense of Wittgenstein's remarks, private. (And just as no real evidence bears on the recognised kind of another's sensations, so none bears on their existence; so the step to a more radical scepticism, or to solipsism, is already prepared.) Further, since the recognitional conception represents the particular instantiation of sensation concepts as private recognition, the privacy accorded sensation appears as necessary, and hence deeper than could be enjoyed by anything physical. (Whence arguments that the privacy of sensation is inconsistent with physicalism.)

So the recognitional conception, with its implication of logical independence, can rightly be seen as a main source of the problems of the mind-body relation, and of other minds. And we see it as this source in a continuous line of philosophers from Descartes, who held that he recognised the items in his mind and could imagine their existing while his body did not; through to Kripke, who takes pain as 'picked out by the property of being pain itself, by its immediate phenomenological quality,' which item and quality we can envisage instantiated apart from any bodily or behavioural state. In both philosophers—and many in between—the recognitional conception explicitly supports the implication of independence (in Descartes the connection is argued in some detail): and we have seen reason to think the implication valid.

(In Kripke this is expressly linked to an account assimilating the first-person use of sensation words to names more generally: 'pain' designates pains, the reference fixed by their phenomenological quality. Thus Kripke "construe[s] the grammar of sensation on the model of 'object and designation.'" The objection is not to the notion of rigid designation, which seems, indeed, one of Kripke's notable contributions to our understanding of meaning. But the claim that we use 'pain' by connection with something introspectively recognisable goes beyond the abstract semantic description to an account of the actual practice of using the word, assimilating it—without warrant—to the use of words for perceptually recognisable items. We are familiar with the fact that there are different techniques for measuring; so we should not assume that if two measurements were of length, they must have been effected by similar techniques. No more does the fact that two words designate, or rigidly designate, or refer, imply that the practice of using them is further to be assimilated.)

Thus if correct this reasoning would show how the problems of mind are rooted in language, and why they have such immediacy and depth. We feel that sensations are independent, that their nature is privately grasped and so there must be a serious problem of other minds, because this is consequent on an idea we have prior to reflection on the matter. Or again we ought, if conceptually sensitive, to feel these things, because they are already involved in the way we are unreflectingly

inclined to represent things. Hence the intractability of these problems, and the superficiality of solutions proposed for them. (This is why Wittgenstein's discussion, which opens with the ostensibly technical and unacceptable notion of someone's 'immediate private sensations' which are 'known to him alone' yet strikes the reader as dealing with something with which he is somehow already familiar. And why persons other than philosophers commonly feel it a source of puzzlement and wonder, whether what they see in seeing something red is like what another sees, etc.)

And of course the problems in the idea of recognised and hence independent and unknowable mental items catch as severely in scientific as in philosophical thought. Thus Skinner says '... the act of self-observation can be represented within the framework of physical science. This involves questioning the reality of sensations, ideas, feelings and other states of consciousness which many people regard as among the most immediate experiences of their life.'³ By contrast, if Wittgenstein is right it is not the reality of these states but a way of representing description of them which is to be put in question. And it would be ironic if we were unable to acknowledge investigation of the mental as part of physical reality, because without investigation we assimilated ascription of the mental to description of the physical.

We represent our understanding of our sentences partly in terms of our capacity to link their use with what makes them true. To take it we may use this important class of sentences ostensibly to state truths without the possibility of significant evidence of any relation between what occasions their use and what would make them true, seems close to taking it we use them incoherently. For this reason as well, alternative accounts of what makes them true—e.g. behaviourism or physicalism—have seemed desirable. But we see these alternatives are blocked: the first, by the truism, reasonably interpreted, that 'Jones is in pain' is true in virtue of Jones's being in pain and nothing else; and both by the interpretation of this truism in terms of the recognitional conception and so the logical independence of sensation, which implies that Jones's being in

³ 'Critique of Psychoanalytic Concepts and Theories,' *The Scientific Monthly*, V. 79, p. 305.

pain cannot consist in anything behavioural or physical. For as a thing cannot be logically independent of itself, so a truth-condition cannot obtain independently of the item whose ascription it is supposed to verify.

This conception thus leads to an account of the situation and sentences to which it is applied which is entirely unsatisfactory, and also effectively blocks other accounts based on our observable practice of judgment. (And of course, by extension of metaphor, it yields a series of other ideas about sensations (that they can be shared, exchanged, exist apart from a possessor, etc.—like the cards in the analogy) which are unacceptable.) Clearly this is not so bad for the mental, or for our knowledge of it or our sentences describing it, as it is for the recognitional conception itself. After all, it is visibly supported by nothing but our impulse to credit it, of which some explanation has been given. And it was supposed to be a representation of the use of these words, not a device for rendering that use unintelligible. This impression is reinforced and deepened by specific consideration of Wittgenstein's discussion.

I think Wittgenstein is most readily seen as addressing himself, not solely to the recognitional conception, but to a view of ascriptions of sensation which he takes as an expression of the conception, and which conflicts with his own principles concerning meaning. The view, approximately, is that ascriptions of sensation have a public or common sense, so that we can communicate in using them; but nevertheless they refer, in the case of each of us, to something distinct from public circumstance and hence known to him alone. Ascriptions of sensation, that is, have public sense, private reference.

This view of sensation was made particularly explicit by Frege. In 'The Thought' he stresses two points between which he sees no inconsistency: that the senses of our sentences are public, while the content of sensations, images, etc., is private. He says, for example, that a publicly understood word like 'red' would have no public use if the conditions for its application were given by the nature of a person's sensations, since 'it is impossible to compare my sense-impression with that of anyone else.' But he does not ask how, if this is so, the public sense of words describing sensations is to be maintained.

Elsewhere he argues that expressions with the same public use will have the same sense, despite differences in private referents.

Wittgenstein's approach to public sense, private reference is foreshadowed in the remark which serves as a transition from his discussion of rules to his discussion of sensation.

If language is to be a means of communication, there must be agreement not only in definitions, but . . . in judgments. (242)

This suggests that for two persons to communicate (mean the same) by use of a word '*w*' it must be possible for them to agree in judgments about *w*'s, or at least judgments logically connected with these. So the referents of '*w*' must be objects of public judgment. It would follow that persons could not communicate by words which referred to private objects, or to items independent of public circumstance. So the idea that sensations are independent or private would be inconsistent with the idea that we attach a common sense to sensation words.

Although such a conclusion is specifically not drawn by Frege, it follows on a line of thought naturally associated with him. If the sense of a sentence is given by the conditions in which it is true,⁴ and these are taken as the conditions in the world which, if they obtain, would make the sentence true,⁵ then for 'Jones is in pain' to have a public sense will just be for it to be made true by public conditions, that is, to have public truth-conditions. And this is flatly inconsistent with the idea that what makes it true is the nature of the referent of 'pain' where this is independent of public circumstances, or something which can be known only to Jones. Nor would this inconsistency be avoided by an agreed definition, in accord with which 'pain' was to designate what a person had (which was independent or private) when some public condition *C* obtained, say in his behaviour or body. For if 'Jones is in pain' were true in virtue of condition *C*, no item independent of this would play any role in determining the truth of the sentence. And then 'pain' would not describe or refer to any such item. For to say that '*F*' in a sentence '*. . . F . . .*' describes or refers to an item is to say that the truth of '*. . . F . . .*' depends upon

⁴ Frege, *Grundgesetze*, 1.32.

⁵ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 4.024, 4.063.

the nature or existence of that item; which is denied, for any item independent of *C*. So again, the assumption of a public sense for ascriptions of sensation is inconsistent with a recognitional or Cartesian account of their use.

And it is evidently the point of the Cartesian account that no behavioural, bodily, or other public circumstance makes 'Jones is in pain' true, but rather the nature of Jones's sensation, which is independent and privately recognised. So clearly this account must acknowledge private truth-conditions for ascriptions of sensation. And if public conditions relating to the use of 'pain' are considered, these will be taken as derivative from the private sense, or as constituting a distinct public sense. Thus it may be suitable to introduce a public word 'pain' for the privately recognised sensation which accompanies pain-behaviour (or certain events in the body), whilst holding that the truth-conditions of ascriptions of what is designated by 'pain' are given by private experience, so that the sense of the ascriptions remains private.

Taking the analogy again: we assumed, to ensure communication, that the cards were named through connection with observable behaviour. But suppose also that each of us (innately, and only to himself) can use colour words just as presently for their inner faces. These inner ascriptions would have private sense, since they would be true in virtue of the (undisclosed) colours of the cards. Now it may be that although we do not show our cards, everyone has a crying card, and takes himself to recognise the colour of its inner face. We may introduce a word '*S*' for this, so that it figures in our games that a person says 'I have an *S*' meaning that he has a card with the inner colour of the crying card which he connected with '*S*' when the term was introduced. Here again, any ascription of *S* is true in virtue of an undisclosed colour, so we have private sense; but also we have a mutually agreed characterization of the truth-conditions of these ascriptions, namely that a sentence of the form '*X* has an *S*' is true just when *X* has a card with the colour had by the crying card by means of which he introduced '*S*.' (We could imagine a stronger alternative, in which truth required that the same colour accompany introductions generally, so that there would be not only common characterization of, but agreement among, private truth-conditions.

But then the question whether one person had the same as another when both truly said 'I have an *S*' could not arise.)

I think this models the feeling of public sense, private reference associated with the recognitional or Cartesian conception; and also a situation of agreement in definitions without agreement in judgments, such as Wittgenstein mentions before discussing sensation and privacy. The inconsistency mentioned above between public sense and private reference is here sustained: for we have private reference and private truth-conditions; and instead of that notion of public sense, we have only public characterization of the role of the private. (We can see, further, how an impression of public truth-conditions might be generated. For first, a public characterization of private truth-conditions might be taken for public sense. Secondly, behaviour initially fixes reference to the colour designated by '*S*'; and while '*S*' in 'I have an *S*' is used recognitionally, in 'He has an *S*' it must be used as it were blindly, on the basis of behaviour. This may suggest that behaviour alone determines the reference of '*S*', and hence also effectually determines the truth of ascriptions of *S*. The ambiguities inherent in the situation are compactly illustrated in the sentiment 'I take 'pain' to refer to whatever, if anything, goes with his pain-behaviour.')'

This may partly describe the stress between the central ideas with which we are concerned—the recognitional conception and the fact that ascriptions of sensation have a publicly determinable use—in the idiom of sense. Of course this is not the later Wittgenstein's idiom; and, as noted, we no more represent the *use* of an expression, with which he was mainly concerned, by giving its sense, than we elucidate the actual technique and practice of measurement, by giving the length of a thing. Still, Wittgenstein may be said to hold that ascriptions of sensation have no other sense than is involved in the public conditions of their use. For Wittgenstein took the idea of a private use—or sense, or truth-condition—for ascriptions of sensation to be a grammatical illusion, arising from the interpretation of the facts of their legitimate public use on the recognitional model.

This implies that the idea of a private use for sensation words is not self-sufficient; it will live only as parasitic upon their

public use. There follows a strategy for demonstrating this. The two uses will be distinguished, as in the card example, by introducing a word for each. Then once the private use is considered on its own, it will be seen to be misconceived. Wittgenstein mentions this strategy in the *Blue Book* (72-73); he carries it one step further in the *Investigations*, where for purposes of argument the conditions of the public use of the word are assumed abrogated, so that the private must stand entirely on its own.

In this way Wittgenstein sets out to examine a conception of ascriptions of sensation when he asks whether I could use a sensation word privately, that is, in a situation in which there was nothing which would enable others to ascribe the sensation to me.

But suppose I . . . only had the sensation. And now I simply *associate* names with sensations, and use them in descriptions.

We know Wittgenstein argues that a person could not, in these circumstances, set up a connection between a word and a sensation; he could not in this way fix the reference of 'pain.' Many philosophers disagree with him on this, and I think the first reaction of almost everyone is to disagree. But this reaction betrays attachment to precisely the assumptions I have been setting out as those against which the argument is directed. For surely to hold that I could associate a word with a sensation which was without concomitant in behaviour or body will be to hold that I recognise the sensation and that it is logically independent of behaviour and body. So to disagree with Wittgenstein at this point is implicitly to adopt a position fraught with difficulty, and which could fairly be characterized as Cartesian. Thus Wittgenstein's presentation of the argument provides for the selection of those who cleave to the preconceptions against which it is directed.

The argument moves by a very simple step. Wittgenstein notes that someone attempting to use an expression in this way must do something which

brings it about that I remember the connection (between sign and sensation) *right* in 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 just means that here we can't talk about 'right.' (258)

Wittgenstein is here employing the philosophical method he speaks of elsewhere, testing an idea about the use of an expression by consideration of a language-game in which it stands out simply and clearly. Part of his point is radical, and has proved difficult to grasp.

We can perhaps approach it by recalling that the meaning of an expression is determined by the use persons make of it, and what a person means by an expression by the use he makes of it. We have common practices of use of expressions, which enables us to communicate by means of them; and a person's use can be judged as correct or incorrect by reference to common practice, which imposes upon a use the natural constraint that it should suffice for communication. Thus a person does not mean what we do by 'add 2' if despite other evidence of mathematical competence he thinks it right to apply it in a range of cases by adding four; and such a use, because not in accord with our practice, would be incorrect. Clearly nothing determines the meaning of an expression of which one person is essentially the sole user but his practice in using it. But then nothing could be brought to bear upon such a practice to determine whether it was correct, and it would not be constrained as is the practice of using a communicative expression. For with an expression used in communication, there is the possibility of a contrast between the use a person makes of it, and its correct common use, which serves as a constraint. But in the case of the essentially sole user, there is no possibility of contrast, and so no constraint.

Suppose, at some time after the ostensive ceremony, the diarist has some very different kind of sensation, and writes down his sign 'S.' Are we to say that in these circumstances he would, unknown to himself, have misused the sign; or that unknown to us this shows that the kind he meant to define included this sensation, since it *seems to him similar enough* to the original? It is not that there is an answer to this question, which we are unable to give; rather there is nothing in the case in which an answer could consist, either for us or for the diarist. For—as Wittgenstein urges in his other remarks on meaning and the mental—nothing in the ostensive ceremony, or in his mind at the time, or in the intervening period, could somehow reach ahead to determine what was to be the correct

use in this case, or in other cases. So it seems this is undetermined, and consequently that no course of action with the sign constitutes its correct use. (Of course the diarist may *say* that each use is as was originally intended—but this may be inferred from the fact that he made the use, and could hold equally, whatever his use happened to be. For of course, whatever seems right to him will be judged right: and this is not, on the face of it, what we mean by 'right.')

No doubt we have not got, prior to the contemplation of such an argument, a formed idea of where we can and cannot talk about right in the use of words. But given that 'S' can be used in any way consistent with the user's impression that he is right, and that no possibility of contrast with anything else exists, it seems that a person could no more plausibly claim that his use of such a sign was constrained as the use of an ordinary word is, than he could claim his movements were constrained by the condition that he had always to go where his shadow might follow. There may be a notion of constraint here, but it is not the common one, nor one that could reasonably be regarded as adequate, for example to our idea of correct description or correct recognition as of a kind. So I think Wittgenstein's point carries; although even if it did not, that would provide no justification of the recognitional conception which it locates, and against which it is directed.

We may wish to say that we ourselves would know the correct use of the word, so that comparison with our use (except that comparison is not possible) would show whether the diarist's use was correct. But clearly, any appeal to our own use here will be irrelevant or circular, depending whether it is to our public use—whose correctness is not in question—or to a purported private recognitional use, which is in the same case as the diarist's.

This illustrates the way the private use is incoherently but tenaciously parasitic on the public. For the thought behind the appeal must be something like: our capacity for the private identification of pain lies behind our public use of 'pain'; and since this is correct, so also are our inner recognitions. (Since we are not in the diarist's isolation, but can talk publicly about our sensations, we can better rely on our judgments about them.) But in this conception the fact that my public

use of the word is correct can give no support to my quite independent inner recognitions; just as in the card example my recognition of red is independent of my crying or of whether others also have crying cards. And further, to take the private recognition as made correct by public circumstance is really to do away with the notion of recognition entirely. For if something public makes the recognition correct, it must follow, either that the purported recognition is of this public thing, which it is not, or that there is no recognition.

Correctness and truth are especially closely connected in the self-ascription of sensation, although they do not seem entirely independent in other cases. With some kinds of sentences we associate two ranges of conditions: those that make their use correct, and those that make them true. Thus if I say something is red, because of a visual impression of the kind typically caused by red things; or that someone is in pain, because he behaves as if he were: then even if what I say is false, the sentences will have been correctly used nonetheless. Indeed my making such false statements may as well exhibit my capacity to use the sentences as would my saying what was true in other cases. Here what is shown is the *ability* to use the sentences to make true statements; so that to use a sentence correctly can still be said to be to use it in a way reasonably expected to result in the making of true statements. And here also the conditions of correct use are regarded as closely (causally) related to that in virtue of which the sentence would be true. But with self-ascription, the link between correctness and truth is even closer. For there is no possibility, analogous to that for other sentences, of my trying to make a true statement about my sensations and failing, but in such a way that the failure gives evidence of my linguistic competence.

Rather it seems that if a person is in pain, but thinks he could not express a truth by uttering 'I am in pain'; or is not, but thinks the utterance would express a truth; this constitutes *prima facie* evidence, and evidence of the strongest kind, that he does not use 'I am in pain' correctly. This is to be interpreted as showing that the same condition which determines the truth of self-ascriptions—arguably the having of the sensation—also determines their correctness. If (as will be argued) this is a physical condition, then a form of physicalism is true, and

Cartesianism and the recognitional conception false. Yet this same grammatical fact, unacknowledged, is felt as part of the recognitional conception itself, in the guise of the philosophical ideas of the indubitability, incorrigibility, and self-intimation of ascriptions of sensation. For the fact that the same condition determines both correctness and truth yields that *if* I use 'I am in pain' correctly, then if I think I am in pain, this is so, and if so, I think it. And taking our ability to use ascriptions correctly for granted, we may then interpret this in terms of the recognitional conception, as the sureness of the recognition or the vividness of its object.

So the alleged inner recognition cannot be made veridical by public circumstances; but only by construing our public use recognitionally can we hold to the idea that the inner recognition is to be regarded as correct. The next stage of Wittgenstein's argument can be read as directed against this misconstruction. For having, as it were, abrogated the public use, to reveal the alleged inner use in isolation as illusory, Wittgenstein now replaces the public use, but points out that the addition of public conditions in no way legitimates the notion of inner recognition.

Let us now imagine a use for the entry of the sign 'S' . . . now it seems quite indifferent whether I have recognised the sensation *right* or not. Let us suppose I regularly identify it wrong, it does not matter in the least. (270)

In terms of the stress I have been placing, the point might be put: if I don't recognise an independent sensation on its own, when the public conditions for employing a concept are assumed lacking, then no more do I recognise such a thing when these conditions obtain. So, finally, I do not recognise such a thing at all. My correct use of 'I am in pain' is therefore not to be understood in terms of recognition, or my identification of something private.

The argument as so far described is to the effect that the recognitional account cannot satisfactorily be applied to the use of words for sensations. Wittgenstein argues distinctly that application of the account would be self-frustrating. For the account is meant to relate the public and communicatively used word 'pain' to those objects, pains, described or referred to in its use. But the word can describe or refer to no such objects

as, on the recognitional conception, pains are. So the objects whose importance it is the point of the account to stress are, on the account, rendered irrelevant as regards the use of the word.

. . . now someone tells me he knows what pain is only from his own case! 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 has no place in the language game at all; not even as *something*: for the box might even be empty.—No one can '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. (293)

This parallels what was suggested above by consideration of Frege. To review the structure, let us take it in terms of the cards. We have, say, cards which make us jump up and down, called *J*'s, and everyone says he knows what a *J* is only by looking at his own, since he alone sees the inner surface. Then Wittgenstein's point is that we can communicate about these only on the basis that a *J* card is one with which certain behaviour is connected, since this is the only ground for a common practice of description. So '*X* has a *J*' is to be regarded as true in virtue of the effect of *X*'s card on his behaviour, and '*J*' is not a word which describes or refers to inner colour. Colour cancels out logically—not that cards have no colour; but rather that since a card may have any colour or none but still be a *J*, '*J*' does not describe or refer to patches of colour. Similarly, if sensations are inwardly recognised and so private, then the only ground for a common practice of ascription must lie elsewhere, say in behaviour or body. But then 'Jones is in pain' can be true, or conventionally taken as true, without regard to the nature or existence of anything private. And then 'pain' will not be used to describe or refer to sensations: the private objects drop out of consideration as irrelevant.

Thus it appears that for Wittgenstein matters stand roughly as follows: persons mean or understand the same by an expression only if they use it the same way, and can communicate by means of it only if they can reasonably judge that this is so. Communication thus requires the possibility of known agreement in use; and in particular, mutual knowledge of the kind of item designated by a term, since evidently this crucially characterizes its use. It is therefore insufficient for communication to characterize the truth-conditions of 'Jones has *S*' by saying that it is true just when Jones has what he had when he introduced '*S*.' A similar point can be made, following Frege, by supposing that the information conveyed by a statement is that the condition of its truth obtains. Then so far as we cannot know what, if anything, Jones had when he introduced '*S*,' thus far is no information conveyed to us by a statement true just when he has that. It follows that we must regard any communicative sentence as, if true, true in virtue of public circumstances. And this, of course, is how we do treat ascriptions of sensation. For despite the temptation to *represent* our practice in terms of the recognitional conception, we still very evidently take ascriptions of sensation as subject to assessment for truth or falsity by public criteria.

So we have arguments to the effect that, on the recognitional conception, a sensation is something about which nothing could be said: for no item is brought under a concept in a private language, and sentences with public conditions of use do not refer to private objects. Alternatively, nothing is needed to serve the logical role assigned a sensation on this conception in the use of a sensation word. A word used on the basis of no private object will be just as correctly or just as inconsequently used as a word used on this basis, correctness being a public matter. This is not, of course, reason for saying that sensations do not exist, or play no role in the use of sensation words: only that the role they play is not that of the recognitionally described basis of self-ascriptions.

Wittgenstein sums up these considerations precisely

'But 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 do as well as a something about which nothing could be said. We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself upon us here. (304)

The 'again and again' refer to the passages on private language and the beetle in the box. The sensation is not something I introspectively bring under a concept; but the rejection of this—*via* grasping that a nothing would serve as well as such a something, about which nothing could be said—is not the denial that there is a sensation, nor that there is a difference between pain-behaviour with and without pain. And it seems the difference is not understood in terms of an item.

Surely we assume that in any actual case of pain there will be events in the sufferer's body—causally linked, typically, with a place of injury or disturbance, and also with the connected dispositions and behaviours we associate with pain, such as vocal activity and the direction of attention to the injury—distinguishing genuine from, say, pretended pain-behaviour. And here as elsewhere it seems we are willing to accept truth-conditions for our sentences which are, broadly speaking, physical.

This can be illustrated by considering a possible world just physically exactly like ours. That is, to every physical thing, process, etc., in the world, whether we know of it or not, there is to be a physical counterpart in this imaginary world: to every object and position, force and field, for all times, down to the last particle. Clearly such a world would be indistinguishable from ours, by sight or any other means of investigation; imagining it would be just like imagining ours. So in this simply physical world there would be chairs and tables, and rocks and stones and trees; and indeed everything else (physical) with which we are familiar.

To the human bodies of our world would be physical counterparts; to the motions and actions of these bodies, corresponding motions; to what goes on in the cells, nerves, brain, etc., corresponding processes. Now take one of us who at a certain time is in pain—he bangs his shin, things happen in his nerves and brain, he feels pain, cries out, rubs the spot, etc. Consider his

counterpart, who does these same things and in whose body the same things go on, and who remains and acts for ever wholly like the man in pain. I think we must grant that the correspondent, like the man in pain, is a man in pain. And if this is so it establishes, among other things, that what makes it true to say of someone that he is in pain is physical. For if the bodily correspondent in a corresponding world of a man in pain is a man in pain, this can only be so in virtue of the physical matters assumed to constitute the correspondence. And if so, then when we ourselves are in pain, it is in virtue of what obtains physically that we are. For we are, so to speak, perfect physical correspondents of ourselves; and what is encompassed in this correspondence—our physical nature—suffices alone to establish of our bodies that they are the bodies of persons in pain. So if it be asked whether a physical thing could think, or feel pain, we should have reason to reply that the human body was such a physical thing; for we are concerned with the body and its processes, in the whole (but physical) context which gives the physical its significance.

The particular events which verify an ascription of sensation will have that significance in the context of the body and activity of a sentient creature; and similarly in other cases with broader context. Thus consider a game of chess between two of us. There would also be a game between their counterparts. So far as the thoughts, intentions, actions, etc., of our game have place and significance in the context of the rules of chess and the history of the game, thus far the elements of the corresponding game would get place and significance from the physical instantiation of those same customs and history. And similarly for almost every fact (or true sentence) in our world there would be a correspondent. So in the simply physical world there would be societies, customs, laws, institutions, ethics, art: all instantiated in purely physical circumstances, and so in this sense all physical. The same would hold for our world, since apparently between that world and this there would be no difference; so, possible worlds apart, we might as well take that world as ours, or ours as simply physical. The point is just that for things to be truly describable as we describe them, they need only be (physically) as they are. This is sweeping. But I think it is not more sweeping than the sense we have always had that

the world is physical. 'Dust thou art . . .' was said before the soul was thought of.

Any physicalism must hold that the true sentences it treats of are true in physical conditions. It is beside the point here to claim more. Suppose, for illustration, we have the true sentences (presumably scientific ones) describing the physical nature of things, and also those describing its seemingly non-physical nature. The minimal idea here is that the physical world makes both sets of sentences true, as shown by the consideration that corresponding sentences would be true in worlds perfectly physically isomorphic to ours. The classical reductionist claim is stronger—that the physical sentences entail the non-physical ones, i.e. that in *all* possible worlds in which the former are true so are the latter—and we should presumably require some sort of grasp of the sentences in question to evaluate it.⁶ To claim a reverse entailment, or entailments between specific sentences, or synonymies, would be stronger still. So it appears as no objection to physicalism that expressions from the vocabulary of physical science differ in meaning, or lack useable expressive power or focus, as compared with those in humane use.

To say that some condition makes a sentence 'S' true is to say that if it obtains, 'S' is true. Frege and Wittgenstein thought of some such association of conditions and sentences as fixed by convention, and hence of statements of such associations as true by convention. It may be we can approach this idea by noting that it seems a convention of English, for example, that 'Felix is a cat' is true if Felix is a cat; and that this seems a consequence of the conventional connections by which 'Felix' names Felix and 'cat' designates cats.

A sentence may be asserted on evidence not identical with, but bearing on, what would verify it. Such an assertion, unlike one consequent on a condition of truth, would be defeasible

⁶ The stronger claim involves worlds not perfectly isomorphic to this one, e.g. those whose differences would not be fully captured by our descriptions, or which would correspond to different possibilities of development in currently stateable physical theory. This may be only a technicality, since there is no reason to take such differences as relevant to other matters. Hence if (as is false) we could produce or understand relevantly complete physical descriptions of things, it seems we should be more hospitable to the idea of entailment.

without change of convention. Sentences may be introduced on the basis of evidence, on the assumption that this will lead further; or on the basis of examples, or an only partial specification of what would make them true. Here reasons or evidence may take us to new cases, and given our concurrence, bring truth in their wake. Where an activity is a game, for example, it is such that something else relevantly like it would also be a game, even if the relevant likenesses are not spelt out or incorporated in a definition of 'game'. This is not, I think, a defeasible evidential consideration; rather it marks our adherence to the idea that if some activity is to be called a game, there is to be something in virtue of which this is true. Where this is not caught in definitions, it may be reflected in our use of examples or paradigms. Thus it might be said that every use of a true sentence puts in the archives a paradigm (convention) of what makes that sentence true. So I think it is upon such paradigms, as well as considerations of evidential consistency, verification, etc., that we draw when we consider what would be true in this or a corresponding world.

The Cartesian notion of the truth-conditions of ascriptions, as opposed to some such physicalist one, seems to rest entirely upon that recognitional conception of sensation against which Wittgenstein's arguments were directed. Take one of ourselves not in pain, when this was evident in his behaviour and body. On the Cartesian view, although it was not actually so, it is logically possible his behaviour, body, history, surroundings, etc., should have been that way, and as ever after, yet he then have had severe pain. Here it seems the obtaining of the Cartesian possibility could consist only in the presence to his soul of item recognisable as pain, but whose existence or recognition was to go entirely unmarked in the world, including his brain, then or forevermore. Everything (including grounded counterfactuals) is against this; and the assertion that this really is a possibility seems nothing but an expression of adherence to the recognitional conception, and as such is inconsequent. The Cartesian possibility is evidently no more to be entertained than the idea that a cold thing might have been hot without being different physically. We may lack detailed understanding of the physical conditions which verify ascriptions; but neither ignorance nor the recognitional conception is reason to espouse

a possibility, or a notion of what would make an ascription true, which transcends the physical.

The problems of dualism seem superfluous and misdirecting; but if we abandon the position, we require explanation for the phenomena of self-ascription. Here it may be worth noting that to give up the recognitional conception should really be only to assimilate the use of 'pain,' etc., to that of other mental concepts. There is small temptation to interpret someone's saying he believes or intends something, for example, in terms of his having identified something inner which justifies his ascription. Rather we accept that a person can simply use such ascriptions without consulting anything, outside or in; although body, behaviour, and context determine whether what he says is true. Here the capacity to give true ascriptions is evidently to be explained causally, without recourse to any recognised intermediary. This must be true as well for ascriptions of sensation.

An analogy may illustrate the shift in perspective. If the cards in the previous examples were blank, we could still sort them and give them names by connection with their role in the production of behaviour. Here it seems a card itself would be important only as a distinguishable and locatable source of an important kind of causal process. But no item is needed to fulfil this role, so it should be possible for us simply to take areas of our bodies as capable of becoming such sources. Then there would be no objects or phenomenological properties to describe; and the causal linkage which issued in behaviour and sorting could bypass the eyes, so we should relinquish a visual or recognitional metaphor altogether. But it seems that in these circumstances we could still make ascriptions, which could be taken as grouping these unseen bodily processes in terms of causal role, place in life, etc. The sources of these processes, upon which attention was specifically directed, might even strike us as somehow intrinsically like or different, so long as no content was to be attached to this except in terms of what happened physically.

No doubt this is inadequate; its purpose is only to indicate the kind of model of word use we presently lack. The assumption is that in a person who has been taught language there will be a causal connection, but different from that involved in perceptual recognition, between the giving of a self-ascription

and what makes that ascription true. (This would explain features of the situation which made the recognitional comparison seem apt—thus a person would be in a direct contact with what verified his ascription, which enabled him to say what was true; whereas our contact would be indirect, we should be concerned with things in him hidden from view, etc.) I think we assume that some such connection exists, but have as yet no familiar model for it, and do not understand it clearly.

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