

Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* Lecture 11

1. Let us return to the S in the diary argument. Its gist was supposed to be that no 'inner pointing' or incantation of 'S' could make 'S' refer to the inner state. What was further necessary was that the ceremony had certain practical consequences. In particular it had to make available some independent check as to whether I had got *right* a subsequent application of 'S'; and this is unavailable in the private case. But then how is the *public* case any better? If I name my dog 'Fido' how can I tell that on subsequent occasion it is *Fido* that I see? 'Well, you remember what he looks like.' But if I am unsure how do I know with *which* of my many dog-memories I must compare the present dog? If there is a problem about private reidentification then there is also a problem in the public case.

2. This line seems to neglect the fact that when we ask if this is Fido we are entitled to hold fixed our beliefs about other properties of Fido by which we identified him. Thus we can settle whether it is the same dog by asking whether he has the same dental pattern or the same bark—the fact that you can't remember the look of the dog need not call into question your memories about his other properties. But no such scaffolding is available in the case of the private sensation, for in that case there *is* nothing correlated with the sensation other than the way it feels. To this a phenomenalist will retort that things are otherwise: our sensations do come in patterns, so it is open to me to identify S as 'the sensation that is always accompanied by sensation T': and now we have as much of an independent check in the private realm as we ever do in the public one. In that case the argument does establish something: what it establishes is what the Transcendental Deduction establishes on a phenomenalist reading (see the chapter on it in J. Bennett: *Kant's Analytic*). Pears's reply to this (*Paradox and Platitude in Wittgenstein's Philosophy* ch. 3) is that the independent checks need to be *publicly* available. But why?

3. *The Beetle in the Box*. One line of thought in this direction is the famous argument at *PI* 293b. This argument bears a family resemblance to Frege's idea that what he called the idea associated with a term has no bearing on its sense: people could attach different ideas to a term and yet mean the same thing by it, and conversely. Whilst the conclusion—that the thing in the box 'cancels out, whatever it is'—does indeed follow if one assumes that there is no more to a term's meaning than is present in its *public* use, its reliance on that premise makes it impotent against its most obvious target: Locke. Somebody who thought that meaning had an ineradicably private (i.e. *unknowable*) component, and that that indeed was the essential thing that it served to *communicate*, would never have granted the premise in the first place.

4. At *PI* 283a Wittgenstein returns to our ordinary sensation-language (i.e. not a 'private' one) and asks the question 'What gives us *so much as the idea* that living beings, things, can feel?' This launches an extended inquiry whose purpose can be seen in part as a reply to the question of *PI* 281. Wittgenstein is trying to get clear on just how it is that pain-behaviour is related to the concept of pain. He is also trying to get clear on how the feeling itself enters

into the language game of pain; this question) and the analogous one for meaning) haunts the remainder of the book.

5. *PI* 283b suggests some psychological mechanism of *transference*: I recognize pain from my own case and then transfer it to others when they behave in an appropriate way. The answer comes at *PI* 302a. Transference is 'none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I *do not feel* on the model of pain which I *do feel*.' And he elaborates the point at *PI* 350-1 with two more dazzling metaphors ('5 o'clock on the Sun'; 'The Earth is beneath us'). What is Wittgenstein getting at?
6. One reading (see N. Malcolm's paper in *Phil. Review* 1954: 537-8) is that if I learn what 'pain' means from my own case I have learnt what it means as applied to episodes that are *essentially* mine; it is therefore a contradiction to suppose that I have learnt about something that applies to others. This argument is not very convincing, whether or not it is Wittgenstein's. You can learn about the denotation of a predicate ('dog') by attending to instances of it (say, Alsatians) that have certain essential properties (e.g. the property of being an Alsatian). But it neither follows nor is it true that some contradiction is involved in your then applying that predicate thus learnt to objects that do not and perhaps could not possess that essential property (e.g. Rottweilers).
7. On another reading (perhaps encouraged by *PI* 403a) the difficulty is just another instance of the general problem with rule-following: nothing in my particular applications of a word, or my training in it, settles how I am supposed to apply that word to a new case. So in particular if I have only ever applied the word 'pain' to my *self* in the past then there is nothing in that to settle when it should, and when it should not, be applied to *others*. As well as being relatively uninteresting (because it makes out that *PI* 302 says nothing new) this reading is unlikely to have got Wittgenstein's intentions right. For he is quite clear at *PI* 302a that whatever the problem is, it is not the problem of applying the word 'pain' to *my leg* on the supposition that I have only ever felt pain hitherto in *my arm*. But the difficulty about rule-following applies equally in both cases: hence W. must have in mind some further and special difficulty concerning the transference of 'pain' from myself to other people.
8. Now if it is not a difficulty about rule-following then you might say 'What is the problem here? Can't we explain what it is for somebody else to have pain by saying that he just has the same as you have when *you* have pain?' Wittgenstein's answer to this comes at *PI* 350-1. The passage does not point out the special problem with transference but undermines our assumption that it *always* works (problems about rule-following aside). The point is based on a distinction between (a) identity of predication and (b) predication of identity. Sometimes we can make sense of (a) in terms of (b); but in other cases it is the other way around: we use (a) to explain (b). (Think of various cases: statements about the past; ascriptions of tactile and visual shape etc.) And the latter situation is what obtains here. 'For *that* part of the grammar is quite clear to me: that is, that one will say that the stove has the same experience as I, *if* one says: it is in pain and I am in pain' (*PI* 350b).