

WITTGENSTEIN *PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS* LECTURE 11

1. *PI* 283b suggests *transference*: I recognize pain from my own case and then transfer it to others when they behave appropriately. 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 W. getting at?
2. One reading (N. Malcolm: *Phil. Rev.* 1954: 537-8) is that if I learn 'pain' from my own case I learn what it means as applied to episodes that are *essentially* mine; it is therefore a contradiction to suppose that I have learnt about what applies to others. This argument is unconvincing (whether or not it is W.'s). You can learn 'dog' by attending to dogs (say, Alsatians) that have certain essential properties (the property of being an Alsatian). But no contradiction is involved in your then applying that predicate to objects that do not and perhaps could not possess that essential property (e.g. Rottweilers).
3. Maybe the difficulty is just the general problem with rule-following: nothing in my particular applications of a word, or my training in it, settles how to apply it to a new case. So if I have only ever applied 'pain' to *my* self in the past then nothing settles when it should 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 W.'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 arm* on the supposition that I have only ever felt pain hitherto in *my hand*. 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 me to *other* people.
4. W.'s answer is at *PI* 350-1. The passage does not point out the special problem with transference but undermines our assumption that it *always* works. 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. (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).
5. To see what the difficulty is we need to understand something about the evolution of W.'s views on solipsism. In the *Tractatus* he insisted that *something* was right about solipsism (viz that 'the world is my world': *TLP* 5.62c), only it could only be shown. But the self does not appear *in* the world, for it cannot be an object of knowledge by acquaintance or description (*TLP* 5.631, 5.633b-c). The denial of a self in experience is familiar from Hume (*Treatise* I.iv.6); W. endorses this

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in his later work too; but now he diagnoses 'self' as an illusion of grammar.

6. Perhaps the most helpful discussions are the 'geometrical eye' and 'pinball' analogies in the *Blue Book* (63-4 and 66-7). The geometrical eye is what you point to when your finger is aligned with the gradient of its visual size (i.e. you point to it by making its tip grow as visually big as it can as fast as it can). Now as a matter of fact what you point to with this method is what you point to using either tactile or *mirror*-based visual criteria. But these criteria *might* have come apart; and in particular it might have happened that when asked to point at your geometrical eye you pointed only at an empty space above your head. But it is your geometrical eye that you point to when you point to the 'I' that 'sees all this' (the visual field). ' "What is seen / see" (pointing at my body). I point at my geometrical eye, saying this... In no case do I make a connection between what is seen and a person' (*NLPESD* 255).
7. The 'pinball' text starts by distinguishing two uses of the word I: the 'I' as subject and the 'I' as object. The 'object' case but not the 'subject' case involves the possible misidentification of a person: when I say 'I have a bump on my forehead' it is possible that somebody else's has the bump. Now in the 'subject' case this is not possible: somebody who says 'I am in pain' could not be right to think that *somebody* was in pain but wrong about who it was. This is a fact about the *grammar* of 'I' as a subject term. We mistake this grammatical fact for a metaphysical one through the following reasoning: (i) When you use 'I' as object you are talking about an object that you might misidentify; (ii) When you use 'I' as subject there is no possibility of error through misidentification; hence (iii) When you use 'I' as subject you are talking about an object that you *cannot* misidentify. In fact (iii) doesn't follow: 'to say, "I have pain" is no more a statement *about* a particular person than moaning is' (*BB* 67; cf. *PI* 404-8).
8. W. queries the sense of saying that a body '*has*' a self. Both queries appear at *PI* 283c—if you turn to stone whilst having the pain, in what sense can *the stone* 'have' a soul or pain; but then: why think that *anything* is having them? And the query about 'having' also appears in non-sensational contexts: 'The chair is thinking to itself... WHERE? In one of its parts? Or outside its body; in the air around it? Or not *anywhere* at all? But then what is the difference between this chair's saying something to itself and another one's doing so, next to it?—But then how is it with man: where does *he* say things to himself?' (*PI* 361).