

WITTGENSTEIN'S PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT
AND ITS MAJOR CRITICS

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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The responsibility for any shortcomings which will be discovered is, unhappily, my own.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis the various attacks which have been made upon the private language argument are considered and criticized. The private language argument concludes that a private meaningful word is not possible. This conclusion is attacked by Hector-Neri Castaneda who claims that Wittgenstein has not made a fair assumption in regard to the possibility of a private language. This point is criticized by appeals to the nature of rules and the concept of correctness. A. J. Ayer criticizes the argument on the basis of the apparent necessity for recognition in all identifications. Ayer's point is criticized by an appeal to the difference between justification and explanation. Kenneth Stern accuses Wittgenstein of scepticism in regard to memory. This accusation is rejected on the basis of an argument intended to show that Wittgenstein was neither excessively sceptical about memory, nor that he was concerned with the efficacy of memory. A second argument by A. J. Ayer is the Robinson Crusoe argument. This is rejected by arguments which are intended to show that language is essentially a social phenomena, and that interaction is a determinant of meaning. Finally, a number of misunderstandings of Wittgenstein's claim are rejected. This conclusion is intended to trace the origin of the private language problem, and to suggest ways in which it could be avoided by alterations in our view of the way in which a named object is related to its name.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will consist, largely, of an attempt to survey and evaluate various contributions to the debate which has arisen concerning the possibility of a private language. This possibility has been of concern only recently, and the question as to whether a private language is possible is, in itself, not one of the traditional problems of philosophy. One might easily have quite a good knowledge of the history of philosophy and yet have no awareness of the problem. However, since the publication of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, the problem has been considered to be of enough interest to have been the focus of a certain amount of lively discussion. As is sometimes ultimately the case in such matters, the problem seems to have become interesting to philosophers for its own sake, with the consequence that it is sometimes difficult to find any clear indication that it might have fundamental bearings on other, more venerable, philosophical problems.

It was clearly Wittgenstein's feeling that the sort of discussion which he carried out ought to be of interest

primarily because of the philosophical problems to which it was related, and upon which he hoped the work might shed light. We ought, then, to strive to avoid giving the impression that his work was carried on in a philosophic vacuum, and to make explicit, to some degree, the connection which exists between the private language problem and more traditional problems of philosophy. One finds a good, albeit very general, statement of this connection put forward by one of Wittgenstein's more devoted followers, Norman Malcolm. Malcolm notes that the belief that a private language is possible

...is the view that comes most naturally to anyone who philosophizes on the subject of the relation of words to experiences. The idea of a private language is presupposed by every program for inferring or constructing the 'external world' and 'other minds'. It is contained in the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical British empiricism, as well as in recent and contemporary phenomenism and sense-datum theory (Malcolm, p. 97).

This statement, unfortunately, does not indicate in any detail the way in which the notion of a private language is involved with these problems and viewpoints. As a result we may not see exactly how it is related, so it might be worthwhile to try to outline this involvement a bit more fully.

The notion that there is a private language is the notion that there are some words of which the meanings can only be known by the user. In most instances it is the idea that there are some words which name objects or entities which cannot be apprehended by any person other than he who uses the words. One finds it expressed in such statements as "no one else can know what I call 'pain'," and, "we cannot know if we mean the same thing by 'red,' or if we see the same color when we see what we call 'red'."

The path by which one comes to hold views which presuppose the notion of a private language can be illustrated by Descartes' methodological scepticism and his quest for certain knowledge. We find Descartes, then desirous of giving his knowledge more foundations, and doubting all that he was able in order that he might discover the indubitable. In his pursuit of certainty, he finds he can doubt all of his 'knowledge' of the world. He can doubt that anything in the world really is as it appears to him. He is led, then, out of the world and into himself. While he can doubt any statement about the world, he cannot doubt that his mind exists. He cannot doubt that his mind exists

because he cannot doubt that he is thinking, doubting, feeling, or carrying on mental activities in general. He cannot doubt that he is doing these things because, while he is indirectly acquainted with the world through the mediation of his mind, he is directly acquainted with his mind and its modifications. He cannot know, with certainty, what the world is like beyond the reach of his experience (which is, itself, mental) of it, but he can know what his mental activities are like because they are apprehended directly.

But one asks why he cannot doubt the statements that he is thinking, doubting, feeling, and so forth. The reason is, presumably, that he knows what he calls by these names because he has attached the names to the things. He has selected what he will call thought, doubt, feelings, and so on through the list of mental words. These words are private because they refer to entities which are not in the public sector of the world. They are not part of that world which is known indirectly through experiences. Were they of that world they too could be doubted because they would have an existence beyond one's experience. The entities to which the names refer are private to the person who experiences them and who names them.

It can now be seen that the notion of a private language must also be presupposed by the views held by the British empiricists. For here too we find that one's knowledge of the world is indirect while his knowledge of his mental realm is direct. One knows the world through sensation and experience, but not directly. So we find, with Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Russell, that the external world, the world apart from our experiences of it, is known not directly, but by inference from our sense experiences. But these experiences, and mental phenomena in general, are known directly.

Now when one sees that the notion of a private language is implicit in these views, one sees that it must be involved in one persistent philosophical problem which is dependent upon the view that we are locked in our private world of experience. The problem of 'solipsism' and the problem of 'other minds' are directly related to the notion that we know our own mental world, and only our own mental world, directly. The first of these problems can be taken to be a more extreme version of the second. The problem of solipsism is concerned with how we can know that anything exists apart from our minds; the problem of other minds is concerned simply with how we can know there are other mental

phenomena than our own, even if we have some reason to believe in the existence of the external world. I will consider specifically the problem of other minds here because this problem carries the problem of solipsism along with it, and because the private language argument is aimed directly at the former problem.

When we reflect upon the nature of mental phenomena, we are not dealing only with raw occurrences, but with these phenomena as bearers of names. When we consider thought or a sensation, we are considering the bearer of the name 'thought' or the name of the sensation, and the applications of these names. The question "what is thought, really?" can be considered to be equivalent to the question "what is to be termed 'thought'?" These questions, to be answered, must lead to considerations of the bases upon which these names are applied. The problem of other minds is concerned with the basis on which we come to know that minds, and in particular, the minds of other persons, exist. It seems to be derived from certain apparent differences between the way in which we gain knowledge of our own mental states, and the way in which we gain knowledge of the mental states of others. We know with certainty that we think, understand, feel pain, and so forth. We can 'observe' ourselves thinking, our pain

is there when we have it. Further, we know from our own experiences that any of these mental states can be present in us without our giving any outward sign, and we know that we can simulate them when they are not present. Since we can conceal them or simulate them, any outward expressions of them are contingently related to the mental states themselves. Now if the public appearances of mental states are logically independent of these states, we seem to have good reason to doubt (or at least, no good reason to assert) that other minds, and mental states other than our own exist at all. For if one can appear to be in pain without actually being in pain, it is logically possible that there could always be the appearance of pain without pain. This conflicts, of course, with what most of us (including philosophers) are willing to believe. But one ought to believe that which seems best founded, and not simply that to which he is inclined to assent. So the problem of other minds demands some sort of solution.

As a result of the foregoing, we are led rightly to the idea that the mental and the physical represent two distinct sorts of phenomena. However, along with the notion that they are different and distinct, we carry the idea that their names function, and that applications of these names

are justified, in the same way. We focus our attention on the fact that our knowledge of activities in these two realms (the mental and the physical) is of different sorts. In our own case we can often simultaneously 'observe' both sorts of activities. We can feel our pain while watching our agitated gestures which are associated with the pain. We find the two different realms presenting different and distinct aspects to us. So we arrive at the picture of the mental and physical realms as being of different sorts, in fact, but as being, logically, of the same sort. They are pictured as running parallel to and apart from each other but still involving the same logical status, with the words referring to and describing each functioning and being applied in fundamentally the same way. But then we must somehow explain how much different worlds can influence each other as they indeed appear to do. We find, then, that the mind-body problem too is based intimately and involved with the notion of a private language, and that it springs from the same stock.

These two problems can be seen to presuppose the possibility of a private language in the following way. Each person has access, ultimately, only to his own mental states. One can feel only his own pain, and so, one's pains

are private. These occurrences to which the word 'pain' is applied, are private. Then what about the word 'pain?' What is its definition or meaning? It cannot be adequately defined in terms of other words. 'Pain is an unpleasant sensation' will not be of much help to the person who wishes to learn what the word means. Further, one could not explain the word in terms of pain's outward manifestations because these are only contingently associated with it. Presumably one can only know what 'pain' means by feeling pain. And one can only feel his own pains. Therefore, we know what we call 'pain' but not what anyone else calls 'pain' (again because we cannot feel or have his pain). So the meaning which each person attaches to 'pain' is private. One only knows what 'pain' means to oneself, and the user alone can know what he means by the word. Thus words such as 'pain' are seen to apply to phenomena which are neither public nor physical. There must be another realm which is private and of a nature other than physical. When the emphasis is placed on the privacy and 'hiddenness' of mental phenomena, the problem of other minds appears. When it is placed on the differences between physical and mental phenomena, the mind-body problem appears. Both derive from the notion that public correlates are only contingently related to mental

events, and so from, the implicit notion of a private language.

The importance of an argument against the possibility of a private language should now be clear. If such a language is not possible, then words which stand for mental occurrences must have meanings which are publicly available. If their meanings (and applications) are publicly available, the conditions for their proper application, both to ourselves and others, is public. We have then, no reason for doubting the existence of other minds, and every reason to assert their extence. Further, if the use of mental terms is essentially tied to what is public, our grounds for asserting the distinctness and separation of the mental and the physical realms has disappeared. The picture of two streams which are ultimately separate must yield.

While, as we have seen, the notion of a private language has been implicitly presupposed by certain enduring philosophical problems, it has been, on occasion, explicitly recognized and accepted. So one finds Bertrand Russell, a phenomenalist and British empiricist, maintaining that all language is ultimately private. Russell hoped to arrive at the ultimate constituents of knowledge, and this was to be achieved in part by an analysis of the propositions which

expressed this knowledge. This aim led him to make a distinction between objects which were known by 'acquaintance' and objects which were known by 'description.' And: "common words, even proper names are usually really descriptions" (Russell, p. 208). Presumably, any name which could be defined or explained in terms of other words could be termed, and, ought to be thought of as, a description. And these words would include most of our so-called 'names.' However, the words out of which these descriptions were, ultimately, composed and by which they were defined were to be words which referred to or named objects known by acquaintance. But, "when we ask what are the kinds of objects with which we are acquainted, the first and most obvious example is sense-data" (Russell, p. 203). If these words (or at least some of them) refer to sense-data, then they have private meanings. For, no person can experience another's sense-data. The words which name sense-data are private because the objects to which these words refer are private. Russell both realized and welcomed this result, and the notion of a private language was explicitly held.

It appears, then, that the credentials of the private language argument are in order. There seems ample reason to hold it to be of philosophical interest, even in terms of the

more traditional problems of philosophy. Some explanation should, then, be made of the treatment which will follow. The greater part of this paper will consist in the presentation of various attacks upon the private language argument, and answers to these criticisms. The criticisms which are considered do not represent all that has been said about the private language argument. They have been chosen for various reasons. Some are chosen because they represent an original approach which seems to me, even if mistaken, legitimate. Others have been chosen because they are representative of a particular type of criticism. The only attacks which have been omitted are those which are simply repetitious of better attacks which have been made by others, and those which, so far as I could tell, did not touch upon the private language argument in any clear way. The discussions of these criticisms are centered around my own interpretations and represent what I considered to be necessary if the criticisms were to be made. The overriding aim of these arguments is threefold. They are intended to meet the objections to the private language argument, to be more acceptable to philosophers who speak in other idioms than those in which the arguments or ordinary language philosophers are usually put, and to indicate and develop implications and aspects of the

private language argument in particular and of some of Wittgenstein's thoughts on language more generally. Because of these ends, I have not dealt explicitly with any of the published defenses of the private language argument. Some of these I feel to be inadequate, others seem not to be easily presented or explained. Some seem downright mistaken.

The conclusion of this paper will be primarily an attempt to draw certain conclusions from what is said in the body of the paper and to indicate certain facets of the private language argument which it is hoped will place it and its conclusion in a perspective different from that which is usually taken.

Much of what is said here is not clearly Wittgensteinian. I hope that it is at least consistent with his views. That which is directly Wittgenstein's is cited; that which is largely my own interpretations (or interpolations) is not. In dealing with Wittgenstein's writings there is always a larger danger of error. His style is indirect and not at all clear. In most cases he seems to raise questions without giving any clear cut answers. Since the author is dead and his students largely disagree, one must rely a great deal upon one's own interpretation. This brings with it, to a degree rare in philosophy, the danger that the

views which one is presenting and discussing are not Wittgenstein's but one's own. One can only accept this danger, and strive to justify his interpretations on the basis of the text. This, however, is not a great help because interpretation is often necessary even in this enterprise. There will also, I think, be found a certain lack of clarity which I take to be unavoidable in an undertaking such as this. I have, in a sense, tried to serve two masters, and to explain Wittgenstein's views in a style to which his ideas are not particularly well adapted. This requires discussing them in an idiom to which they are not adapted, and brings with it a host of presentational difficulties which I have tried, perhaps in vain, to overcome.

In what follows, those references to which I appeal will be cited parenthetically following the quotation. Within the parentheses the name of the author and the page (or, in the case of Wittgenstein, paragraph numbers) on which the quoted passage appears, will be placed. Detailed bibliographical data will be found at the end of the paper in a list of cited authors and works.

WITTGENSTEIN'S ARGUMENT

The discussion which is concerned with the notion of a private language begins with paragraph 243 of the Philosophical Investigations and occupies (in a rather loose sense of the word) a bit more than one hundred paragraphs before it finally fades from sight. Its progress seems rather disorderly and is difficult to follow, since it does not advance in a step-by-step pattern but is interspersed with what often seem to be chance observations and side comments. Therefore, I shall attempt here to present the development of the argument, as it is more commonly understood, in a more tightly knit way.

Wittgenstein begins by asking us whether we could imagine what might be termed a 'private language,' which he describes saying: "The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 243). These words, of which 'pain' would be considered, by many, an example, are to refer to some sort of 'objects' or 'entities' in much the same way that 'lamp' stands for a

particular sort of thing. The word 'can' here is to be taken in a strict logical sense rather than a practical sense. The possibility of knowing what another person means by one of these words is not ruled out by any set of practical circumstances, but is ruled out in our language. One cannot know another's pain because to know it is to feel it. If one feels a pain it is his own, rather than another's. So any claim to know another's pain would end by being self-defeating.

With this sort of object in mind we can proceed to the creation of a private language. Wittgenstein provides, as an analogous situation, 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 "E" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 258).

Here one might think of the case of the 'entity' pain. A person wishes to give a name to a particular sensation. He cannot define the name or describe the sensation, in terms of other words, nor can he appeal to any outward manifestation of it. And so, in order to establish an association between the word and the thing, he defines the word ostensively, perhaps by saying "I shall call this

feeling pain," and attending earnestly to that feeling.

But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a 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 it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right.' (Wittgenstein, paragraph 258).

Here we seem to have an appeal to the concept of a name.

A name must be capable of being applied correctly and incorrectly. This is, of course, true of any sound if it is to be even termed a 'word.' Any and every application of a word cannot be right. If it is, the word loses its meaning and becomes a mere sound. In the case of the name which we are discussing, the word must refer to a particular sensation or sort of sensation. It must be used to speak of the same object by which it is defined, or objects which are similar in relevant aspects. One could say that someone (if only the user) must be able to infer a rule for its use by observing its applications. There must be some criterion for its correct use, and some justification for saying that it is being applied to the

same or similar objects. Here 'criterion' is to be taken to mean simply 'a way of discovering.'

Now it seems that all a defender of the possibility of a private ostensive definition must do is provide some criterion by which the user can tell that he is using the word to refer to the object by which it was defined. And at this point one thinks naturally enough of memory. One might simply remember the defining situation, or that this is the sort of thing which was given the name.

"But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don't know if I have remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn't it the same here?"
 ---No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually correct. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be tested for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true). (Wittgenstein, paragraph 265).

The appeal to memory seems then to be an attempt to check our impression that a word refers to a particular sensation by an appeal to what seems to us to have been the case when we defined the word, or in all past applications of the word. Here we might think of two different cases. First, one might decide what word to use to refer to this sensation by searching his memory. He would call it by

whatever name his memory suggested. But of course one might be in doubt as to what would certify the memory itself. One has only his impression that this was the object named by the word. Second, one might call a sensation by a name and then, wondering whether he was correct, try to recall the defining situation. If the two impressions agreed, he would be in the same situation as in the first case. If they did not agree, he would have to choose between them, and have some basis for doing so.

There are other problems involved also. Recalling that it is required that we apply our word to the same or similar objects, he wonders how we could justify calling these objects 'similar.'

"Before I judge that two images which I have are the same, I must recognize them as the same." And when that has happened, how am I to know that the word "same" describes what I recognize? Only if I can express my recognition in some other way, and if it is possible for someone else to teach me that "same" is the correct word here. (Wittgenstein, paragraph 378).

Or, does the word 'same' also have a private meaning? Further:

What reason have we for calling "E" the sign for a sensation? For "sensation" is a word of our common language, not one intelligible to me alone." So the use of this word stands in need of a justification which everybody understands.---And it would not help either to say that it need not be a sensation; that when he writes "E", he has something---and that is all that can be said. "Has"

and "something" also belong to our common language.
(Wittgenstein, paragraph 261).

And so it seems that unless we can establish some criterion for our privately meaningful word we lose much else that we might say.

One might, however, be inclined to suppose that, while he could not answer the preceding arguments (or, perhaps, illustrations), one had to assume such a private object to explain the use of the word 'pain.' But:

"Imagine a person whose memory could not retain what the word 'pain' meant---so that he constantly called different things by that name---but nevertheless used the word in a way fitting in with the usual symptoms and presuppositions of pain: --in short he uses it as we all do. Here I should like to say: a wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism. (Wittgenstein, paragraph 271).

We seem to be left in a position where the notion of a private ostensive definition which appears so necessary for the existence of a private language is neither necessary to explain our use of the word pain, nor even able to perform its function, that of giving meaning to a word. It seems, then, that there is no possible way in which a private language could exist as a language, or in which a private object word (a word naming some private entity) could exist as a word.

CASTANEDA'S CRITICISM

A fitting point at which to begin a discussion of the various attacks which have been made upon the private language argument would be, I think, with the criticism presented by Hector-Neri Castaneda. This argument, while one of the more recent, is probably the most ambitious in its claims, and finds Castaneda avowing: "...I am content with claiming simply that I have refuted the private language argument in all its forms, so that concerning the private language issue there is simply an impasse" (Castaneda II, p. 132). I am inclined to think that we shall find this claim to be a bit strong, as simple as it is. His argument, however, is interesting inasmuch as it treats certain matters which are especially fundamental, and inasmuch as it involves certain points which are frequently encountered. These latter points will not be considered in any great detail in regard to Castaneda's argument, but will be dealt with in connection with the arguments of others wherein they are more fully developed. In regard to these points, then, Castaneda's argument may be viewed as a springboard from which they may be reached.

Castaneda's argument is centered around his idea that the argument has the form of a reductio ad absurdum, and that the notion of a private language has not been, while it ought to be, given a 'full run.' The notion of a private language which he believed that Wittgenstein discussed, he finds to be unfair, and he sets out to rectify this defect. To this end he postulates a language called "Privatish," and a speaker of that language, "Privatus," and proceeds to outline a 'fair' assumption for the private language argument.

Privatish contains several logical signs, which we shall assume to be identical with those of ordinary English. In some cases we shall assume that Privatish includes a public sub-language... whose purely public words will be supposed to be identical with their English counterparts.
(Castaneda I, p. 91).

Continuing, and further rounding out the requisite notion of a private language, Castaneda adds:

...it is fair to assume, insofar as for the purpose of our reductio ad absurdum we are assuming that Privatish is a language, that Privatus is for the most part consistent in his use of Privatish, that his use of signs possesses "enough regularity," and also that he holds certain true beliefs about his private objects, which beliefs are the counterparts of the judgements agreed on in the case of a public language. (Castaneda I, p. 98).

The exact nature of the language which Castaneda is postulating seems a bit unclear since he appears to fluctuate

between the idea of a 'purely private' language and the idea of an ordinarily public language which contains only some private words. Just what would constitute a 'purely private' language, I am not sure, but I suppose it would consist of logical words and the names of private objects. At the other extreme we can imagine a language which is in all respects the same as English, except that it contains one word which names a private object. Throughout this consideration I will understand Castaneda to refer to the latter sort. This is fair, I think, since he seems to believe that the possibility of this sort of language is the easiest to establish, and that its possibility is implied by the possibility of the former, while the reverse does not hold true. So in the discussion which follows, the terms 'private language' and 'Privatish' will be taken to refer to a language, such as English, but which possesses one word, or more, referring to private objects; that is, "a private language is one which has some words descriptive of private objects" (Castaneda I, p. 90).

The assumption which we must make, according to Castaneda, is that there is a private language of the sort just described, that this language has rules, and that these rules are regularly followed. We are to assume that the

language is used, and its rules, as a matter of fact, are followed.

The reduction of the notion of a private language to absurdity comes, as Castaneda sees it, as an attempt to show that there is one necessary requirement for the existence of rules which cannot be met. "If there is no way in which Privatus can misapply the signs belonging to Privatish, then this is not made up of rules and is, therefore, not a language" (Castaneda I, p. 95). This is here taken to be his statement of the requirement that there be a difference between a name which seems right and one which is right. The contention which he finds being made in the private language argument is that mistakes or misapplications of names would not, in the case of a private language, be possible, with the consequence, which Castaneda admits, that it could not be a language. The conclusion that such mistakes or misapplications would not be possible he finds to be based on the following premises:

11. The proof that I am following a rule must appeal to something independent of my impression that I am.

12. If in the nature of the case there cannot be such an appeal, then my private language does not have rules.

12A. In the nature of the case there cannot be an appeal to something independent of Privatus' impression that he is using a rule of Privatish

correctly to check whether his use is in fact correct or not (Castaneda I, p. 97).

The crucial premise here, as Castaneda sees it, is 12A, and the remainder of his discussion is aimed at showing it to be false.

Castaneda's contention is, then, that there can be mistakes in Privatus' use of Privatish, and that there are means available for their correction. The bases on which Privatus is able to correct his mistakes are the same as those which are available to speakers of purely public languages aside from those which require other persons.

Privatus qua speaker of Privatish has his experiences and the objects, private or public, which he apprehends in them, his memories of previous utterances, the words of Privatish, the logical connections among these, and the generalizations which link some objects to others. Clearly, most of them are independent of his impression that he is using a certain word correctly (Castaneda I, p. 99).

The only sorts of mistakes he is concerned to consider are slips of the tongue. By way of illustration, he offers the following examples whereby we can see how mistakes are made, and how they are corrected.

For instance, an English speaker can correct his misapplication of a word simply by noting that the object is not what he called it; he may say: "That red,...I mean, brown

chair..." Here we have a linguistic self-correction. (Castaneda I, p. 99).

A person can become aware of, and correct, a slip thanks to his wanting to make a certain inference and finding himself using the right generalization. For instance, one might say "This is an elephant; since every rhinoceros has a horn on its nose, this, I mean, this rhinoceros, not this elephant, will have a horn on its nose." (Castaneda I, p. 100).

If, in these examples, we substitute private-object words, we will presumably have instances in which Privatus could correct his mistakes in the use of those words. These mistakes, it is true are slips of the tongue, but still in a sense, mistakes of a sort. Whether, and in what respect they are relevant remains a question to be answered later. If there are mistakes possible in Privatish, and if these mistakes can be corrected, presumably the private language argument will fail.

Before evaluating this attack, let us review its major points briefly. Castaneda believes, apparently, that the private language argument seems to succeed because it concentrates on the defining of a private-object word, and thereby rules out the sorts of mistakes which could be made and corrected only by a person who already speaks the language. Since the possibility that one knows how to use a word is not dependent upon his having come by this

knowledge in any particular way, and here he quotes Malcolm to the effect that it is logically possible that a person be born knowing how to apply a concept (vide, Malcom, p. 112), Wittgenstein's apparent assumption is not fair to the possibility of a private language. If the very possibility of a private language is in question, any discussion must apply to an already existent private language, as well as one which is being acquired. So we must assume that Privatus uses Privatish with regularity and correctness; we must assume, in other words, that it consists of rules. If this assumption is allowed, as Castaneda feels it must be, then there are open to Privatus such mistakes as slips of the tongue, and their corrections. To deny these mistakes and their correction would be to deny something to a private language which is not denied to a public language. If we admit these mistakes, then Privatish is composed of rules and stands as an instance of a possible private language.

Now this criticism of the private language argument seems to fail in at least three respects. First, the assumptions, which Castaneda makes for the sake of a reductio ad absurdum, cannot be made. Second, he has not established that there is any ground for saying that mistakes could be made and corrected in the case of Privatish. (I shall not

here consider the specific sorts of mistakes, and sorts of tests for mistakes which he presents. These are also discussed by others.) Third, Castaneda has built into his notion of a private object a requirement which makes the naming of such an object impossible, both according to Wittgenstein and according to himself. These points will be considered shortly; but first, it should be noted that Castaneda seems to have been a bit unfair to Wittgenstein insofar as the assumption with which he charges him. He appears to believe that the entire private language which Wittgenstein was discussing was to be taken to consist only of the word which was to name a private object. Since, however, Wittgenstein's discussion appears to be centered around the word 'pain,' taken as the name of a private entity, within the broader context of English, I think we can take both Wittgenstein and Castaneda to have made the same assumption, except for one point. Castaneda assumes that there can be rules for the use of a private object word while Wittgenstein does not. This reminder is not crucial, but it should be noted since certain of Castaneda's critics seem to feel that he is unfair to Wittgenstein in asking that he allow more than only one word to Privatish.

Let us now take up the first of the three points

at which I maintain Castaneda's attack fails. Castaneda has assumed that Privatus knows how to use the private object words of Privatish; that is, he is able to follow the rules for the use of such words. Further, he does so as a matter of course and without thought. "We cannot require Privatus to know the formulation of the rule in question (Castaneda I, p. 97). All we can assume is that he habitually uses the word in accordance with the rule. The question which I wish to pose here is whether we can make such an assumption. This involves asking what it is that we are asked to assume, and to what we are committing ourselves when we make the assumption. Castaneda describes the role of rules in language as follows:

For the most part one's actions exhibit certain regularities which one would describe as actions in accordance with certain rules. But one is not obeying or trying to follow a rule. If an action is successful, i.e., if there are no unexpected obstacles, there is no question about having followed a rule correctly. (Castaneda I, p. 98)

(It might be noted, by the way, that the fact that there is no question does not mean that there can be no question.) So we are committed then, in making the required assumption, to saying that Privatus' use of the private object words possessed a regularity which would be described as consisting of actions in accordance with rules. Someone, that

is, can have grounds for saying that Privatus is following a rule for the use of a private-object word. If, then, we are to assume that the rules regarding the use of the name of a private object are followed by Privatus, we must be able to assume some justification for saying that a rule is followed. If, however, we logically cannot assume some justification for saying this, we cannot assume that a rule is followed here. We then cannot be required either to give the notion of a private language a 'full run' in Castaneda's sense, or to allow that Privatish involves rules. We must now ask, then, who can have grounds for saying that Privatus follows rules, and what justification there can be for saying that rules are followed.

It should be clear, at this point, that no other person than Privatus can have grounds or justification for saying that his private object words are used according to rules. We have excluded these other persons, logically, from any opportunity for the observation of both correlates which would be necessary if they were to be able to describe Privatus' actions as in accordance with a rule for the use of a private object word. Such an observer could only observe the public occurrences of the word and never its object.

The obvious solution to our problem would be to assert that Privatus himself could have justification for saying that he was following a rule of Privatish in his use of private object words. This means, of course, that we must require that Privatus be logically able to make some formulation of the rule after all. This does not mean that we require that he does so, or that he has the intelligence to do so, and so it seems consistent with Castaneda's stipulations concerning rules. Now the formulation of the rule need not be a terribly complex matter. All that Privatus must do is observe his uses of the word, and the occurrences of the object to which it refers, and say that objects similar to this are regularly called '...'. But this leads us into as direct confrontation with the private language argument as if we had (as Castaneda has forbidden) maintained that private objects are named by means of private ostensive definitions. For we again need some grounds for saying that the word is used consistently to name the same or similar objects. But Castaneda's appeal to slips and their 'corrections' is not here relevant because the issue is not one of breaches of existing rules and their subsequent 'corrections,' but the very possibility of the discovery that there are rules at all.

Carrying this discussion on to a little greater depth, let us note that, if Privatus is going to be able to recognize or discover any regularity in his uses of words, then he must have some concept of similarity by means of which he can express or conceive of this regularity. He must, that is, have a concept of similarity which can apply, not only to things public, but also to the private objects which some of his words name. So his concept of similarity must have some justifiable private applications. To simplify matters, we can even assume that he does possess, so far as we can tell, our usual concept of similarity. From all appearances, he knows how to use the word. We must now decide whether he can justifiably apply this concept to the private objects from which a rule is to be derived. Now since others are logically precluded from checking such an application, there seems to be but one recourse, if we are to say that he can apply the concept of similarity here. This would consist of an appeal to the fact that he generally uses the word correctly in public situations, and the claim that we ought to assume that he does so in private situations. But this amounts to saying that when he is inclined to call two things the same, they are in fact the same. This would not be allowed even in

the instance of public words. Saying this, as Wittgenstein notes, could be taken as a definition of the word 'same' (cf. Wittgenstein, paragraph 386), but not as proof that two private objects are the same. So it seems that not even Privatus, as the user of a private object word, can have justification for saying that two private objects are the same or similar and hence that there can be a rule for the use of a private name. We cannot then, if the foregoing is correct, assume that Privatus follows the rules for the use of private object words, even unconsciously. It is not possible to obey a private rule because no one could have justification for saying that a rule was followed.

The second point at which I find Castaneda to have failed to achieve his end is related to his claim that Privatish could be shown to consist of rules by virtue of the fact that Privatus could make 'mistakes' and 'correct' these errors. Castaneda allows that, if mistakes are not possible, then there are no rules. He feels that he has shown that there are possible mistakes (slips) in Privatish's use and corrections of those mistakes (based on appeals to memory, the objects of experience, generalizations, and so forth) and, therefore, possible rules for the use of private object words. We have, in the preceding discussion, main-

tained that such rules are not possible. However, ignoring this, let us see if this present claim can be established. Castaneda is quite correct in maintaining that if mistakes are possible then rules are possible. But upon what basis can we maintain that this example represents mistakes and their correction? For it appears that there must be some way in which Privatus can distinguish between a correction and an alteration of a use. On the surface, Castenda's examples can only be taken to represent alterations, for we want still some test for correctness. Upon what basis is he to say, after altering his words, that the first use was not correct and the second incorrect? If these alterations are to be maintained to constitute corrections we must have some means available for distinguishing between the case in which a word seems correct and the case in which it is correct. The fact that a use seems correct on second or third or fourth thought does not establish that it is correct. Wittgenstein maintains that this distinction must be made on a public basis and Castaneda seems not to have overthrown this requirement. Even his claim that we do not rely on the corrections of others in our uses of public words will not do, because these uses are not esteemed corrections on the basis of being alterations, but on the basis of being correct.

Castaneda's argument, then, appears to have failed here to establish (without begging the question) the existence of mistakes, corrections, or rules.

The third, and final, failure of Castaneda's argument is found in a circumstance which appears a bit odd. As we have seen, central to the private language argument is the notion that the fact that an application of a word seems right cannot imply that it is right, if the word is to be taken as the name of an object. Yet it is interesting that Castaneda seems to have built into his notion of a private object the necessity that the names of such objects should fail to meet this requirement (that 'seems' does not imply 'is'). For when he defines 'private object' he states:

2c. the object's existence is entailed by the speaker's belief [my italics] that it exists...
(Castaneda I, p. 90)

3c. the object's being A [a predicate or characteristic] is entailed by the speaker's, and only by the speaker's belief that it is A; (Castaneda I, p. 91)

Now if we can legitimately interpret these assertions to state that the speaker's belief that a particular name applied entails that the name does in fact apply, then this seems to amount to 'whatever seems right is right.' Since, then, he appears to wish to accept both Wittgenstein's requirement and these two statements, he can be taken to

contradict himself if he maintains that private object words function as names of objects.

The only conclusion which appears to me to be warranted is that Castaneda's claim to have refuted the private language argument in all (or perhaps any) of its forms cannot be supported.

PRIVATE TESTS OTHER THAN MEMORY:

CASTANEDA AND HARDIN

The most obvious way in which the private language argument might successfully be attacked would appear to be for the critic simply to provide some private test by which the correctness or consistency of his uses of words could be checked. Wittgenstein explicitly considers only one such test, memory: but there might, of course, be others to which one might appeal. Both Castaneda and Clyde Laurence Hardin attempt to provide such tests, without, I think, much success. However, their attempts should be mentioned and discussed at least briefly. Since these appeals appear all to suffer from similar defects, they will be treated together.

Castaneda mentions, as examples of acceptable private tests the objects which the words name, the logical connections between private object words, and generalizations about the objects which the words name (vide the preceding chapter and Castaneda I, p. 99). Hardin cites "phenomenal laws" (vide Hardin, p. 523-524), which I take to be about the same sorts of thing which Castaneda terms 'generalizations.'

Since Hardin has developed this idea a bit more fully, I will begin with his treatment.

Hardin proposes that one might effectively use private ostensive definitions as a basis for using the words to formulate and confirm phenomenal laws. Presumably, the user of private object words might formulate laws or generalizations covering the occurrence of private objects. Such a law might be: 'If red and green occur together, shrill whistle follows.' If he noticed a sequence of red and blue followed by shrill whistle, and, searching his memory, could discover no such law, he could assume that he had misapplied one of the words. He would then withdraw his identification of the object as 'blue' and substitute 'green.'

Now if one is to formulate laws describing such occurrences, it must be presumed that the meanings of the words by which the sequences are described must have been fixed. This is to say that the person formulating the laws must know the applications of the words prior to the formulation of the laws. But what is his test of the consistency of his uses to be here? For the laws themselves were to be used as tests. He appears, then to require some test prior to the development of phenomenal laws.

Perhaps the formulation of laws and the naming of the

private objects occur simultaneously, the names determining the laws and the laws determining the names. This would, of course, provide rather poor basis for generalization, the names and the laws being established on the basis of one instance. It might, however, succeed. But could such laws then serve as checks on one's use of the names of objects? It appears not since it is the sequence which counts. So long as one utters the words in the right sequence, his identification is correct. One could, so to speak, 'close his eyes' and remember the correct sequence, and his identification would be 'correct.' If he is to check the association of names and objects, then the alteration ought to be based, in some way, on the nature of the object, and not be carried out totally apart from the object. Further, one might ask how he was to be assured that his memory of the law was accurate. Here Wittgenstein's discussion of the railroad time-table becomes relevant. The user of the words it appears, would not have a test of consistency after all.

Castaneda's appeal to the objects themselves, and to the logical connections between their names, seems to suffer from a similar weakness in that both seem to presume that the meaning of the words could be established. How-

ever, we have rejected the admissibility of the assumption. To check one's use of a name by looking again at the object which has been called by that name requires that the association of the name and the object could have already been established. But this is the very possibility which the private language argument denies. One cannot check the use of the name of a private object by looking at a private object. If these various examples are appealed to as tests for the consistency of one's use of private object words, they must be rejected as begging the question.

AYER ON MEMORY

Probably the first of all published criticisms of the private language argument, and still one of the most interesting and influential, is that which is offered by A. J. Ayer. This attack was presented as Ayer's contribution to a symposium on the possibility of a private language, which took place before the Aristotelian Society in 1954. There are two interesting aspects of this attack which are distinct enough that they can best be treated separately. I will therefore, discuss the first of these aspects here, while reserving treatment of the second for a later point.

The first of the arguments which A. J. Ayer puts forward is directed against that step in Wittgenstein's argument which seems to assert that memory is not, and cannot be a justification of our uses of a word, that it cannot show that our present use is consistent with my past uses. Against this Ayer argues that the user of a private object word could check his identification of a sensation by an appeal to his memory of the naming situation. And the results of this act of checking can be

accepted because: "...unless there is something that one is allowed to recognize, no test can ever be completed: there will be no justification for the use of any sign at all" (Ayer, p. 41). Justification, to be justification, must come to an end. There must come a point when enough has been done and it is no longer sensible to require still more. And the ultimate justification for the use of any word rests upon recognition because:

Let the object to which I am attempting to refer be as public as you please, let the word which I use for this purpose belong to some common language, my assurance that I am using the word correctly, that I am using it to refer to the 'right' object, must in the end rest on the testimony of my senses. It is through hearing what other people say, or through seeing what they write, or observing their movements, that I am enabled to conclude that their use of the word agrees with mine. But if without further ado I can recognize such noises or shapes or movements, why can I not also recognize a private sensation? (Ayer, p. 42)

In a footnote which was added to the article after its first publication and in answer to what he considers to have been misinterpretations, Ayer clarifies himself in the following way:

My argument is that since every process of checking must terminate in some act of recognition, no process of checking can establish anything unless some acts of recognition are taken as valid in themselves. This does not imply that these acts of recognition are uncheckable in the sense that their deliverances could not in their

turn be subjected to further checks; but then these further checks would again have to terminate in acts of recognition which were taken as valid in themselves and so ad infinitum. If the inference drawn from this is that an act of recognition is worthless unless it is corroborated by other acts of recognition, the recognition of private sensations will not necessarily be excluded. For there is no reason in principle why such acts of recognition should not corroborate one another. (Ayer, p. 42)

Ayer's argument is not terribly easy to see, but it seems to consist of three parts. The first part is an infinite regress argument which is intended to show that we must be allowed to 'recognize something' if any tests or justification of our use of a word is to be possible. Having established that we must be allowed to recognize things at times, he maintains as the argument's second part, that, ultimately, every justification rests upon memory. This taken as established he seems to wish to maintain that acts of memory (as I understand him, memory feelings, and 'one's seeming to remember') are to be taken a self-certifying and authoritative in both public and private instances. The facts of memory (that which is remembered) appear not to be taken as essential to one's claim to remember. We are to conclude then, that since acts of memory are self-certifying, one can justify, or test, his use of private object words by appeals to memory. This

constitutes a direct attack upon Wittgenstein's argument, and if Ayer's attempt is successful, then there will be private tests for one's use of private object words. I will consider each of these points in order that we may be able to decide if Ayer's attempt does indeed succeed.

I do not take the first point to be particularly important, although I agree with its conclusion. It seems clear that we do recognize and remember things. This is true, if only from the fact that the words 'recognize' and 'remember' exist and have various applications. Nor do I think that Wittgenstein would disagree. He too often discusses memory and recognition and can, in fact, be taken to be discussing the conditions for the application of these words in the very paragraph with which Ayer is concerned (cf., Wittgenstein, paragraph 265). We are, then, to be allowed to remember, and to claim to remember, in certain circumstances and at certain times. The conclusion of the infinite regress argument is accepted. Whether the argument itself is equally acceptable, whether, that is, we must assume recognition in order to have any justification, seems not to be so clear, and will be discussed in connection with his second point.

The second point which Ayer is concerned to make is

that, ultimately, every justification of one's claim to use a word correctly, or consistently with its definition, must rest upon memory or some act of recognition. This claim seems to be subject to at least two different interpretations. The first of these would be that in our justifications of our uses of words, we are always, if pressed, forced back upon the claim that we simply remember that this is the way in which the word is used. This seems, however, not quite to be the case. There are certain cases in which we might make an appeal to memory as justification. We might, perhaps, encounter and identify something with which we are not totally familiar (such as, perhaps, an animal or geological formation), and of which we have been taught the name. We might support our identification by stating that we recognize the thing from having studied a particular subject in school. Most of the cases in which we might feel the need to justify our use of a word seem to be somewhat different, however. It ought to be noted here that we are not often challenged in our uses of words, and that when we use them it is not with any conscious 'remembering' or 'recognition' determining our uses of them. We will also disregard the most likely reply which we might make upon being questioned as to how we know our use of a word is correct, that of being totally at

a loss as to what to say, having never before considered the matter, or of asking our questioner, belligerently, whether he doubts that we know how to speak English. With these reservations, we can say, I think, that our word is used correctly because others understand us, and we understand others when they use the word. Questioned as to our basis for saying this, we would cite the fact that others seem generally undisturbed by our use, or that they do what we intended for them to do in response to our words. These do not involve any explicit appeal to memory. But Ayer could be expected to reply that the appeal is implicit, that if the speaker says 'fetch me that book,' and cites the fact that the person so ordered does indeed fetch the book as proof that the speaker used the words correctly, he must recognize the other person's acts as being those of fetching the book. The appeal to memory would be held to be implicit because we wouldn't know that the person fetched the book if we had not, consciously or not, recognized the actions of the bearer of the book. Similarly, one would not know how to use a word if he did not remember how it was properly used. This leads us directly into the second interpretation of Ayer's claim.

It may be then, that Ayer's claim represents the

view that, while we may not often appeal to memory or recognition when we are called upon to justify our uses of words, these uses, and justifications, are possible only because we remember or recognize something. The reason here would be that we generally refuse to say that we know how to use a word and yet do not remember how it is used. However, the relation between one's use of his word and his memory of the word seems not to be logical. There seems nothing inconsistent in the supposition that a person who uses language could never remember how the words were used. He might on each occasion be inspired to use a certain word and always use the word correctly to all appearances. He might even be inspired to utter particular words as justification for his uses. Nor is the relation, in any clear sense, empirical. We use words without explicitly seeming to remember their uses, and our appeals for justification are not often to memory. The charm of the expression seems to be derived from that characteristic of our language by which we seem to have come by our knowledge of the uses of words on some past occasions. If we learned the word in the past, and know how to use it now, we must remember how it is to be used.

Ayer's claim seems clearly to be an explanation of how we are able to use words correctly which are based upon

this aspect of our language. The question which must be answered, of course, is whether, and to what extent, an explanation of how correct uses of words come about can be taken as a justification for one's belief that he is using a particular word correctly. To say that we were able to use a word correctly because we remembered its proper application is not to justify our belief that the word was used correctly. For this has, apparently, already been established in some way. The problem at hand is whether memory can provide one with reason to believe that he is using a word correctly. To say that one's use of a word is correct because one remembers that the word is used in such-and-such circumstances which do prevail, can justify one's claim of correct use. If, that is, these circumstances actually are the conditions for the correct use of the word: if, that is, one does in fact remember. If someone does remember something, that something is (or was) as it is remembered. But this implication exists, not because one's claim to remember something certifies the truth of what is claimed to be remembered, but because it can only be said to be remembered if it is true. Thus there is a distinction between memory-feelings and memory claims (taken together, acts of memory) and actual memories.

An act of memory might be considered to be the inspiration of the belief that one remembers something. But this belief can only be established by some facts of memory, some actual state of affairs which exists (or has existed) to be remembered. So it seems that our claim to remember that a particular set of circumstances serves as the proper conditions for the application of a word must be justified by the existence of the same conditions which justify us in the use of the word. That which justifies the one justifies the other, and so neither can be used without further support to justify the other.

Ayer might, however, be inclined to answer here that since our memory claims are usually true in those cases in which we can discover their truth or falsity, their truth should be accepted in those cases where we cannot. (We must of course, disregard those instances of people who have extremely poor memories, and whose memory claims are almost never true.) Wittgenstein, that is, would have no reason to believe that in the case of private object words, the user of the words remembered falsely. But this is to miss Wittgenstein's point. For Wittgenstein is not assuming that such private memory claims would be more likely to be false than public memory claims, but that the distinction

between a true and a false memory claim could not be made by anyone. We have no idea of what an actual 'true' memory of a private object would be like in comparison with a mere act of memory. From the statement that someone remembers something, it follows that the something was the case. But even in a public case it does not logically follow from the fact that a person thinks he remembers or recognizes something, that he does remember or recognize it. If this is the case even in public situations, it ought also to hold for private. But in the private case every instance of 'memory' would be an instance wherein one thought he remembered. One would not even have grounds for asserting that private memory claims are usually true.

The only way, it appears, that Ayer might avoid a conclusion contrary to his purpose here would be, I think, to deny that the objective fact which is remembered is essential to the application of the word 'remember.' He might wish to maintain, that is, that the proper justification of one's use of the word 'remember' was through appeals to one's 'act of recognition,' 'feeling of remembering,' or 'belief that he remembers,' and that these feelings certify the truth of memory claims and are authoritative. This tendency in his thought is, I think, clearly present

in view of the emphasis which he places in his argument upon 'acts of memory.' But this position leads into problems again. For it would clearly amount to maintaining that, since memory was certified by experiences and since the remembered state of affairs did not essentially determine the application of the words 'memory' or 'remember,' the word was private in much the same way as 'pain.' If this is the case, we seem to be multiplying private entities. There is, however, one difference. Recognition or memory is our means of justifying our uses of private object words as always referring to the same sorts of entities. But, to what are we to appeal in order to justify our use of memory words; how are we to make the distinction between a feeling that seems to be a memory feeling and one that actually is? Is it to be memory again?

It appears, then, that Ayer's argument will not establish memory as a test by which the distinction between an identification which seems right and one which is right can be made. His emphasis upon the idea of acts of memory appears to have obscured his view of the objective reference which is essential to the word 'memory.' Perhaps he ignored Wittgenstein's warning against looking into oneself to determine the nature of an experience.

STERN ON WITTGENSTEIN AS A SCEPTIC

An approach to Wittgenstein's argument which is directed against the discussion of memory, and which is, in many respects similar to that of Ayer's, is taken by Kenneth Stern. Stern finds this discussion, as Ayer seems to have, to indicate that Wittgenstein was sceptical concerning the powers of memory. Wittgenstein's discussion of memory is held by Stern to illustrate two theses. The first is that memory is essential to the use of any descriptive word, so that if memory cannot be used in the case of private object words, these words are not descriptive. The second thesis is that:

...all memory claims, and so a fortiori the memory claim involved in the use of a descriptive word, have no epistemological stamina of their own, but always stand in at least potential need of checks of some kind where these checks are present events. (Stern, p. 750)

His attack upon the private language argument then, appears to be two pronged. He will show first that private object words could be descriptive, even if memory is not involved in their use; and, second, that memory can serve as a justification.

Considering the first of these two theses, he notes that, in our uses of descriptive words or names, we are not ordinarily 'remembering' or 'recognizing' objects.

"...do we always remember what something is called whenever we call it by name? Is to talk this way consonant with the ways in which we ordinarily talk and think about memory and recognition" (Stern, pp. 748-749)? Ordinarily we simply use the word without any conscious act which we might designate as 'remembering' or 'recognition.' It is not the case that "I recognize my brother when I see him, or remember his name when I call him by name. But neither would it be right to say that I fail to recognize him or fail to remember his name. I simply see him. I simply call him by name" (Stern, p. 749). In regard to this point I might correctly be expected to agree, having made substantially the same point in connection with my discussion of Ayer. We should ask, however, whether this point will affect Wittgenstein's argument. Stern has shown that memory or recognition is not ordinarily explicitly involved in our uses of names or descriptive words. Wittgenstein's point is that an appeal to memory cannot support or justify one's use of a private object word. These points do not oppose each other. Further, it would appear

that Wittgenstein would agree with Stern here. In support of this, I might cite the following:

When I talk about this table,---am I remembering that this object is called a table? (Wittgenstein, paragraph 601)

Asked "Did you recognize your desk when you entered your room this morning?"---I should no doubt say "certain!" And yet it would be misleading to say that an act of recognition had taken place. (Wittgenstein, paragraph 602)

No one will say that everytime I enter my room, my long-familiar surroundings, there is enacted a recognition of all that I see and have seen hundreds of times before. (Wittgenstein, paragraph 603)

Stern, himself, cites these passages and finds them interesting. But he wishes to view them as indicative of a passing insight on Wittgenstein's part which is obscured by his (Wittgenstein's) picture of the workings of descriptive words. Stern's reconstruction of Wittgenstein's argument as we have seen, seems to be: memory is essential to descriptive words; but here one can't trust one's memory alone; therefore, since there is no other check for correctness of application in the case of private object words, these words cannot be descriptive. I suspect that this picture of the argument so held Stern that he was unable to appreciate the impact of the statements listed above when he encountered them. For they seem to make plain Wittgenstein's

views on the subject. Stern seems, then, to have been in error in attributing his first thesis to Wittgenstein.

The central and more important development in Stern's argument is his attack upon the second of the two theses which he finds in Wittgenstein's argument, the thesis which he feels represents Wittgenstein's scepticism concerning memory. The prevailing attitude of his argument is represented by a maxim which asserts that we ought not to doubt while doing philosophy what we do not doubt at other times (cf. Stern, p. 756). If one is going to doubt something, one ought to have good reason for doing so. Accepting this attitude, his argument aims to establish that to question memory is to do the very thing the maxim forbids.

I think his argument can be taken to begin with an example which is to be understood to show that private memory claims are proper. The case to which he appeals is that in which a person claims to remember having an itch at some time in past circumstances in which there never has been any public indication or trace of the itch. The conclusion which we are apparently intended to draw here is that the reason that such a memory claim is not disputed is because they are accepted to be true. He continues: "It is my contention that in everyday life we

do accept memory claims that are absolutely private, because in ordinary life...memory is accepted as a basic form of knowledge, which is not in constant need of some check external to it" (Stern, p. 752). Presumably, memory is accepted as being a 'basic form of knowledge,' at least in part, because most publicly checkable memory claims are found to be true. I think their general truth would be an empirical question, and would vary a great deal, depending upon the person who is doing the remembering. Probably, however, most such claims do turn out to be true, although certainly not all of them.

Stern maintains, further, that 'remembering' has an experiential content. Here he appeals to 'vividness and vivacity' and to the feeling of 'trying to remember.' "Memory has a phenomenological side. If a person thinks he remembers, this is more than simply making a claim about the past. There is, after all, something going on, viz., an experience" (Stern, p. 756). And usually a person makes a memory claim on the basis of such experiences or at least, that is, when such experiences are present. This will be taken to apply equally to both those memory claims which refer to the public realm, and those which refer to the private.

In order to round off the argument and close the many gaps through which objection might enter, he maintains that while memory-beliefs are sometimes false, one must realize that:

It does not follow from the proposition that it is possible to make a mistake when you claim to remember (because you may in fact have done so in the past) that in this particular case it is possible that you have made a mistake or that I do not know that my memory is correct. To assume that it does follow is simply the result of an equivocation on the word 'possible.' For in the first proposition the use of 'possible' means something like "people have in the past made mistakes when they claimed to remember;" and in the second 'possible' means something like "I am not sure whether I remember correctly." And surely it does not follow from the fact that I have had "false memories" in the past that right now I cannot be certain that I am remembering correctly. (Stern, pp. 757-758)

Now to recapitulate, Stern's argument seems to be directed against Wittgenstein's apparent contention that all correct uses of 'remember' are at least possibly justified by the fact which one claims to remember. Stern begins his argument with a counter example, that of remembering having had an itch, which he maintains is a proper use of 'remember.' This use he holds, is based upon certain 'memory experiences;' and these 'memory experiences,' apparently, are its justification. We have good reason to believe in the truth of such a claim because most memory

claims are both accepted and true, and these true memory claims are themselves based upon (and justified) by memory experiences. If most memory claims which are based upon such experiences are true, then we have no good reason for doubting the memory of a private ostensive definition. Stern grants that memory mistakes occur, but denies that these are grounds for doubting a particular memory claim because, he maintains, the possibility that memory claims may be false does not imply that one cannot be certain that a particular memory claim is true.

Now in order to evaluate this argument, we ought to attempt to decide just how well and how directly it meets the view to which it is opposed. Wittgenstein seems to have wanted to maintain that no memory claim could serve to bolster one's belief that he was using a word consistently with a private ostensive definition, unless there was some way for someone to decide whether the memory claims referred to an 'actual memory' or whether the claimant only 'seemed to remember.' In order to get around Wittgenstein's point it would seem then that there are two possible courses open to Stern. He might, on one hand, maintain that in the situation in question, the distinction, and so, a way of distinguishing, is unnecessary. On the

other, he might attempt to show that there is some means of making the distinction in this sort of situation. If he chooses the first alternative he seems to commit himself to the view that, in the context under consideration in the private language argument, if one seems to remember something, he does in fact remember. And this would amount to the claim that memory errors are excluded from the realm of the possible when the facts to which they refer are private. If he chooses the second alternative, then he seems on the basis of what he has said, to require that 'memory experiences' and 'feeling certain' constitute the means of distinguishing which are necessary. Now since memory experiences are held, by Stern, to be common to all truthful (as opposed to 'true') memory claims, and to be the basis of those claims, it appears that the two alternative courses collapse into one, and we are asked to accept the view that if someone, on the basis of 'memory experiences,' claims to remember some occurrence of fact, then there is no good reason to doubt that he does truly remember.

The burden of his argument, then, seems to be to show that there is no good reason for doubting any memory claim, and so, no good reason for doubting that one who claims to remember a private ostensive definition does,

in fact, remember it truly. His grounds for this claim seem to be basically that, first, memory claims generally prove to be true, and second, the fact that it is possible to make a false memory claim does not imply that one cannot be certain or know that a particular memory claim is true. Both of these points seem to me to be sound. They do not, however, seem to warrant the conclusion which he wishes to draw from them.

Let us consider the first of these. Memory claims do usually prove to be true. But their truth is determined not by an appeal to memory experiences or to the fact that it seems to the claimant that he remembers. One decides, in most cases, whether to allow that a person can properly claim to remember a fact on the basis of two conditions. The state of affairs which is claimed to be remembered must have in fact been the case; and the claimant must have been in a position to have first-hand knowledge of that state of affairs. If either of these conditions is not met, then the claim is denied, no matter how earnestly and truthfully the claimant protests that he has 'memory experiences' to support his claim.

Stern might wish to offer as evidence that these conditions are not required, the fact that often, perhaps in most instances, we do not dispute memory claims or require

that each and every memory claim be justified by meeting these conditions. But this does not seem to be adequate because, in the first place, it seems to be held that the fact that a memory claim is not disputed indicates that it is assented to as true. But there seems to me to be a number of reasons why one might not dispute a memory claim; e.g., one might not do so simply because one had no interest in whether the particular claim was true or not. So, unless he can give some reason why a lack of dispute implies an active assent, this fact seems not to affect our conclusion. Moreover we still have remaining the fact that if such a memory claim is not disputed but it comes to our attention that the requisite conditions have not been met, our assent to the claim as in instance of 'remembering' is withdrawn.

Let us now return to the second of Stern's grounds for maintaining that there is no good reason to doubt memory claims. This is the fact that the possibility of falsely making memory claims does not imply that one cannot be certain or know that a particular memory claim is true. As I have said, I agree with this point. However, the interpretation which Stern might wish to make of it seems unclear. One presumably has grounds for his claim to being

certain that he remembers a particular state of affairs, but among these grounds are not his memory experiences. If he is to claim to be certain or to know that a memory claim is true, then it is presumed that the conditions stated above for the ascription of the term 'remember' hold. Yet Stern seems to wish to maintain that those conditions are not necessary. And so the only way that I can understand his claim is by interpreting him as meaning the same by 'feeling certain' and 'know.' If these two sets of terms can be equated, then his point will stand. But I don't believe that they can be so equated without equivocation.

Now we might consider whether his view that one ought not to doubt without good reason really applies to the case of memory. One is strongly inclined to suppose that any factual claim in which one is interested can be properly and profitably doubted. Yet there does come a point when one would wish to say that there is no good reason for doubting further. The question is whether Stern has drawn that line at the right place. Stern seems to wish to maintain that where most people do not actively doubt, there is no good reason to doubt. Yet it seems that such an attitude would have left a great many facts

undiscovered. If some aged person claims to remember shaking Lincoln's hand, we might not doubt his claim. But if he continues by attributing some outlandish behavior to Lincoln, there seems to be good reason to doubt his claim to remember, at least to the point of determining whether he could remember such a thing. The behavior of most people seems hardly the correct criterion for deciding where it is sensible to doubt. I think, perhaps, it would have been better to draw the line at the point where the claimant had satisfied all the usual tests for remembering. And these tests do not, as we have seen, end with his avowing 'memory experiences.'

There are, I think, two further considerations which should be made. First, Stern's statement that the claim to remember having an itch is an acceptable use of 'remembering' even though one cannot determine whether the claim to remember having an itch is true or not, seems undeniable, unless one wishes to prescribe what can and cannot be said. But Wittgenstein disavows this aim. However, it seems that this instance cannot be used to establish the fact that there was an itch, unless there is some possible distinction between 'remembering' and 'seeming to remember.' And this brings the question into full circle.

The second consideration is concerned with Stern's

apparent belief that 'memory experiences' can serve as a criterion for the truth of a memory claim. If we allow, for the moment that these could so serve, then presumably we need some way of fixing their identity. And since the case in which they are appealed to as decisive is one in which the memory refers to something private, then there seems to emerge (as we have seen with Ayer) the same question which arises with a private ostensive definition, whether, that is, their identity can be fixed (vide above page 51).

The conclusion which I find to be indicated by the above is that Stern has neither shown Wittgenstein to be excessively sceptical toward memory, nor that memory claims are in themselves worthy of being accepted as true on face value. This conclusion, however, which is directed against Stern's argument as it stands, does not do justice to Wittgenstein's argument, for it seems to admit that Wittgenstein was doubting the efficacy of memory. Both Stern and Ayer seem to understand him, in this way, although he nowhere indicates that memory is excessively unreliable. It might be noted that if his claim is simply that memory cannot be relied upon, he seems not to have ruled out the possibility of a private language. For it might then be that the user of the language remembered correctly, whether or not he could be

tested. The argument then seems not to be particularly strong.

It appears much stronger if we interpret his comments on memory not as indicating that memory is unreliable, but that memory has no application in a private context. On this interpretation, memory cannot be appealed to, because 'memory' does not apply in that context. The word 'memory,' for its proper application, requires the actuality of the state of affairs remembered. The fact which is remembered serves as a criterion for the use of the word. The claim to remember in a private context cannot be allowed, then, because this 'fact' does not essentially influence the use of the word. If one claims to remember that a particular object is the one given a particular name, and so to know that his use of the name is correct, there must logically be the possibility that someone could determine whether the word memory was correctly applied. This is not allowed; the fact which is claimed to be remembered does not effect the application of the word 'remember.' Memory cannot serve as a justification for one's use of the private object words, because there is nothing which could justify one's use of the word 'remember.'

AYER AND THE ROBINSON CRUSOE ARGUMENT

I

We now come to the second of the two arguments which were offered by A. J. Ayer, the 'Robinson Crusoe' argument. This attack is quite convincing, and has been adopted by P. F. Strawson and Helen Hervey as well. This attack is, I think, more important than the others we have discussed because any attempt to answer it requires that one appeal to aspects of language and its uses which are by no means readily apparent. The picture of the way in which language functions which emerges from such an appeal is, I think, quite important to an understanding of Wittgenstein's approach to philosophical problems. This, however, will be discussed more fully in the conclusion.

Ayer presents the argument as an attack on the assumption "that for a person to be able to attach meaning to a sign, it is necessary that other people should be capable of understanding it too" (Ayer, p. 44). In order to combat this assumption he attempts to set up an imagined situation wherein a person might attach meaning, to a sign, yet in which no other person would be in a position to check the use of the sign to which meaning was attached. To this end

he creates a hypothetical situation in which a man, Robinson Crusoe, having been deposited in infancy upon a desert island, and having never had any contact with other human beings, comes to a point where he might wish to (or come to) develop a language for his own use.

He [Robinson] will certainly be able to recognize many things upon the island, in the sense that he adapts his behaviour to them. Is it inconceivable that he should also name them?...Surely it is not self-contradictory to suppose that someone, uninstructed in the use of any existing language, makes up a language for himself. After all, some human being must have been the first to use a symbol. (Ayer, p. 44)

If all of this can be granted, then Ayer has shown that it would be possible for an individual, isolated from any other person who might, in some way, come to provide checks on his uses of words, to create a language which would be private in the sense that it was used by only one person.

But if we allow that our Robinson Crusoe could invent words to describe the flora and fauna of his island, why not allow that he could also invent words to describe his sensations? In neither case will he be able to justify his use of words by drawing on the evidence provided by a fellow creature: but while this is a useful check it is not indispensable...His knowing how to use these words will be a matter of his remembering what objects they are meant to stand for, and so of his being able to recognize these objects. But why should he not succeed in recognizing them? (Ayer, pp. 44-45)

And so, if we admit that a person in isolation could develop

a language to describe 'public' objects, then he ought also to be able to extend that language to include 'private' objects. And if it is logically possible that a person in isolation might do this, the naming of 'private objects' by an individual who already possessed a language could only be an easier task.

This argument appears to me to be rather difficult to deal with, primarily because it is difficult to see exactly what is being claimed by Ayer. He is clearly correct in maintaining that it is not, in any direct way, self-contradictory to speak of a languageless person inventing a language. We can also, I think, discern the picture of language which underlies the argument. To invent a language, one has only to associate sounds with objects. One is then ready to talk. This is a bit oversimplified. Using such a picture of language, one could imagine Robinson developing a language one morning if, upon rising, he finds that during the night someone had attached tags to every object on his island, each tag bearing a different mark. He would not, of course, possess any class-concepts, unless he were so fortunate that the same marks were on the tags attached to more than one object. All he need do to learn a language is pick up a stick and start marking in the sand.

At this point one wants to rebel. For there is much else that Robinson must accomplish before he has his language. He must use the marks to stand for the objects, and he must try to say something using these marks. But using sounds or marks to stand for objects and using them to say something requires more than the bare association of the sounds and marks with objects.

In order to get a better picture of what it is that constitutes this 'more,' let us ask when we would say language is being used, and what sorts of things are called uses of language. Here we might distinguish an 'inside' and an 'outside' point of view. The 'inside' point of view is concerned with those aspects of our uses of sounds and those of our fellows, which are termed 'language' because of our standing within the language. The 'outside' point of view will be concerned with those activities of alien groups and persons which would lead us to attribute the possession of language to them.

To an insider there is a difference between mere sounds, even sounds which are associated (as, perhaps, conditioned responses) with objects, and words. The primary difference between the two cases is what words have meaning, and are understood and expected to be understood. And

understanding here includes, but is more than, simply having an effect. One can use mere sounds with an intended affect (e.g. nonsense utterances) without considering them to be words. When one utters a sentence one (in most cases) utters it with some intended effect which is dependent upon the particular sounds which are uttered. If one wished, he could say that language was used for communication. One communicates his wishes, his intentions, his feelings, what he sees, what he wishes to know, and so forth. The words which one uses for these purposes are essential to the success of his undertaking. If he uses different words (not synonyms) with the same intended result, he will be disappointed. One knows that another speaks the same language when the other person responds to the words in certain ways, which are taken to be determined by the particular sounds which are used. This is not to say that a series of sounds which constitute a sentence always leads to the same reaction (as in the case of conditioning), but that there is a range of responses which can be expected and which are determined by the hearer's own attitudes, desires, intentions, and so forth. The important point is that the speakers of a language interact, using their words in such a way that the words are essential to their interaction.

Ayer's proposal is that we suppose that Robinson interacts with himself using his language, that he communicates with himself. Ayer has a prima facie strongly favorable instance to summon in support of his contention that this supposition is possible. For we all at times 'talk to ourselves.' We describe scenes to ourselves, exhort ourselves, curse, carry on dialogues with ourselves, and so forth. So it appears that one can use language for his own benefit. But all of these activities are carried on in a context of existing language. Ayer requires us to imagine that Robinson carry on these activities without assuming their existence prior to his undertaking them. He requires, that is, that Robinson be imagined to come to talk to himself without ever having any concept of, or experience with, talking to others, and takes the problem as to whether Robinson could do so or not to be a psychological question rather than a logical question. Now, it seems to me, that to allow that Robinson could possibly carry out these activities apart from a pre-existing language would be tantamount to denying that interaction and communication were essential to language. For as we have seen, these are activities to which the words of a language are essential. The words which are used must be essential to

the carrying out of linguistic activities. Yet it seems that this could not be so in Robinson's case. For to whatever end Robinson used his words, the words would not matter in any essential way.

If the words of the language are essential, their being correctly understood is essential also. The words could not be essential if there were not meanings communicated by them. But to require that they be correctly understood forces one to say that they could be misunderstood. Their meanings might be interpreted wrongly, and the communication which is carried on through them might fail. There must, then, be some sense in which one could say that Robinson might misunderstand himself. But what are the tokens of this misunderstanding? Could Robinson the speaker fail to get his point across to Robinson the listener? What would lead us to say that this had happened, and that Robinson misunderstood himself? He can't stare blankly at himself, nor can he proceed to make the wrong response. If Robinson the speaker used the improper word, he ought to be misunderstood, and fail to achieve the purpose of his utterance. But unless we postulated that his personality was somehow split and partitioned, it would seem that he would know what was intended apart from the words which

were used. Again, one might ask, in what sense can a word be termed 'improper?' For the word would seem to be 'improper' only if it communicated a different meaning to the listener than was intended by the speaker. But here they are one and the same person, and both would know what was intended independently of the words which were used. If different words were used, or even no words at all, the understanding would be the same. The 'words' drop out, and unless one is prepared to include under the term 'language' the utterances of sounds which do not matter, either in regard to the speaker or the hearer, Robinson's sounds seem not to constitute a language.

Looking further into Robinson's language, more problems arise. Ayer would wish to maintain that Robinson could describe his environment (cf., Ayer, p. 45), but could he do so without the concept of description? Could he use exhortations without knowing what an exhortation was? Could he create a language without any concept of a language? The answer to all of these questions appears to be negative. To be able to describe requires that one know what a description is, how it is used and how it is reacted to. But concepts require a language, and Ayer requires that Robinson create a language which requires the simultaneous invention

of concepts, words, sentences, and so forth.

The foregoing seems to deny Ayer's claim that someone must have been the first to use a symbol. This seems to me to be the correct path. This notion seems to be based upon the picture which sees language to primarily descriptive rather than primarily interaction, and which sees all other uses of language to be parasitic upon description (e.g. 'a command is a description of the situation which you desire plus a description of your intent that it be brought about'). If this picture is valid, then we might expect someone to invent the first symbol (by which I take Ayer to mean a descriptive word), and, of course, the concept of a symbol. If, however, one views interaction as primary, then the effects of sounds are central and language could have come into being through the standardization of the effects of the sounds, prior to the evolution of concepts. Language might then have grown out of warning growls, and so forth, and descriptive words could be seen to appear rather late and in circumstances where a great many of the usual functions of language were already present.

Turning now to the 'outside' views of language, we should consider what sorts of activities we would be in-

clined to term 'language' when performed by an alien group or individual. Here we might introduce P. F. Strawson's version of the Robinson Crusoe argument. Strawson postulates a person, such as Ayer's Robinson, and then introduces a spectator who observes Robinson's uses of sounds and the contexts in which these uses occur. On the basis of his observations, the spectator formulates hypotheses concerning the meanings of the words which are uttered. Eventually the observer and Robinson come to be able to speak to each other. And Strawson asks: "But shall we say that, before this fortunate result was achieved (before the use of language becomes a shared 'form of life'), the words of the language had no meaning, no use" (Strawson, p. 85)? Strawson's picture is, of course, prejudicial. Therefore, I shall reconstruct the situation without introducing the terms 'words' and 'language' with all of their implications.

We will, then, have Robinson on his island uttering sounds, and a spectator who remains concealed and observes these utterances. We need not assume for our purposes that Robinson has no language. It is probably better if we say that he does, but not so far as the observer knows. S might observe that every day Robinson comes to the same

place, and utters the same series of sounds. Perhaps it is before one particular tree that the sounds are spoken. What is the hypothesis to be? Do the sounds constitute a description, a prayer, a warning, self-encouragement, an expression of disgust, or simply a response to the tree, or its surroundings, with which Robinson has somehow been conditioned? There seems to be nothing in the situation which could guide S's interpretation. Perhaps S could begin with simpler cases, cases which are marked by what Wittgenstein terms instances of the 'common behavior of mankind.' Is S to decide that the sounds which Robinson utters when he is obviously in pain to be equivalent to 'I am in pain,' or for 'ouch!' Perhaps the sounds which are uttered vary with the surroundings and time in no regular manner. If we presume that Robinson has a language then this could be expected. He might be talking about the past or future, for instance. Upon what basis is S to conclude that Robinson is using words and language and to formulate his hypothesis? Even the variety of the sounds is no index, if one cannot tell how they are used. S could, to be sure, formulate hypotheses, but their basis would as it stands, always be tenuous. There seems to be something missing in our picture which would indicate more fully to S how the sounds were

used. This would appear to be the presence of other persons and Robinson's interaction with them. If other persons are introduced we have not only Robinson's sounds and their context, but the reactions of others to those sounds. We now would have a human basis for translation. But this indicates that we could have no basis for attributing a language to Robinson even if he had one, except perhaps the fact that he is a human being and we assume human beings have language. But we must make our hypothesis on the grounds of his behavior alone. And if none of the conditions which would lead us to apply the word 'language' here are possible or allowed, what is our ground for saying that Robinson could have language?

Strawson provides what seems to be such a ground. We will assume that S has formulated his hypotheses and strays out to converse with Robinson. If he could immediately carry on fairly sophisticated conversations, then we must say that Robinson had a language after all. But if this result was more gropingly obtained, is S to say that Robinson showed him the language, or that the two of them together created a language? The situation, as are all borderline cases, seems very confused.

The conclusion which seems to be indicated by this

discussion is, that Ayer, with Robinson Crusoe, has postulated a situation which lacks the conditions necessary for the existence of a language, both those known from our experience within a language, and from our more objective view of language. That which we are asked to imagine is either not language or not possible.

II

There is one interpretation of the claims which are made by the private language argument which seems to be quite widespread. This interpretation finds expression in the view that one could invent 'private codes,' and that one could name objects, if only it is logically possible that another person could check one's use of the name, even if it is stipulated that no other person will ever, as a matter of fact, be or have been in a position to do so. It is central to Ayer's presumption that Wittgenstein is only denying that a person could name an object which is in principle private. So it is that Ayer says, assuming Wittgenstein's agreement, that if a person could recognize objects (i.e. adapt his behavior to them) he could name them, and the only serious question is whether he could recognize, and as a result name, private objects. I shall argue here that this view is based upon a faulty view of the relation between objects and one's recognition of them, the view that one sees the similarity of one object to another when one recognizes them as being the same or similar. The 'sameness' of two objects, on this view,

seems to be some inherent quality which is perceived.

Let us now remember that central to the whole private language argument (and to the step which discusses memory or recognition) is the position that, in regard to the correct name of a private object: "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'." (Wittgenstein, paragraph 258). The burden of the step which is concerned with the admissability of the 'testimony' of memory is simply that one's 'memory' of a private object can be taken only as an example of something which 'seems right,' and which requires some sort of possible substantiation before one can say it 'is right.' The problem which arises is whether, and by what means, one can make this distinction. But this is a proper question in regard to public, as well as private objects.

Ayer, thinking that it is a problem only in regard to private objects, maintains that Robinson could recognize things on his island in the sense that he could adapt his behavior to them. This supposition is, of course, probably quite true. Yet, there is one aspect of this 'recognition' of objects which will, I think, preclude the naming of these objects on the basis of recognition alone. As Ayer appears

to view recognition, Robinson would simply see that various objects were similar and react accordingly. Let us test this picture against an imaginary example. We will assume that Robinson throws stones, using them as weapons, and that he prefers one sort of stone for throwing purposes. The fact that he recognized a particular sort of stone as the sort that he preferred to throw would be signaled to us by the fact that he regularly passed over other rocks and selected this sort when he was about to throw. On the basis of this fact, observers might come to hold that he 'recognized' things in his environment inasmuch as he adapted his behavior to them. The fact that the observers classify his behavior as examples of 'recognition' seems to require that there is a similarity (what the observers would judge to fall under their concept of similarity) between the objects which seem to inspire a standard reaction on Robinson's part. To the observers, the various objects must seem to be similar if Robinson's reactions seem to be similar, or they have no basis for claiming any regularity. The apparent similarity of the objects is essential to the claim that Robinson 'recognizes' them. The observers, however, judge that the objects are similar on the basis of their own conceptual framework. That which they see as a point of similarity

might not enter into Robinson's concept of similarity at all. The observers might, then, be impressing their own concepts upon Robinson's behavior, and seeing a regularity from without which would not exist, if the situation was seen from within.

I want now to consider the basis upon which Robinson, himself, could distinguish between recognition and mistaken identification; between, that is, an object which seems to be of a particular sort and one which is of that sort. This is the same as asking the basis upon which he might be said to make judgements of similarity. (Here the concept of similarity which we impressed upon the situation no longer applies since he is judging things to be similar.) What is it about the object, then, which makes the difference, and in regard to which his behavior is adapted? This would be, it seems, the way in which the object fulfilled his expectations or wishes. Suppose Robinson wishes to kill a bird for dinner. After searching around, he finds a rock which seems to be of the preferred sort for throwing, and goes hunting. Unfortunately, when he sees a bird and throws, he misses badly. Perhaps he recovers the rock and tries again, and again misses by far. The rock seems to him to be of the sort to fulfill his purposes, yet it does

not. But the purpose was the basis of his selection, and not the object. I am saying here that the object appeared to him, so far as he could tell, to be of the kind to throw well. The selection was occasioned by the rock's appearance, but is justified by the fulfillment of Robinson's purposes. The rock seemed right, but was wrong. But the way in which this was determined was not on the basis of the rock's appearance, but on the basis of its behavior in regard to those of his activities which involved the rock. If the rock made no difference in his actions, we would have no basis for ever saying that he recognized the object at all. (I do not believe that any discussion of why the rock appeared right, or of why it did not behave as expected, is relevant here.) The only aspects of the object which are essential to his belief that it is an object of a particular sort, and in regard to which his identification of it is, or only seems right, are those aspects which, in some way, make a difference to the activities in which it is involved. And any aspect which does not directly affect those activities is inessential and in the event that those activities are unsatisfactory in their results, irrelevant (e.g. the color, shape, weight of the rock and so forth). The object, insofar as it involves these other, inessential aspects, drops out.

Whether or not we would judge it to be the same as others which had thrown well does not enter in. The correlation of those qualities by which it appeared to be the same to us can be taken as accidental and of no logical import to his identification. The object, again, drops out.

Ayer's purpose in introducing recognition (viewed as adaptation of behavior) was to afford a foundation for naming and the development of language. The conclusions, then, which applied to his recognition of objects to which he adapted his behavior should apply also to objects to which he adapts his linguistic behavior. The distinction between identification or 'recognition' of an object which 'seems' to be the object bearing a particular name and one that 'is' right should presumably be made upon the same basis: the success or failure of that name in the activities in which it is involved. The correctness of his identification of the named object depends wholly upon the success or failure of his uses of that name. As he has, presumably, identified the object for the purpose of referring to it in speech, whether the object is right or only seemed to be, depends not upon the object but upon the success of his reference to it in the language. What determines this success or failure in a case such as Robinson's? Robinson's

words are, according to Ayer, to be used in descriptions. But what is the aim of his descriptions, and what are the tests for their success? Since he is describing for the benefit of no other person and can, by stipulation, describe for no other person, he is not aiming for any reaction by another to his words. His aim would probably be simply to mirror, using words, the situation described. And: "His justification for describing his environment in the way [the particular words] that he does will be that he perceives it to have just those features which his words are intended to describe" (Ayer, p. 45). (vide Wittgenstein, paragraph 509: 'Suppose we asked someone "In what sense are these words a description of what you are seeing?" ---and he answers: "I mean this by these words."... Why is this answer "I mean this...." no answer at all?') But which features are his words intended to describe? How is he here to distinguish between the right word for the purpose of describing those features which he perceives and intends to describe and the wrong word? He chooses the words he uses because they seem to describe what he wishes to describe. This cannot also be his justification for saying that the words not only seemed right but were right; unless, of course, whatever seems right is right, but this,

as we have seen, has certain consequences. There seems to be no way of either achieving or failing the end to which he uses the words, and so he has not, in this case, even the test which he would have in the case of the mere recognition (in Ayer's sense) of the object.

Now this argument and its conclusion has ramifications for language which extend beyond the private language argument itself. The notion that the object which is named drops out will be considered in a different regard in the conclusion of this paper. Here we will apply the conclusion that there is no basis, apart from the success of one's uses of words, for making the distinction between the right and apparently right word, a bit more widely. As I have said, the point has been made by some, including Ayer (vide Ayer, p. 36), that the private language argument does not apply to private codes or to our ordinary public language when it is used in isolation. It is held that it only applies to the names of objects which are in principle private. I wish, however, to maintain that it applies to both private codes and our ordinary public language, provided one stipulates that the user of the language is, in fact, isolated from any practical check. The user of a language in such circumstances would have little more basis

for the distinction between a word which seems right and one which is right than one who named a private object. His belief that he used the code or the language correctly would be his 'memory' alone. This leads to the apparent conclusion that language in isolation from others is not possible. Yet we do not wish to say that Robinson Crusoe could not use language, or that he forgot English while cast away. Yet our grounds for saying that he had not forgotten or that he could use language would be all based upon his behavior when he returned to civilization, and this only refers to that time. On each occasion of the use of any word by any person whatsoever, unless the user is subject to practical checks, there is no way of distinguishing between a use which seems right and one which is right. The difference between those cases and the case of someone who made a private ostensive definition would be mainly that the user of the private-object word could never establish a use, whereas the user of English in these circumstances would have established the habit of correct use. But, of course, habits can fail. It might be the case that every user of English ceased, while in isolation, to use his words correctly, in the sense that hidden observers, if any, could observe that they were incorrect. (The difficulties with such observation have

been touched upon in our discussion of Strawson.) I will conclude this point with a reminder. We do not say that people, unchecked, fail in their ability to speak their language. But our justification for saying so depends upon their behavior when they can again be checked. The situation described is, for purposes of illumination, deliberately placed outside the reach of what we would ordinarily say.

The conclusion of this discussion is that language can exist, that is, the concept can be properly applied, only in contexts of interaction. The distinction between seems right and is right is, in the case of language, dependent upon our existence as social beings. Language, then, cannot be held to exist altogether apart from this interaction through words. Interaction is essential, so the Robinson Crusoe argument cannot succeed.

MISCELLANEOUS INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter will be the last to deal centrally with views which might be considered hostile to the private language argument. However, the views which will be considered here differ in a nebulous way from those considered in the preceding chapters. They do not constitute full scale attacks upon the argument or its steps, but, rather, focus upon 'by-products' or consequences of the argument. They are presented by their authors, as being reconstructions of 'what Wittgenstein is saying' and are the sorts of things which would tend to dispose their readers against the private language argument. My approach to these offerings will be to try to show that they result from misconceptions on the part of their authors.

I

The first of these which I shall consider is the claim made by Judith Jarvis Thomson that the argument "is, properly understood, something very familiar and rather trite" (Thomson, p. 20). It amounts, she believes, to no more, and no less, than the Principle of Verification, and

must stand or fall with that principle. This aspect of the argument she finds to emerge when the several steps which it involves are brought out into the open. These are as follows:

...if a sign "K" which a man uses is to be a name of a kind of thing in a language, his use of it must be governed by a rule of the form, X's and only X's are to be called "K's." (Thomson, p. 23)

If a sign "K" which a man uses is to be a kind-name in a language, then it must be possible that he should call a thing a "K," thinking it is an X when it is not an X, where it is the X's and only the X's which (in his use) are to be called "K." (Thomson, p. 24)

There is no such thing as a man's thinking a thing is of the kind to be called "K" and it not being so unless it is logically possible that it be found out that it is not so. (Thomson, pp. 26-27)

These points, when taken together, add up to the Principle of Verification. To be sure, the argument does not explicitly present the Principle in the older form which as, in its time, inspired such strong feelings both favorable and unfavorable. But there is, she believes, no significant difference between them.

We are no longer to say that what purports to be a kind-name "K" has meaning if and only if it is possible to find out whether or not a thing is a "K." But we are instead to say that what purports to be a kind-name "K" is a kind-name in a man's language only if it is possible to find out whether or not a thing is a "K." (Thomson, p. 29)

The equation having been made, not wishing to consider the

validity of the argument, or the truth of its conclusion, at any length, she rests. (It might be of interest to note here that she does not attribute the private language argument to Wittgenstein, but to his followers, and she lays the apparent weakness of the conclusion at the feet of the followers. This opinion she bases on Wittgenstein's frequent claim that he offered no thesis.)

Mrs. Thomson's view of the argument is especially interesting in light of the role which the followers of Wittgenstein (and Wittgenstein himself) have played in the history of the Principle of Verification. Ironically, she has attributed the Principle to the very people who have been most instrumental in its decline. For, as a matter of fact, this decline seems, historically, to have been brought about by, more than anything else, the exposure of certain inadequacies which were made by Wittgenstein and those who philosophize in similar veins. Now it seems to me that she is right, to a certain extent, and that there is a definite relationship between the Principle of Verification and the private language argument. However, this relationship is of much greater complexity than Mrs. Thomson has indicated in her equation of the two and her denial that there are any significant differences between them. This

complexity is of importance and ought to be brought out to some extent if Mrs. Thomson's claim is to be evaluated.

There is one difference between the private language argument and the Principle of Verification which any equation of the two almost certainly glosses over, but which cannot be emphasized strongly enough if one is to avoid treating Wittgenstein unjustly. This is the simple fact that the Principle of Verification ruled that some words were to be considered meaningless, and therefore not words after all. The 'principle' which underlies the private language argument denies meaning to no sound (or mark) which is ordinarily considered to be a word. This underlying 'principle' only denies that words can function in a particular way. 'Pain' is not held to be meaningless if its reference to an object of a certain sort cannot be verified; it is not even denied the status of a 'kind-name.' It maintains simply that if a particular object is to be the essential condition for a word's correct use, it must be possible that the objects presence or absence be discoverable by someone.

A second difference between the two which ought in no way to be disregarded is the difference in their logical nature. The Principle of Verification, as it is

usually understood, states (loosely) that a proposition is meaningful if it can be verified. And, I think, a meaningful word is one which occurs integrally in some verifiable propositions. The 'principle' around which the private language argument seems to be built appears to assert that every word (and every sentence) must have conditions for its correct application, of a sort which someone can discover. The denial of the former would, I think, imply that there is at least one word which is meaningful and which appears in synthetic propositions none of which can be verified. The denial of the latter would seem to assert that there is at least one word (or sentence) of which the conditions for the correct application can be discovered by no one. The denial of the Principle of Verification seems to be straight-forward, and quite possibly true. One thinks of words which certainly seem to be meaningful enough which could not be subject to any verification, e.g., 'good,' 'God,' 'ultimate reality,' and so forth. The denial of the 'principle' involved in the private language argument seems to be of a different sort. No counter examples leap to mind. One is even a bit puzzled as to what could possibly stand as a counter example. It might be termed, I think, a conceptual contradiction, inasmuch as it seems

to deny a necessary requirement for 'wordness.' Someone might wish, of course, to offer as a counter example to this contention, the very word which is so central to the private language controversy, 'pain.' But this will not do, for I have found no one of the opponents of the argument who has ventured to maintain that there are no discoverable conditions for the application of the word. Rather they have concentrated upon trying to produce ways in which the conditions could be discovered. Nor do I think that the staunchest advocate of the possibility of a private language would care to maintain that 'pain' is a word for the use of which there are no conditions that can be discovered by any person.

As I stated a bit earlier, the two principles are related. This relationship appears to be both historical and logical. The 'principle' of the private language argument might be considered to be an extension of the Principle of Verification which eventually devoured it. We have already noted some of the differences, and, necessarily, indicated some of the similarities. But there could be a balder statement. One might, I think, say that the statement, 'the word X is applied in such-and-such circumstances' must be subject to possible verification by someone (if only the user of the word) if X is to be a word. Seen this way, it

appears clear that verification is involved in the private language argument, but it is perfectly possible to accept this statement and at the same time deny the Principle of Verification. If the two were not significantly different, one could not, of course, do this.

II

Peter Strawson, as might be expected, agrees to a great extent with the view put forward in the Philosophical Investigations, yet argues that at one point Wittgenstein goes too far. This point is reached when he comes, as Strawson understands him, to deny that 'pain' is the name of a sensation (vide Strawson, p. 83-89). Here Strawson balks, for far from it being the case that 'pain' is the name of a sensation, he finds: "One could say: that pain is a sensation (or, that sensations have the special status they have) is a fact of nature which dictates the logic of 'pain'" (Strawson, p. 88).

This seems to me to be a particularly strong and valid point. If Wittgenstein denies that 'pain' is the name of a sensation, then he is surely wrong and no amount of argument can get around the fact.

How how does Wittgenstein deny that 'pain' names a

sensation? He says that it does not name a private object. If sensations are private objects, then to deny that 'pain' is the name of a private object is to deny that 'pain' is the name of a sensation. Thus, it seems that Strawson believes that the word 'sensation' refers to a class of private objects (and is, perhaps, explained by references to them), and that he believes Wittgenstein to share his view. For how else could he take Wittgenstein's denial that 'pain' is the name of a private object to amount to Wittgenstein's denial that 'pain' is the name of a sensation?

Let us try to see if these beliefs can be attributed to Wittgenstein. To begin with, if he held the belief he seems not to have been aware of it. He speaks often of pain as being a sensation (e.g. Wittgenstein, paragraph 244: "how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations?---of the word 'pain' for example"). Rather, I think, he would deny that 'sensations' refer to a class of private objects.

Strawson might, however, have based his view of Wittgenstein's conclusion on the idea that the use of sensation names, including 'pain,' requires that these words name private objects. Thus, the way in which sensation names are applied would depend, either logically or

empirically, upon the existence of some private objects. So, to deny the existence of such objects would amount to a denial that such words could function or be used as they actually appear to function or be used. But Wittgenstein seems to have considered such a possibility. In regard to the notion that the use of sensation words logically require this assumption of private objects, he offers the now well known passage:

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 a 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.
(Wittgenstein, paragraph 293)

It appears, then, that one can assume that a private object differs from person to person, changes from time to time, or even does not exist without being logically required to assume that the use of the word purported to name that object varies in any noticeable way.

There remains, then, the idea that a private object is as a matter of observed fact, required to explain the

uses of the word 'pain.' But this view seems to imply that we have observed our uses of the word (in reference to ourself) and have discovered that there is a particular 'something' which causes us to use it. However, the private language argument itself can be seen as an argument against the very possibility of such observations and discovery. So it seems that this means of defending the idea that sensations are private objects depends, for its success, upon the failure of the private language argument. And, so far as I have been able to tell, the private language argument has been able to withstand every attack made upon it. I must conclude, then, that Strawson's interpretation, wherein he finds Wittgenstein to deny that any words name sensations, is erroneous.

III

There is, I think, one other misinterpretation of Wittgenstein's views which ought to be cleared up for the reason that if it is left undenied, it lends a prima facie silliness to the private language argument. This is illustrated by Strawson's belief that what Wittgenstein "...has committed himself to is the view that one cannot sensibly be said to recognize or identify anything, unless one uses

criteria" (Strawson, p. 86). Another, similar interpretation is offered by Helen Hervey when she says, describing Wittgenstein's views: "...if the sensation he [anyone] is trying to record is an itch, for example, then if he is not permitted to scratch himself (or behave in some other appropriate fashion) then he cannot know whether he has an itch or not" (Hervey, p. 70). Again we have a view which, if held by Wittgenstein, is rightly damaging to his claim; and again the question remains whether or not he did express the view.

Once more we can offer statements made by Wittgenstein which appear to run counter to this interpretation. Thus we find him saying: "What I do is not of course, to identify my sensation by criteria: but to repeat an expression" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 290). In spite of counter-examples, however, there does seem to be a basis for this interpretation. Wittgenstein does refer often, and perhaps ambiguously, to 'criteria.' We find him saying: "But we forget that what should interest us is the question: how do we compare these experiences; what criteria of identity do we fix for their occurrences" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 322)? However, I believe that the interpretation which would find him demanding that we identify our itch on the basis of

seeing ourselves scratching arises through the mistake of assimilating two sorts of expressions between which Wittgenstein wishes to distinguish, and through certain confusions concerning the roles which recognition and criteria play in our use of words.

Let us consider, first, the role of recognition and criteria in our uses of words. It might be remembered that it was earlier held that, in most cases in which we use words, we do not explicitly recognize the object to which the descriptive word or name refers. In the same vein, our uses of words are not, in most cases, based upon conscious reference to criteria. We simply use the word. There are, of course, cases in which our recognition is explicit, and cases in which we do appeal to criteria. However, these seem to be mainly confined to instances wherein we have not learned well the use of the word, or to borderline cases. In order to illustrate the way in which criteria are related to our uses of words, let us consider several different sorts of names. One such sort could be illustrated by our use of the word 'giraffe.' Most of us have no trouble in using this word. Neither do we recognize when we see them and use the word. However, a person who has not yet learned the name well ('internalized' it, perhaps) could be said to recognize giraffes and to apply

the criteria for its use. Thus someone might say 'I recognize it as a giraffe because it has a long neck, blunt horns, and black spots.' Here the criteria and the basis for recognition consist in the defining characteristics of giraffes. However, a name of a radically different sort would be 'red,' and color names in general. Here there seem to be no criteria for the use of the word in the sense of defining characteristics. If there is anything which can be said to be a criterion for its use, and which justifies us in our use of the word, it must be the reaction of others who speak English to our use of the word. It is true that this is the ultimate justification for our use of any word, but in the words 'red' it seems to be the only justification there is. Our learning of this word consists in coming to use it in such a way that others don't correct our uses. One might say that we come to 'know' or 'recognize' the color red, but it must be realized that this 'knowledge' or 'recognition' consists primarily in the ability to use it 'correctly.' We come to a point at which we simply use the word and are not corrected. (It should be mentioned here that the use and justification of the use of color words is a bit more complicated than is indicated here. But this complexity is not of a sort to affect my point.)

This discussion comes to bear on the point at hand;

that is, the view that Wittgenstein believes that we know we are in pain on the basis of criteria when one considers a sort of word which is similar to the two preceding sorts in certain respects. Included in this group of words are sensation-names. These words are similar to words such as 'giraffe' in that there are uses which are justified by appeals to criteria, and are similar to words such as 'red' in that there are uses for which there are no criteria if one excepts the reactions of others. In order to bring out the dual nature of such words, it will be helpful to distinguish between first person pain-statements and third (or second) person pain-statements, and the ways in which we come to use these. Our first encounters with the word (or, at least, concept) 'pain' is almost invariably in a situation where someone else says that we are in pain. Eventually we come to use the word to refer to ourselves, and finally we come to be able to say correctly that another is in pain. Now the person who says that we are in pain can be said to do so on the basis of criteria. If he were asked why he said this, he could and probably would (again an over simplification) appeal to aspects of our behavior (e.g. crying, agitation, careful treatment of the injured area, etc.). So these second and third person statements can be likened

to the use of words such as 'giraffe.' They can be applied on the basis of, and justified by appeals to factors other than the reactions of others. Now we, hearing these words, come to be able to apply them to ourselves. But the application of sensation words to oneself can be likened more closely to the use of words such as 'red' than to those such as 'giraffe.' Our appeals for the sake of justification are not, and cannot be, to criteria. We come to know what the word means, but this amounts to how to use it without running afoul of others' uses. Our uses might be said to be 'on the basis' of the reactions of others (if any basis for these uses is claimed). Our uses come to be coincidental with the criteria for third person pain statements because our use of the word in such circumstances is not corrected. But what we have acquired is a habit, or a disposition to use the words at certain times, or simply, "to repeat an expression" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 290). It seems to be for this reason that Wittgenstein says that our statements of our pains are "connected with the primitive, the natural expressions of sensation and used in their place" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 244). It is for this reason, also, that the situation is not, as Miss Hervey imagines, one in which we say we are in pain because of the presence of certain

natural expressions of pain. We have no reason for saying we are in pain except that we are; in fact the private language argument is directed against the notion that there would be one such reason. We simply come to use (or internalize the impulse to use) the word at certain times. It is because Miss Hervey assimilates the function of first and third person pain statements, and because she confuses the role which criteria play in the use of these statements that she is tempted to interpret Wittgenstein the way she does. The problem seems to disappear when one realizes that he is not saying that every use of a word must be justifiable by appeals to criteria. "To use a word without justification does not mean to use it without right" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 289).

This then, should clear up the more prevalent misinterpretations of Wittgenstein's conclusions, and complete our discussion of the actual participants in the controversy over the private language argument.

CONCLUSION

Our interest has, up until this time, been focused upon various criticisms of the private language argument which have been put forward. My admitted purpose throughout the discussion, has been to defend the private language argument against its critics, and I think that this undertaking has been successful. It might now be interesting to take a more general look at the argument, the reasons it has survived, the criticisms directed against it, and the origins of the private language problem itself. Pursuing the discussion in this way I hope to be able to indicate, with some degree of clarity, Wittgenstein's view of philosophical problems and their origins, and his manner of resolving them.

The structure of the private language argument, as it has been seen in this paper, can be presented rather simply. One might, I think, distinguish the following steps as its constituents:

1. If a word is a name, there is something which it names. If a word is the name of some particular thing, or sort of thing, then there are some things, actual or possible, to which it does not apply. This is to say that every application of a name

which is logically possible cannot be equally acceptable. A name names something.

2. If the preceding is true, then there must be some difference between the 'right' and 'wrong' objects (the objects which the word names and those which it does not) by virtue of which the application of the name is right or wrong.

3. This requires that, since language is used by, and essentially dependent upon its use by, people, this difference be discoverable by someone, if only the user of the name.

4. This person must be able to distinguish between what seems, to the user of the word, to be the proper object, and what is. This means that in the case of private entities the user of the word himself must be able to distinguish between objects which only seem to him to be 'right' and those which actually are right.

5. But the application of the word 'seems' is such that every object which the user would identify as 'right' (or wrong), whether it is or is not actually 'right' (or wrong), and whether or not it is so identified as the result of some alteration of prior identification, still remains under the scope of 'seems.'

6. The distinction, then between that which seems right and that which is right cannot be made, and the user of the word cannot distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong' uses of a name. The name can, so far as anyone is concerned, be equally well applied to any object.

The steps of the argument (aside from step six) seem all to be conceptually true statements. Central to the entire argument is the distinction, and the necessity that it be possible, between what seems to be the case and what actually

is the case. And it is this distinction, as we have seen, which has been the focus of most of the criticism of the argument. The various critics have concentrated on trying to produce some private standards which the distinction could be made. They seem not, however, to have attended to the full generality of this distinction as it is indicated in step four. As a consequence, the tests they have offered as means by which to determine what is the case have all, of necessity, been subjective, and so, instances of what seems to be the case. If the distinction must be made, then it seems that a private language cannot be.

One might, however, discard the necessity of this distinction, as Castaneda seems to have attempted, by pointing out the fact that the very word around which the argument appears centered is one to which the distinction seems not to apply, even if it is made on public grounds. The use of the word 'pain' is such that if a person who speaks English believes that he is in pain, then he is, in fact, in pain. If 'pain' seems to him to be the correct word for what he feels, it is. This point, however, does not seem to be of any aid to the advocates of the possibility of a private language. For it does not follow that he understands the word by knowing what it stands for. As we have seen,

the object could be constantly shifting its aspect. One cannot be said to know what is pain if it could possibly be anything at all. Any object which would happen to inspire the word 'pain' would be pain. This seems to conflict with step one of the argument, and seems to give no ground for saying that one knows his own pains any better than he knows those of another.

Let us here take a look at the sort of argument which, it would seem, produced the notion of a private object to which a name is attached. This argument can be viewed as beginning with step one and two above, and continuing as follows:

3. To know what a name means, one must know to what it refers.
4. There are some names which do not refer to any publicly available object, an example of which would be 'pain.'
5. Either pain is not a name or it refers to a private object and cannot be understood by others. It is surely a name, and so it must refer to some private entity.

Here again, as in the case of the private language argument, we seem to be faced with a number of statements---conceptually true---which no one would wish to deny. Yet the two arguments seem to come to contradictory conclusions. One wishes to say, because of the apparent conceptual truth of the

steps, that each is acceptable. Yet both can't be. Here again the very word around which the argument seems centered seems to pose a counter example. For we like to think that we do know what 'pain' means, and that we do understand the word when it is used in reference to pains other than our own.

We now find that we have been led into the presence of a fundamental conflict between two arguments, each apparently acceptable in its body, which lead to contradictory conclusions. One leads to the conclusion that it is logically impossible to have a privately meaningful word, the other to the conclusion that we do in fact, even must, have such words. We feel that we are compelled to choose one or the other; yet we seem to have no good reason for doing so, or grounds upon which to do so. There is clearly something wrong somewhere. When one finds oneself in such straits, it is very often helpful to make a distinction, and I shall try to do so. The distinction which suggests itself is based upon a conflict which we have encountered throughout our discussion. The one side seems to hold that a name is applied on the basis of the object which is named, the other, only that there must be some conditions for the application of the name. We will, then, distinguish

between the object which a word names, and the conditions for the application of the name, and between the roles which these two play in the functioning of names. Now this distinction appears odd and repugnant to us because we have the seemingly natural inclination to consider, at least in the case of names, these two to be the same. There are, of course, apparent exceptions, names for which we seem to be able to discover no corresponding objects. Among these might be non-existent or fictional 'objects' and their names. But ways have been developed for the purpose of allowing us, in some way, to get away from any damaging effects these exceptions might have; a notable example would be Russell's theory of Descriptions. Using this device we seem to be permitted to keep our idea of the way in which names function, yet encompass the apparent exceptions; and we are able to continue to hold the seemingly impregnable notion that the object which a word names constitutes the condition for its applications. But there still arise, as this paper should indicate, certain other difficulties. The private language argument remains. So the possibility that a distinction between the two might be needed suggests itself.

The basis upon which this distinction can be made should at this point, be familiar. It might be remembered

that in our discussion of the Robinson Crusoe argument we were led to hold that there is a sense in which the object which a word names 'drops out' of the linguistic activities which are carried out using the names. It was maintained that the test of whether one's use of a word was correct or not was not, ultimately, an appeal to the object itself, but to the success of one's uses of language. These activities will generally be successful if words are applied consistently with the accepted conditions for their application. In the case of 'pain,' for instance, these would be the various criteria by which pain is ascribed to someone. The criteria rest ultimately on human agreement and so must be publicly available.

There is something odd about saying that the object which a word names, of all things, drops out and is not essential to the application of the name. But it is simply meant to mean that the object in itself does not serve as a logically necessary determinant of the correctness of the applications of its name. This will, perhaps, be clearer if we recall the case of the beetle in its box, but now we will allow the beetle to be public. When the beetle is considered to be private, it is not logically required for the success of the linguistic activities which involve

its name. The word 'beetle' has a role in the language; it can even be said to be the name of an object. But the object does not play an essential role apart from the activities surrounding its name. The same should be true if it is public. The beetle could be constantly changing when considered from the standpoint of an 'objective' spectator (one who was not involved with the particular language being considered), while the users of the language could carry on without a hitch. This offends us on empirical grounds. We wish to say that it scarcely seems possible that the uses of the language could change to keep up with a beetle. But in this case, language, and what can be said, precedes the empirical. To speak meaningfully of the changing or remaining constant here, one would have to step out of his language, and its context or framework. But those who would say that the object could not be changing are within the language. Logically, it is perfectly possible that the language could continue to work. For it is only within the human world that it plays a part. And if one could still ask for the beetle, tell another person to step on it, ask where it is, describe it, and so forth, without running into trouble with one's interactions, one need have no concern as to whether he is really using the words to refer to

the same object. The object then, is not logically necessary for the correct use of the word.

The conditions for the word's application, as we have indicated, are logically necessary. The question will probably arise here whether these conditions ought to be given the same status which is ascribed to the object. But as we have said, the ultimate conditions for the application of any word or name is human agreement. Sometimes these conditions are termed 'criteria,' and these seem to imply something about the object itself. But these criteria seem ultimately to rest on human agreement themselves. "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 242). A criterion for 'girafe-ness' is a long neck. But for use of the word to be justified by an appeal to this criterion, it is only necessary that others agree in accepting this as a criterion, and agree in ascribing a long neck to the animal which is being identified. These conditions must be public in order that they can play a role in the various uses of language.

Taking this distinction between the object which a word names and the conditions for its application, we can, I think, have a different perspective of our problem. The

conditions for the application of a name become our ultimate basis for our knowledge of how to use the name, and of our ability to understand the name. But the role of the object seems to be diminished. The first step in both the private language argument and in the argument which seemed to show the necessity for private objects held that a name refers to something. One speaks of the object which a word names, but on the basis of this distinction this object need not have any factual status. Its existence, as implied by such statements as 'names stand for things,' is grammatical. The various statements of the two arguments need not be ascribed any factual significance. They can be taken as grammatical statements, statements which are conceptually true, but which are endowed with no necessary factual claims. This is not to be taken to deny these objects existence in some sense. The objects in themselves and apart from the activities surrounding them, simply remain outside of the uses of our language.

Adopting this distinction and the notion of the object as 'grammatical' and outside of the language, one is spared the necessity of concluding, from Wittgenstein's discussion, that the statement 'he is in pain' is equivalent to the statement 'he is manifesting pain-behavior,' from

having to say, that, when one attends to his own pain and says 'that is pain,' he is referring to nothing. The 'something,' if it is anything, plays a grammatical role, and does not constitute a condition for the use of the word (vide Wittgenstein, paragraph 304). One can, I think, even say now that 'pain' names a private object, but say it as a grammatical statement rather than as a statement of fact (vide Wittgenstein, paragraph 248). We are able to accommodate all of the grammatical statements about 'pain' and see, perhaps, the meaning of Wittgenstein's claim that he is not offering theses, but changing the 'pictures' which one is led to form of, and from, the uses of words. For we do not deny any of the statements made in the arguments (except the conclusion, perhaps), but have suggested other interpretations of these steps. One is led to stop viewing these statements as having the factual status and implications that they seem to require. So we find Wittgenstein saying to the advocate of the existence or possibility of a private language: "You interpret a grammatical movement made by yourself as a quasi-physical phenomenon which you are observing" (Wittgenstein, paragraph 401).

The conclusion which I hope one will be able to draw from the foregoing discussion is that one cannot really say

that the private language advocate is wrong. His statements, being largely grammatical statements, are 'true,' and his reasoning seems valid. Certainly it would be improper to charge such a person with error. The most one can accuse him of is having made a misleading interpretation of the statement that a name stands for something. But, although the interpretation which he makes is misleading, and, as we have seen, generative of difficulties, it is a natural and honest one, one which seems to be implied by the very language from which it is drawn. There is no condescension when Wittgenstein holds that philosophers are misled by language. He is emphatic that their 'mistakes' are not stupid mistakes. One might say that philosophers in their discussion, are making the highest kind of sense, that which is indicated by their logic and the language which they use. But the more attentive one is to these, the greater will be his temptation to overstep the bounds.

I would have liked, here, to have adequately described Wittgenstein's views, and while to a large extent in agreement with them, I would have liked to lay them out in such a way that one could see at least the paths which serious criticisms would have to take. I have not done these things, nor do I really think that it can be done

without a large danger of falsifying those views which are to be described. I think Wittgenstein wished to have been able to do so himself, but was not able (cf. Wittgenstein, Preface, page IX). So it is that one finds no full scale description of his methods or their foundations in the Philosophical Investigations. Rather the book is composed of examples, analogies, aphorisms, and enigmatic hints. It is certainly not a philosophical work in the usual sense in which a work contains arguments and assertions.

The reason for the form in which the work is presented is, I think, due to the central position held by the view that philosophical problems arise directly out of our forms of expression and our reasoning on their basis. To have become involved in the usual sort of philosophical writing would have led him into the creation of new (or the recreation of old) philosophical problems. Since the development of arguments on the basis of our ordinary forms of expression would have had this effect, he was forced to content himself with the indication of various aspects of our language, and with the posing of questions, both of which were intended to draw attention to often unnoticed aspects of our uses of language, and to change the reader's manner of interpreting the forms of expression with which

he lives. Perhaps another language would prove more adequate for the discussion with which he was concerned. But Wittgenstein disavows any attempt to create such a language and, perhaps, the very possibility of the success of the attempts. I have, to a certain extent, put forward descriptions of his views; however, on every occasion, as I attempted to reason on their basis, I found myself led away from them, not because they seemed false, or incorrect, but because I began to be led by the language again. Even to the extent to which I have described and discussed, there seems to have begun to appear falsifications. I don't know how this could have been avoided, except by, perhaps, mirroring Wittgenstein's manner of presentation. But even this would not have led to perfect clarity.

My original purpose, in undertaking this paper, was to defend the private language argument against its more able critics. If what I have accomplished has any value, it does not lie, I think, in the defense of the argument, but in any illumination of the argument and of Wittgenstein's ideas and methods which might have come about as a by-product of the discussion. I hope, at most, that it has not failed at this.

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