NAMES, NAMING, AND THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The private language problem, as such, is a twentieth century phenomenon. This "problem" is in fact a network of interconnected problems and questions which, if traced out, eventually lead to many different areas of philosophical concern and bring in many of the perennial philosophical questions. The center of concern is the question, which gives this network its name, of whether a private language is possible. By 'private language' is meant, neither a language which only one or a few people happen to known, nor a code devised to keep communications private to a particular group, but a language which, in principle, only its speaker can understand. In other words, the central problem is whether there can be, or perhaps in fact are, words or signs with meanings that can, in principle, be known only by their user. The relatively recent awareness of and interest in this problem has been generated primarily by portions of Ludwig Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations.[1]

However, as Saunders and Henze have put it, "the private language problem is at once as old as philosophy and as new as television."[2] The sense in which this problem is as old as philosophy is that many philosophical opinions throughout the history of philosophy can be seen to entail at least the possibility, and often the existence of private languages, in areas of our common language (the areas in question being those dealing with sensations, emotions, and experiences), although the

formulators of such opinions may not have been aware of this aspect of their views (and certainly didn't discuss this aspect directly). It has been suggested, for example, that the works of Protagoras, Hobbes, Descartes, and Locke all entail the possibility or actual existence of private languages.[3]

In order to understand the relation between this historical aspect of the problem and its emergence in modern and contemporary philosophical debate a few words about the nature of Wittgenstein's Investigations and his approach to philosophy are necessary. As is well known, in the Investigations Wittgenstein attacked a number of traditionally held philosophical beliefs including many which he had himself held earlier in his career (such as the belief in "essences"), and he did this in a new sort of way. He did not offer counter arguments to specific philosophical theories, and then offer and defend theories of his own to replace them, but rather offered considerations about the general nature and functioning of language intended to show that many philosophical problems are at bottom confusions resulting from linguistic misconceptions, misunderstandings about how language functions. Part of the problem, however, was that the confusions Wittgenstein exposed were confusions only implicit in the traditional philosophical theories involved. That is, part of his work must be seen as bringing out general theories of the functioning of language which were implicit and quite unrecognized, or automatically presupposed as unexceptionable, by much traditional philosophy. Then he brought these exposed theories of language into question. This two part approach to philosophical investigation is that often currently referred to as diagnosis and elucidation of linguistic confusions, and forms the basis of the

"school" of philosophy which employs this method, sometimes referred to as "linguistic analysis" or "ordinary language philosophy".

But Wittgenstein himself, in the Investigations, very seldom specifically mentioned other philosophers and took no special pains to relate the views he attacked (which were usually presented by means of an imaginary interlocutor) to those of well known and traditionally recognized figures in the history of philosophy or to those of his contemporaries. In a very few cases, specific, direct quotations or paraphrases from other philosophers are cited as such by Wittgenstein, and in a few others, statements of Wittgenstein's interlocutor are easily recognizable as the views of some particular philosopher,[4] but for the most part the views criticised in the Investigations are compounded out of many sources and represent basic elements common to many other philosophies, and in these cases the sometimes quite difficult job of recognizing this connection is left to the reader. For this reason, a great deal of the "diagnostic" aspect of Wittgenstein's approach, (that is, the job of showing that some particular philosopher's work presupposes, implies, or entails the general views criticised by Wittgenstein) has been bequeathed to his successors.

It remains quite possible, however, to discuss the views presented by Wittgenstein's interlocutor on their own, so to speak, without demonstrating some specific connection between them and the views of a particular philosopher (or philosophers), even when such a connection is not obvious. Two ways in which such a discussion is useful are, first, the case in which someone wished to argue that Wittgenstein did not successfully defeat the views expressed by his interlocutor and so, whether or not these views are entailed or presupposed by those of

anyone else, no successful criticism could result; and second, the case in which someone might attempt to criticise another's view by first getting him to agree independently that, for example, a private language is impossible, and then proceeding to demonstrate that his view entails the possibility of a private language and so must be rejected. Of course there is also the fact that the basic questions of the private language problem are quite fascinating in their own right, but the full significance of the problem can only be appreciated when the connection between it and traditional philosophy is recognized.

The fact remains, however, that there are these two distinguishable aspects of the private language problem: the diagnosis of traditional philosophical works as involving this problem, and the elucidation of the problem itself, i.e., independent discussion of whether any of our words have private meanings or whether it would be possible to invent such words. The focus of this thesis is on the latter aspect of the problem.

There is yet another preliminary matter which must be discussed before the purposes of this paper can be clearly set out. Although Wittgenstein raised the question of private language and, as is generally recognized, opposed the view that any words in our common language have private meanings, there is considerable confusion as to what he offered beyond this, the Philosophical Investigations being notoriously cryptic and obscure, and Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy being quite novel.

There are several possible positions with respect to the private language problem, all of which have been occupied at various times by various philosophers. In addition to (1) the traditional view that

such a language is not only possible, but that areas of our common language are of this nature, there is (2) the view that although our common language is indeed public, still it is possible that one should invent a private language, and (3) the view that a private language is not possible. View (3) may take various forms according to the reasons adduced for the alleged impossibility, sometimes pitting two opponents of private language against each other as to why such a language is impossible. Disagreement also may erupt between holders of views (2) and (3) as to why no areas of our common language are private.

In any case, part of the private language problem is the question of names and naming. The possibility of a private language hinges upon the notion of naming: it involves the notion of directly associating names with logically private data. One who claims (or whose philosophy entails the view) that there are words in our language the meanings of which can be known only by the speaker, sensation and emotion words usually being the ones in question, will be required to explain how such words acquire their private meanings, such an explanation usually taking the form of a description of a sort of private act of naming (conferring a name on a private object or datum). One who denies that any of the words of our language have private meanings may do so on the grounds that this notion of private acts of naming is defective, and will need to indicate how the words in question do function. One who claims the impossibility of a private language will likewise be required to comment on the matter of names and naming. In the body of literature which has recently built up around these questions, not only have all of the various possible views of the matter been defended, but several different views have been defended

in the name of Wittgenstein, as interpretations of his position in the Philosophical Investigations.

The purpose of this thesis is multiple. What is offered here is, first, a series of what I hope are relatively clear examples of the possible positions with respect to the private language problem, showing the reasons adduced for them and the objections to them. The views examined will also serve as examples of various views of names and naming. As mentioned earlier, the focus of the paper is on the recent debate of the problem, which has been relatively independent of questions of an historical nature. Thus, the traditional view (that parts of our language are private) is only characterized to provide background for the development of the views opposing it in various ways. At the same time, I have tried to make it clear that this traditional view must be rejected. Since it does seem that the full significance of the problem can only be appreciated by seeing its connection with the actual history of philosophy, an appendix note has been attached to this thesis providing an example of the diagnosis of a traditional view needed to establish this connection.

Following this initial characterization of the traditional view referred to above as view (1), representatives of positions (2) and (3) appear. View (3), or rather, one form of view (3), that a private language is impossible, appears first, exemplified by the work of George Pitcher. This is followed by the work of Alan Donagan as a representative of view (2), that a private language is possible, though no part of our common language is of this nature. This order is used because Donagan's view includes criticism of Pitcher's.

The second purpose of this thesis concerns the confusion over the

interpretation of Wittgenstein's position in the Investigations. The two views presented, those of Pitcher and Donagan, serve not only as examples of different possible positions, but each is also presented by its author as Wittgenstein's view, and so the two exemplify the interpretation problem, as well.

The third purpose of this thesis is to show that Pitcher's and Donagan's views are themselves as unacceptable as the traditional view and that neither in fact represents a correct understanding of the Investigations.

Finally, I hope to indicate what the main point of a correct understanding of the Investigations is, and that this is in fact, the correct solution to the private language problem.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (New York, 1958), In subsequent textual references, this work will be referred to merely as the Investigations, as has become customary.

[2]John Turk Saunders and Donald F. Henze, The Private Language Problem, (New York, 1967), p. 4.

[3]Ibid., p. 1. Hobbes' view is briefly examined in Appendix.

[4]Cf, e.g., Wittgenstein, p. 109: "William James, in order to show that thought is possible without speech..."

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

What is here referred to as the traditional view of language and the private language problem, seems to come to one quite naturally and easily. In fact, the traditional view of language may seem so plausible, so basic a fact, as not even to need any discussion. This seems to be precisely why the traditional view treated of in this section is, in a sense, an artificial creation. But it is artificial only in the sense that it can be seen to underlie the work of many philosophers, rather than to come in for explicit discussion by them. Thus, the traditional view of language is more a diagnosis of the source of many traditional philosophical problems than an ostensible component of traditional philosophy. However, its value as a diagnosis is not here in question, only its plausibility is.[1]

The traditional view may come about in answer to a question like "How does language function?", or "What is the essence of language?". There seems to be an obvious and rather simple answer. Language consists of words, which are signs, names, for things. By assigning words to refer to things, to label them, so to speak, we are able to communicate about the world. What a word means is the thing for which it is a sign; that is, the meaning of a word is its referent. And thus, learning language consists in learning which words refer to which things. Here we seem to have the basic constituents of language, name-labels, and the basic operation involved in learning language, the attaching of

the appropriate labels to the appropriate things.

As Wittgenstein has pointed out, St. Augustine expresses a view quite like this in his Confessions.[2] In the passage quoted by Wittgenstein, Augustine speaks of language as a series of names (nouns like the names for pieces of furniture, and people's names) learned individually and then strung together in sentences. Notably, "Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word"[3], but seems to think of whatever other kinds there might be as "something that will take care of itself"[4], as not central to the functioning of language, as not part of the "essence" of language. This notion of the functioning of language as a fairly unified and simple process consisting of the association of names with objects (which are the meanings of the words) is characteristic of the traditional view.

Of course only a little reflection will remind someone that not all of the words in our language are nouns like 'chair' and 'Socrates'. But again, whatever other sorts there are seem insignificant or seem to differ only in some minor way. There are, for example, such words as 'of', 'to', 'and', etc., which may first come to mind. These are the sort that may seem rather insignificant, subsidiary. This feeling is expressed in Mill's distinguishing as, "only parts of names", the following words (and those similar): 'of', 'to', 'truly', 'me', 'him', 'John's', 'large', and 'heavy'.[5] All the important words it seems, are names, words which label things, and there are, in addition, such auxilliaries as these prepositions, pronouns, and adjectives.

One may also notice, upon further reflection, that there are different sorts of things or objects which we use words to label, but here the difference seems only minor. There are for example emotions,

like love and hate, and sensations, like pain and tickling. All this seems to come to, however, is that our language has the richness of labelling both physical and non-physical "objects". This richness is often noted in grammar books by defining a noun as "the name of a person, place, thing, or mental state". Similarly, Aristotle's categories might be interpreted as a classification of the different kinds of things which can bear names (Mill has taken them this way).[6] At any rate, there seems to be no more than a minor note required here: the essence of language is naming; names label pieces of furniture, people, and other things, so that we may talk about them (and there are also such auxillaries as prepositions, conjunctions, etc.).

As mentioned earlier, on this view learning language consists in properly associating names with the things for which they stand. A child learns what 'dog' means, for example, by having all the various neighborhood dogs pointed out to him, along with the instruction "There's a doggie", or "See the dog". Or, if he wants to know what 'rock' means, he has various rocks pointed out to him, and so on with 'bird', 'milk', 'sandbox', and others.

Private Language

But when we consider that area of our language which deals with sensations, emotions, perceptions, and experiences there seems to be this difference: here the referents for words aren't public, aren't open to everyone's view as were those of 'dog' and 'sandbox'. The things to which words like 'pain', 'love', and 'red' refer, appear to be items of the individual speaker's consciousness, items which he alone experiences, and thus, which he alone has "access" to,

rather than items of our common, public world, like dogs and sandboxes. When Smith says, for example, "This chair is comfortable", we can all look and see the chair, or when he says "That music is beautiful" we can all listen and hear the music, but when he says "This pain is terrible", we cannot all feel Smith's pain. His pain is his alone; it is an item private to his consciousness. No one can experience Smith's pain except Smith. No one can experience anyone's sensations except his own.

This being the case, philosophical reflection immediately gives rise to the question, "How do I know that Smith means the same thing by the word 'pain' that I do?". Perhaps the sensation he calls 'pain' is what I would have called 'tickle'. Similarly, in the case of color words it seems quite possible that we should discover that what Smith calls 'red' the rest of us would have called 'green', were we able to see through Smith's eyes. It might even be that one half of mankind, say, the women, have a different sensation of red than the other half.[7] Since no one may feel another's sensations or see through another's eyes, all these, and many more, possibilities seem live. What each person means by the word 'pain' when he says "I am in pain", he and he alone knows for he and he alone has access to, can feel, the sensation which is the referent for that word.

For precisely the same reason, none of the above speculations can be verified. The thesis that what Smith calls 'red' I would have called 'green', or that what Smith means by 'pain' is not the same as what I mean by 'pain', can be neither confirmed nor disconfirmed. But this seems to leave one thing certain: the language of color perceptions and sensations (and similarly, that of emotions and experiences)

is indeed a private area of our language; for although each individual knows what he means by 'pain', he alone does.

This fact seems to emerge as a profound philosophical discovery, but one which gives rise to two further questions. If the language of sensations is thus private, each person knowing only what he himself calls 'pain', then, first, how is the word 'pain' taught and learned?, and second, how is it that we seem to communicate with words like 'pain'?

Private, Ostensive Definition

The traditional view's answers to these questions are intimately connected. As we have seen, words of our public, common language are learned by means of ostensive definitions. One learns what things are called 'dogs' and what things are called 'sandboxes' by having such things pointed out to him. It seems then that what must be involved in learning the meanings of sensation words like 'pain' is a sort of private ostensive definition. A. J. Ayer gives this description of the process:

> As it is, a child is not taught to describe his feelings in the way he is taught to describe the objects in his nursery. His mother cannot point to his pain in the way that she can point to his cup and spoon. But she knows that he has a pain because he cries and because she sees that something has happened to him which is likely to cause him pain; and knowing that he is in pain she is able to teach him what to call it. If there were no external signs of his sensations she would have no means of detecting when he had them, and therefore could not teach him how to describe them.[8]

Thus, the meaning of the word 'pain', can be taught only by making use of certain special occassions. When the teacher observes that the child

has undergone something which would cause pain in the teacher (say, a scraped knee) and exhibits the same external manifestations as might the teacher when in pain (say, crying) then the teacher infers that the child also has the appropriate sensation, that which is called 'pain', and so can inform the child that he is to call that sensation 'pain'. Of course, this instruction will most likely take place in the context of comforting the child, that is, by saying "I know it hurts", or something similar, but it is the process described above which is involved in the child's learning what the word 'pain' means.

What the child must do in this situation is notice the sensation he is feeling during this time and associate with it the name 'pain', and thus, after sufficient repetitions of this experience, he will remember that <u>this</u> sensation is called 'pain', and will be able to say, on his own, "I am in pain", when it recurs.

The Analogy Argument

In the foregoing explanation of how sensation words are taught and learned we find also the traditional answer to the second of the questions raised earlier, that of how we seem to communicate with words like 'pain'. We simply do not doubt, ordinarily, that others mean the same sensation by the word 'pain' that we do, since all the external, or observable, signs are the same when they use the word as when we do, just as the teacher inferred that the child had the appropriate sensation, in the above example, when he exhibited the appropriate behavior in the appropriate circumstances.

J. S. Mills' statement may be taken as representative of this element of the traditional view:[9]

> I conclude that other human beings have feelings like me, because, first, they have bodies like me, which I know, in my own case, to be the antecedent condition of feelings; and because secondly, they exhibit the acts, and other outward signs, which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings. I am conscious in myself of a series of facts connected by a uniform sequence of which the beginning is modification of my body, the middle is feelings, the end is outward demeanor. In the case of other human beings I have the evidence of my senses for the first and last links of the series, but not for the intermediate link...by supposing the link to be of the same nature as in the case of which I have experience,...I bring other human beings under the same generalizations which I know by experience to be the true theory of my own existence.[10]

There seems to be this asymmetry then in the use of sensation words: I know, in my own case, what I call 'pain', what sensation I mean by that word, but when someone else says "I am in pain", or when I say of someone else that he is in pain, what is involved is an inference made on the basis of an analogical argument similar to Mill's. Thus, first person sensation statements seem to express true knowledge, whereas, third person sensation statements express only inferences, which could in any given case be incorrect.

In summary, the traditional view of names, naming, and the private language problem has the following elements. The primary words in our language, the substantives, are names which signify objects. The meanings of such words are the things which they name, their referents. There are, however, both public objects, like chairs, dogs, and sandboxes, which are open to everyone's view, and private objects, like pains, which are not open to everyone's view, but which can be directly observed or experienced only by the person who has them; each person experiences only his own sensations, no one may have another's. For this reason there must be two sorts of learning techniques, public

ostensive definitions, by which words referring to public items can be learned, and private ostensive definitions which each person must employ for himself in order to associate a word with the sensation it names. And finally, at the base of this latter method of teaching, the method employed in those areas of our language which deal with sensations, emotions, and other experiences, is an analogical argument, which also is the basis on which we seem to achieve communication in these areas of our language. As we shall see in the next section, this view leads to puzzling, and unacceptable, consequences.

Puzzles Generated by the Traditional View

On the traditional view, although an analogical argument similar to Mills' may seem to describe what must be the basis of the private areas of our language, the fact remains that these areas are, strictly speaking, private. If, when Smith says "I am in pain", 'pain' is the name of an item of his consciousness, and if no one else may experience that item, have his pain, then he, and only he, can at any given time know with <u>certainty</u> whether or not he has it, whether he is in fact in pain. The rest of us may <u>infer</u> that he is in pain, since he is similarly constituted, but the most we can have, as the result of such an inference, is a <u>probability</u> that he is in pain. Thus, on the traditional view, each person is in the position of being the only one who can know with certainty that he is in pain, and of not being able to know with certainty that anyone else is in pain.

What similarly follows from the traditional view is that the meanings of such words as 'pain' can be, strictly speaking, neither taught nor learned. For when a situation appropriate for the teaching and

learning of sensation words appears, as in the example from Ayer above, the teacher actually only believes that the learner has the appropriate sensation; the most the teacher would logically be allowed to say is that it is probable that the learner has the appropriate sensation, and the most the learner should be allowed to say is that it is probable that he has what the teacher calls 'pain'.

After such an analysis as this, the philosopher may appear to be in the classical position of possessing an insight into an ultimate truth that is not possessed by the ordinary man. He seems to have discovered that ultimately, strictly speaking, the facts are that one has direct knowledge of sensations, emotions, and experiences only in his own case, and that all other instances (i.e., cases of third person sensation statements) are cases of inference. Although the ordinary man may continue to make statements like "He is in pain", the philosopher realizes that this is a loose or imprecise way of speaking, it being the case that the only precisely accurate statement which can be made in such cases is "It is very highly probable that he is in pain".

The analogical argument, again, is seen as the logical basis for such third person statements, and might be used as the philosopher's justification for not insisting on the revision of our ordinary way of speaking, since this argument seems to make it so very highly probable that we all experience the same sensations in similar circumstances. But the analogical argument is, recall, the inference that other individuals, constituted similarly to me, and affected similarly externally, experience a sensation which is the same as the one I experience under the same stimulation, since their overt behavior is similar. That is, in my own case, touching a hot stove produces in me the sensa-

tion of pain, to which I react by screaming, holding my hand, etc. Other people, I have observed, react similarly when they touch a hot stove and so, since their physical constitution is similar to mine, they must experience the same sensation of pain as the cause of their reaction.

But how good an argument is this? As Wittgenstein has commented "How can I generalize the one case so irresponsibly?!"[11] The analogical argument is, as a matter of fact, only a very weak inductive argument. It is based on only a single instance (that of my own case) of the occurrence of the phenomenon in question (the sensation of pain). This argument actually supplies very weak logical justification for the conclusion that other people mean the same thing by 'pain' that I do, or that they experience any sensation even remotely similar to my own.

On the traditional view then, the philosopher who is interested in the truth accurately stated, must affirm, unequivocally, that certain areas of our language are actually private languages, it being possible for each person to know only what he means by such words as 'pain', since only he may directly "observe" the thing he names by that word. That is, he must affirm the following two propositions: (1) "Only I can know whether I am in pain", (2) "I cannot know whether anyone else is in pain"; and also, what follows from these first two: (3) "No one can teach another or learn from another the meanings of words like 'pain'" and (4) "It is possible that we all mean something different by words like 'pain'".

It should be clear that the traditional view must be rejected because these consequences shown to follow from it are unacceptable.

That only I can know whether I am in pain is clearly false; others quite often know that I am in pain, just as I quite often know that others are in pain: "Just try to in a real case — to doubt someone else's fear or pain."[12]

Of course it is possible for someone to conceal his pain from me indefinitely, as it is possible for me to conceal by pain from others, but this fact lends no support to the traditionalist position that it is logically impossible for someone else to know whether I am in pain, or vice-versa.

> That another is in pain can be observed in innumerable cases, as when one sees a child spill boiling water on himself, and hears his uncontrollable cry. To describe such observations as inferential, much less dubiously inferential, would be perverse.[13]

The Behaviorist Alternative

However, if the traditional view is rejected then the alternative seems naturally to suggest itself that sensation words refer to people's behavior. If 'pain', when I say "He is in pain", does not name an item or occurrence hidden within the privacy of the other party's consciousness (since, on that view I could never be entitled to make the assertion), then it must mean what I can observe, namely his crying, moaning, grimmacing, or other characteristic pain-behavior. Or, in other words, sensation words must be the names for behavior syndromes, it seems. On this view, then, to use a simple example, 'pain' simply means 'crying'. Were this the case, the puzzles generated by the traditional view would dissolve. If 'pain' simply meant 'crying', then the teaching and learning of such words by ordinary ostensive definition would seem to present no problem, since the behavior which is the refer-

ent of the word is publicly observable, just as dogs and sandboxes are. Neither would one be required to assert that no one could know whether another were in pain, or that we might all mean something different by the word 'pain'.

But this view generates puzzles no less serious, and perhaps more quickly recognizable, than those of the traditional view. First, there is the fact that there can be pain-behavior without any pain. One may pretend to be in pain, exhibiting all the characteristic behavior, merely in order to avoid some unpleasant duty, for example, or sham being in pain as part of a dramatic performance. Second, there is the fact, mentioned earlier, that there may be pain without any overt pain-behavior. Children are very early taught to suppress crying, for example, and there are such cases as someone's being injured and in severe pain yet concealing the fact, perhaps to avoid unduly alarming others. In general, this behaviorist position is open to the fatal objection that

> if the occurrence of a sensation is a matter of behavior, then the manifestly false conclusion follows that from an inspection of somebody's behavior it is always possible to tell whether or not he is having a given sensation.[14]

There is also the equally serious objection that if sensation words are the names for behavior syndromes, then the speaker would have to find out whether he is in pain the same way everyone else does - by observing his behavior. But clearly this is not the case, for if it makes sense to speak of one's finding out that he is in pain, it must be possible to be in pain and not know it, or to be mistaken about being in pain. That is, statements like "I think I'm in pain, but I'm not sure" and "I thought I was in pain, but I was mistaken after all"

would have to make sense, because the concept "finding something out" can only have application in cases in which the thing found out could be unknown or in which one could have been mistaken about the matter at hand. But, since neither of the above statements makes sense, neither can the notion of finding out that one is in pain makes sense. One can't be said to find out that he is in pain the same way everyone else does, or "to find it out" at all, for that matter. Something which cannot be unknown, cannot be found out.

But now here is the dilemma: the traditional position is unacceptable because according to it no one can know whether another is in pain, which is manifestly false. It seems, however, that if the traditional position is rejected, the behaviorist opposite must be accepted. But it too is repugnant, for according to it, one must find out that he is in pain the same way everyone else does. But when I say "It hurts" or "I am in pain", it is clearly not on the basis of having observed my own behavior that I do so. It may seem that one or the other of these two views must be correct, but neither is acceptable.

Wittgenstein is generally recognized as having suggested some kind of solution to this dilemma (as well as having pointed out the puzzles of the two views), but there is considerable confusion as to just what he offered. As examples of this confusion and of possible solutions to this dilemma which have been offered, two different interpretations of Wittgenstein's work on the private language problem in general (and on our common language of sensations in particular) will now be examined. First, in Chapter III, the view of George Pitcher and then, in Chapter IV, that of Alan Donagan. The choice of dealing with these two interpretations was made on several grounds. Pitcher's view, as one of the

earliest published accounts of Wittgenstein's work in the Philosophical Investigations, seems to have been fairly influential.[15] As will be shown, however, it generates puzzles no less serious than those of the traditional view which it is supposed to solve. Donagan's interpretation, on the other hand, is important in that it recognizes some difficulties with Pitcher's view and offers another account as the correct interpretation of the Investigations. It too, however, will be seen to involve consequences quite unacceptable. What will be shown, and this is the final and most important reason for examing these two interpretations, is that they both involve misunderstandings of the Investigations which are similar and apparently, as this similarity suggests, not easily avoided when reading the Investigations. Hence, a parellel purpose in Chapters III and IV, and more directly in Chapter V, is to indicate the proper understanding of the relevant portions of the Investigations, which avoids the difficulties of Pitcher's and Donagan's views, and also, as we shall see, does offer a solution to the puzzles of the traditional view. We proceed now to the examination of the first of these two views.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See appendix for an example diagnosis of the work of a traditional philosopher as entailing a private language.

[2]Wittgenstein, p. 2. Wittgenstein quotes St. Augustine (Confessions, I. 8.) as follows: "When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shown by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires."

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic, (New York, 1893), p. 30.

[6]Ibid., p. 45.

[7]Cf, Wittgenstein, p. 95.

[8]A. J. Ayer, "Can There Be a Private Language," Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher (Garden City, 1966), pp. 261-262.

[9]Norman Malcolm singled out this passage from Mill for discussion as representative of the argument from analogy for the existence of other minds.

[10]J. S. Mill, An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, (6th ed., London 1889), pp. 243-44.

[11]Wittgenstein, p. 100.

[12]Ibid., p. 102.

[13]Alan Donagan, "Wittgenstein On Sensation", Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed., George Pitcher (Garden City, 1966), p. 325.

[14]Ibid., p. 335.

[15]Cf, p.

CHAPTER III

THE "NO-NAMES" VIEW

George Pitcher's interpretation of Wittgenstein's work on the private language problem appears primarily in the chapter entitled "Sensations and Talk of Them" in his book, The Philosophy of Wittgenstein.[1] The position expressed there I shall refer to as the "no-names" view, for reasons which will become obvious. As suggested by the title of the book, this view is propounded in the name of Wittgenstein, as a sympathetic exposition and interpretation of parts of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations.[2] This view is of special importance in that it seems to have gained some acceptance among philosophers as an accurate description of Wittgenstein's thought and, in some cases, as the correct view, also.[3] I hope to show that the no-names view is neither correct (i.e., that it generates puzzles of its own), nor an accurate description of Wittgenstein's views, and so I shall also refer to it as "Pitcher's view" for brevity's sake, rather than as Pitcher's interpretation of Wittgenstein's view (although Pitcher comments at the end of the chapter than Wittgenstein's ideas "are obviously highly controversial and there are certainly powerful objections which could be urged against some of his arguments.").[4]

Pitcher sees the no-names theory as a response to the following "natural view":

> We all constantly experience things which enter and leave and re-enter our consciousness, things which are directly accessible only to ourselves.

> And there are words in our language to refer to many of these things - words like 'pain', 'itch', 'ache', 'image', 'fear', 'anger', and many more. These are names for things which each of us experiences privately: only I feel my toothache, for example. You cannot feel my toothache, nor I yours. But your toothache is doubtless qualitatively similar to mine, since the structures of our bodies are very similar. And so, although many words in our language denote physical things and events which are publicly observable by all, other words denote items in each of our separate consciousnesses, things directly observable only by the person in whose consciousness they occur. All this seems undeniable.[5]

This view is easily recognizable as the traditional view discussed in Chapter II, and Pitcher cites the same absurd consequences to follow from it.

Pitcher's proposal for dealing with these unacceptable consequences, simply stated, is the suggestion that the mistake of the traditional view was in supposing sensation words to be names, when in fact they are not names at all; we have no names for sensations.

In attributing this view to Wittgenstein, Pitcher of course presents his exposition by drawing heavily on the Philosophical Investigations, but our immediate task must be to get clear about just what the no-names view involves, and discussion of Pitcher's justification for attributing this view to Wittgenstein will be reserved for a later chapter.

Genuine Names

First, it is important to note that Pitcher refers to a "non-trivial" sense of "names", and a merely "trivial" one, as in the following passages:

> [Wittgenstein] is not denying that there is a (trivial) sense in which 'pain', for example, is the name of a sensation.[6]

> The notion that pain is the name, in a non-trivial sense, of a private sensation proves to be a decided hindrance [to seeing the actual uses of the word].[7]

The explanation Pitcher offers of this distinction is that the trivial sense in which sensation words like 'pain' are names is that

> 'pain' denotes a sensation, as 'five' denotes a number, as 'understanding' denotes a mental process, and as virtually every word denotes something - that is, pain is a sensation word and has uses closely allied with 'twinge', 'ache', 'tickle', and the other sensation words, just as 'five' is a number word and has uses closely allied with 'one', 'two', 'ten', and the other number words. This much is obvious and no one would wish to deny it.[8]

And the following is apparently to be taken as the non-trivial or genuine sense in which a word can be a name:

> When a word is the name of something, I learn what it means by having other people point out examples of it to me or by observing what they apply it to, and then by going on myself to apply the word to further examples.[9]

These two passages make it clear that in Pitcher's view the two senses of 'name' come to this: there is the loose or insignificant use of 'name' in which a word is a name in name only, i.e., the sense in which anything which can serve as the subject of a sentence may be called a name, as could 'five' in the sentence "Five is greater than two", or 'understanding' in "My understanding of the matter is that...", or in other words, the sense in which the word 'name' is just equivalent to 'grammatical substantive'. And then there is the genuine, significant, sense of 'name' in which a name may be thought of as a label, i.e., in those cases in which the word may be learned by means of osten-

sive definitions.

In the Hallmark Hall of Fame production of the play "Teacher, Teacher" a tutor attempts to teach a retarded boy to speak (and write) by actually placing printed signs bearing individual words such as 'chair', 'table', and 'fireplace' around the room on the objects designated by these names, after having failed in attempts with finger pointing and gestures. This example shows the way in which the notion of ostensive definition involves the model of names as labels. Apparently, Pitcher would count as genuine names only those words which the teacher could actually have printed as labels and attached to individual objects. Thus, 'five', 'understanding', and 'pain' are not genuine names.

Notice that Pitcher's characterization of names and naming is precisely that of the traditional view examined in Chapter II. There is only one kind of word significantly to be called a 'name', exemplified by such words as the names for pieces of furniture and people's names. Although Pitcher's characterization of what a name is does not differ from the traditional view, he does, however, disagree with that view in suggesting that some apparent names (e.g., 'pain') are not genuine names. This distinction between apparent and genuine names, then, is the first major aspect of the no-names view.

The Privacy of Sensations

The second major aspect of Pitcher's view is also suggested by the two passages already quoted in which he referred to two senses of 'name'. In the first of those, recall, he said that Wittgenstein did not deny a trivial sense in which 'pain' is the name of a sensation, and in the

second he said that the notion of 'pain' as the name, in a non-trivial sense, of a private sensation was a hindrance to understanding that word's actual uses. These two passages suggest that Pitcher makes no distinction between 'sensations' and 'private sensations', or in other words that he accepts without question the proposition 'sensations are private'. Since, according to the second passage, Pitcher says that the word 'pain' can be the name, in a trivial sense, of a "private sensation", then a part of Pitcher's view is that sensations are, in fact, private.

This part of his view he makes explicit in other passages, such as the following:

> Everyone acknowledges that sensations are private, that no one can experience another person's sensations, so that the special felt quality of each person's sensations is known to him alone and to no other.[10]

> Wittgenstein will maintain that the privacy of pain makes a great deal of difference to the way in which 'pain' denotes a kind of sensation.[11]

According to Pitcher then, the proposition 'sensations are private' is a true statement because no one can experience another person's sensations; and thus, each person knows something in his own case which he cannot know in the case of another person, viz., the "special felt quality" of his own sensations (i.e., what his own sensations feel like).

This second element of Pitcher's view also echoes the traditional approach. Sensations are objects of a sort (they have qualities), but of a special sort. They are private objects, open only to the "view" of their possessor, rather than public objects like chairs, dogs, and sandboxes. At this point Pitcher is in very much the same

position as the traditionalist, affirming that (genuine) names are words which refer to objects, which are what the words mean, and that pains, itches, and other sensations are private objects.

The next step in the traditional view was that, therefore, names must be conferred on these sorts of objects privately, i.e., that there must be a sort of private ostensive definition by which we teach ourselves names like 'pain'. The puzzles thus generated by the traditional view (e.g., that one can never know whether another is in pain) were those comprising the affirmation that certain areas of our common language are actually private. Pitcher's answer, however, is that such a private language is not possible, and his argument involves calling into question the notion of private ostensive definition, which must be involved in a private language.

Private Ostensive Definition:

The Memory Argument

Pitcher's characterization of the point at issue here is the following:

> A defender of View V [the traditional view] might offer the following...Suppose a man suddenly experiences a sensation E that he has never had before. He can focus his attention on it and give it the name 'E'. This corresponds to an ostensive definition that one person might give another of the name of something publicly observable, only here the person gives it to himself, and instead of pointing physically to the thing named, as in a standard ostensive definition, he points to it mentally. Then he may even keep a diary and write down the sign 'E' whenever he experiences the same sensation again, noting the time and place of its occurrence.[12]

This, of course, is a general form of just what the traditionalist

must count as a description of the way in which words like 'pain' are learned. The objections which will be raised to the process described here apply to any notion of private ostensive definition and, a fortiori, to the case of actual words in use in our common language.

The primary argument offered by Pitcher against the process described in the above example is that

> The alleged diarist has no way whatever of knowing whether he always applies the sign 'E' to a sensation which is the same as the original one, or...to a different one each time, or sometimes...to the same sensation, sometimes to a different one.[13]

The reason the diarist has no way of knowing whether he has made a correct entry of the sign 'E' is that he will make such an entry whenever it seems to him that the same sensation has recurred, but he will have no way of knowing whether his impression that the same sensation has recurred is correct or not. The proponent of the traditional view may reply that all the diarist must do is remember the original sensation correctly, but the point here is that if he has no way of checking the correctness of his memory, then having the impression that this sensation is the same as the original, E, is what must count as making a "correct" entry in the diary. But that means that the occurrence of any sensation whatever may be noted in the diary as 'E', so long as the diarist has the impression that it is the same as the original. In other words, there can be no distinction here between the sensation's being the same and merely seeming the same, and thus no distinction between a correct and an incorrect entry in the diary, i.e., use of the sign 'E'. The diarist

> might always "make a mistake" in identifying his sensations, now putting an 'E' down in his book when he has sensation E, now when he has

> a different one T, and so on; and there is no conceivable way that he could tell he was doing it...But then we cannot speak of his making a mistake at all, nor therefore of his using the sign 'E' correctly or incorrectly ...[but] in order for a sound or mark to be a word it must be possible to use it correctly or incorrectly: there must be some circumstances in which it would be correct to use it, and others in which it would be incorrect... [Thus] the concept of correctness and incorrectness does not apply to [the diarist's] mark 'E'; therefore, that mark cannot be a word or sign of any kind, and a foritiori not the name of a sensation.[14]

In this way the notion of private ostensive definition, which was a cornerstone of the traditional view that parts of our common language are private, is apparently struck down. The idea of someone directly associating a name with a private object, e.g., the word 'pain' with a particular private sensation, and thus the idea of each person is privately assigning a meaning to the word 'pain', proves defective. It's defectiveness consists in the fact that, on this view, it would be possible that each time one said "I am in pain", he might be expressing a different sensation and would have no way of knowing it, and so 'pain' could not be said to be the name of any particular sensation at all. This then, is the third major element of the no-names view, that private objects cannot be named.

We now have before us all of the major premisses of the no-names view. First, that names are words which refer to objects, which label them, and which therefore can be learned by means of ostensive definitions. Second, that sensations (such as pains and tickles) are private objects rather than public ones (such as dogs and sandboxes). And third, that private objects cannot have names as can public objects, because the notion of private ostensive definitions by which they

would be given names is defective (as shown by the "memory argument"). Pitcher's conclusion, given these premisses, is obvious: words like 'pain', and 'tickle', i.e., the sensation words of our language, are not really names of sensations.

What must next be explained is what the no-names view of the actual role of sensation words is, and what part, if any, sensations play in the the language. But before going on to that part of Pitcher's exposition, the implied criticism of the traditional view which is present in the no-names argument above should be noted. As mentioned earlier, the first two propositions of the no-names view, (1) that names function like labels and (2) that sensations are private, are also affirmed by the traditional view. Where the traditional view has gone wrong then, according to Pitcher's account, is in supposing that all the important words of our language, incorrectly including sensation words, are names. The traditionalists are thus seen as having failed to notice what Wittgenstein referred to as the "multiplicity of language-games", i.e., the fact that there are many different kinds of words (not just names and "parts-of-names") and many different kinds of uses of the individual words and sentences of language (a theme which occupies a major portion of the early part of Philosophical Investigations). Thus, in putting forth the argument that words like 'pain' are not names, Pitcher can also be seen as making this more general point, by indicating one case in which apparent names ('pain', 'tickle') are not (genuine) names at all.

Thus, the solution offered by the no-names view to the puzzles generated by the traditionalists is that, if one recognizes sensation words not to be names, it no longer seems to follow that the language

of sensation words is private, i.e., that I cannot know whether another is in pain, nor he I, and so forth. Of course, what must now be explained by the proponent of the no-names view is the actual use of words like 'pain': What do they refer to? How are they taught and learned?

In the beginning of this part of his exposition, Pitcher makes two preliminary points. First, that the view he is expressing

> is not denying that when a person isdin pain, he very often and perhaps always feels something frightful [and] terribly important... [but] is only denying...that the word 'pain' names or designates [in any genuine sense] this something that the person feels.[15]

In other words, this first point is that the no-names view is not one of "ontological behaviorism"; there are, Pitcher has before indicated, private sensations.

The second preliminary point is that these private sensations have absolutely no part in the language:

> [I]n the numerous language-games we play with the word 'pain', private sensations play no part... The private sensations, whatever they may be, play no part at all...private sensations do not enter in. They are completely unknown to us; we have no idea what he [the speaker] might be feeling — what the beetle in his box might be like... We proceed in exactly the same way no matter what his sensations may be like.[16]

But if it is not sensations which enter into the language-game, then it is, according to Pitcher, behavior:

> What does play a part in pain language games is pain behavior...and pain comforting behavior...in short, the external circumstances in which the word 'pain' is used.[17]

Just as in the case of the behaviorist view discussed earlier, the alternative here seems to be the only one: if sensation-words are not

the names of (private) sensations, then what they must refer to, in some sense, is behavior. Pitcher however, recognizing the difficulties involved in thinking of sensation words as the names of behavior syndromes, warns that he does not intend to make the same mistake:

> We must not make the mistake...of assuming that 'pain' must denote something, and that if it does not denote a private sensation, then it must denote some natural pain behavior which may accompany one's use of the word. The word 'pain' does not denote anything.[18]

The explanation Pitcher does offer of our actual use of sensation words like 'pain' does not seem to escape entirely the difficulties of behaviorism however. His position takes into account the following asymmetry between first and third person uses of sensation words. First person sensation statements (e.g., "I am in pain") may be considered as replacing natural pain behavior, and as functioning in much the same way as a moan or grimace, or as a request for assistance or compassion, or as performing any of a number of other functions, depending upon the context of the situation. The point is that in all of these cases the statement is an avowal, i.e., is not the identification or description of an object (and so there is no possibility of the speaker's being mistaken about his being in pain).

Third person sensation statements, on the other hand, are subject to error; one may be mistaken about another's being in pain, but "we at least sometimes know — and with certainty — that another person is in pain, and...any view which denies this possibility is so far wrong".[19] What constitute cases of this latter sort, cases of our knowing with certainty that another is in pain, are the "circumstances", "surroundings", or the "wider situation" in which the pain behavior occurs. That is, there are situations or surroundings in which no doubt

as to the other's pain is rational (such as the example given in the last chapter of the child's spilling boiling water on himself), and then there are contexts in which the circumstances may warrant some doubt.

The no-names view then, in summary, asserts (1) that for a word to be a (genuine) name it must be possible to define the word ostensively, (2) that sensations are private objects, (3) that the notion that a private ostensive definition gives a word meaning is confused, and concludes, (4) that, therefore, sensation words cannot be names in a genuine sense; and finally, (5) the no-names view asserts that sensation words do not refer to anything at all but rather in first person uses, replace natural behavior, and in third person uses are made on the basis of observed behavior patterns and the contexts in which they occur.

Such then is, very briefly, Pitcher's account of our use of sensation words. His positive account is much more detailed than this brief description would suggest and contains much that is valuable, and to which this account does not do justice. But only this short summary seems necessary — because the no-names view has already generated puzzles which outweigh any positive achievements.

Puzzles Generated by the No-Names View

As we have seen, the no-names view does not entail the manifestly false conclusions of the traditional view (that only I can know whether I am in pain, etc.), and thus may appear to offer a solution to those puzzles. But it avoids those difficulties by the assertion that, as a matter of fact, we have no names for sensations. This contention,

although perhaps less bothersome than the view it supplants, is itself quite puzzling. The disclosure that 'pain' is not really the name of a sensation seems quite difficult to accept; it is counter to the seemingly obvious fact that 'pain', 'tickle', 'itch', etc., are names of sensations. Of more significance than this rather vague misgiving however, is the puzzle created by speaking of an area of experience about which nothing can be said in any case:

> When "I am in pain" is a description of one's inner state, it is most certainly not the purpose of this description to tell the hearer what the objects before the speaker's consciousness feel like, what the nature of his private sensations are. No words can ever do that.[20]

Just as puzzling is the fact that this is to be an area of experience about which nothing can be known except in one's own case: "His private sensations...are completely unknown to us; we have no idea what they might be like".[21] Here we find the sense in which Pitcher's no-names view seems not to avoid the puzzles of behaviorism: his view rules out of the language game what seems to be the most important part, sensations. That sensations play no part in the language of sensations is self-contradictory.

As mentioned at the outset, these views are put forth by Pitcher as Wittgenstein's views of the Investigations. This no-names view seems to have gained some support, whether as Wittgenstein's or not, as indicated by this passage from Wallace T. Matson's A History of Philosophy:

> Sensations do not have names at all...If our sensations did have names, as opposed to descriptions by causes, we could never communicate with each other about them.[22]

This view has also been criticised as that of Wittgenstein:

> Wittgenstein is driving at the conditions that are necessary for a common language in which

> pain can be ascribed to persons, the consequent need for criteria for the ascription of pain, and the effects of this upon the use of the word 'pain' of our common language. Hence his obsession with the expression of pain. But he errs through excess of zeal when this leads him to deny that sensations can be recognized and bear names.[23]

It should be clear that the no-names view is, in fact, unacceptable, but the purpose of a portion of Chapter V will be to show that this view is not Wittgenstein's, and thus that criticism of the view that sensations cannot have names is, however valid, not criticism of Wittgenstein's view of the Investigations.

In closing, the view which has been examined in this chapter perhaps should be put once more in terms of its position among possible alternative views within the private language problem. The no-names view occupies the position of affirming that, although there is a realm of private data or knowledge which might serve as a subject matter for a private language, still such a language is impossible (and thus one does not speak a private language when he speaks of his sensations or emotions) because of the defectiveness of the idea of private ostensive definitions which would give such words private meanings.

We have now seen one of the two interpretations to be examined of Wittgenstein's work on the private language problem in the Investigations. We have also seen that it generates serious puzzles of its own. We shall turn in the next chapter to the work of Alan Donagan, which offers a criticism of Pitcher's interpretation and attempts to supplant it with another aimed at clearing up the puzzles of both the traditional and no-names views.

FOOTNOTES

[1]George Pitcher, The Philosophy of Wittgenstein, (Englewood Cliffs, 1964).

[2]Cf, Pitcher, p. 313: "In this chapter I have tried to present Wittgenstein's position as fairly and sympathetically as I know how."

[3]Examples of such cases appear at the end of this chapter.

[4]Pitcher, p. 313.

[5]Ibid., p. 281.

[6]Ibid., p. 282.

[7]Ibid., p. 312.

[8]Ibid., pp. 282-3.

[9]Ibid., p. 291.

[10]Ibid., p. 297.

[11]Ibid., p. 293.

[12]Ibid., p. 294.

[13]Ibid., p. 295.

[14]Ibid., p. 297. Cf, also, Wittgenstein, p. 92.

[15]Ibid., p. 298.

[16]Ibid., pp. 288-89. The passage from the Investigations which Pitcher has reference to here, and which he takes as making this point, he quotes as follows (We shall have occassion to return to the discussion of this passage later): "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 by empty. — No, one can 'divide through' by the 'thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.

[17]Ibid., p. 299.

[18]Ibid., p. 301.

[19]Ibid., p. 285.

[20]Ibid., p. 304.

[21]Ibid., p. 299.

[22]Wallace I. Matson, A History of Philosophy, (New York, 1968), p. 357.

[23]P. F. Strawson, "Review of Philosophical Investigations", Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher, (Garden City, 1966), p. 46.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMPOSITE VIEW

Alan Donagan offers his own interpretation of Wittgenstein's Investigations in his article titled "Wittgenstein on Sensation",[1] using as a foil both the traditional and no-names views. His own characterization of the traditional view, below, he labels "Cartesianism":

> Each man has...privileged access to his own sensations. Not only does he, and only he, have them; but he, and only he directly knows that he has them. Others may, with varying degrees of certitude, infer that he has a given sensation; but he, and only he, knows whether he has it or not.[2]

And his succinct report of Pitcher's view is this:

> If Pitcher is right, Wittgenstein's position comes to this: the private inner happenings that the Cartesians wrongly describe as "sensations" really do exist, but no language either does or can have names for them. As for sensations, for which we do have words, although perhaps not names, they are a matter of the behavior of those who have them, and the behavior of others towards them.[3]

Donagan, of course, is familiar with the difficulties of the traditionalist position ("according to the Cartesian position, knowledge of the sensations of others is impossible"[4]) and those of "crude" behaviorism ("according to [behaviorism], a man can know what his own sensations are only in the way by which others do, namely by observing his behavior and circumstances"[5]). However, Donagan also has objections to Pitcher's "linguistic behaviorism", as we shall see.

Criticism of the No-Names View

What seems to be Donagan's primary objection to Pitcher's view is, I think, a good one, but his reasons for making it indicate a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein just as serious as that which he correctly attributes to Pitcher. The controversy here centers around the interpertation of the following two rather puzzling passages from the Investigations:

> Of course, if water boils in a pot, steam comes out of the pot and also pictured steam out of the pictured pot. But what if one insisted on saying that there must be something boiling in the pictured pot?[6]

> It is a misunderstanding to say 'The picture of pain enters into the language-game with the word "pain"'. The image of pain is not a picture and this image is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture. The image of pain certainly enters into the language game in a sense; only not as a picture.[7]

Pitcher's interpretation of these passages, which Donagan quotes, is that

> The representation enters in...not by any reference to a mental object behind the pain behavior and causing it; but rather by a reference to the circumstances, including various sorts of surroundings, of the present pain behavior.[8]

Now Donagan's objection here, based on a discussion of the significance and proper translation of the passages from the Investigations is that

> This [Pitcher's interpretation quoted above] cannot be right. It is true that Wittgenstein denied that pain is imaginatively represented by a picture of a mental object behind the pain behavior, but that is not the same as denying that a mental object is referred to. ...At the very least, Wittgenstein was maintaining that, in the Vorstellung ['image' in the translation quoted above; 'imaginative

> representation' is the translation Donagan prefers] of pain, reference is made to something other than the external circumstances depicted in the Bild ['picture'] that corresponds to it.[9]

Donagan's objection can be stated very simply then, if I understand him correctly. Pitcher's no-names view, in claiming that we have no genuine names for sensations, asserts that in our use of words like 'pain' no reference is or can be made to our actual (private) sensations, and that that is why such words as 'pain' are not really names of sensations. Donagan's objection is that Wittgenstein never said that the word 'pain' does not refer to a sensation (and that he would be wrong if he had) although he did say that pain-behavior plays an important role in the language game. In fact, Donagan points out,[10] Wittgenstein warned against just such a misinterpretation of his views. An even simpler form of Donagan's primary objection would then seem to be that, contrary to Pitcher's view, sensation words like 'pain' are names of sensations in a significant sense. Thus, Donagan's view has the initial advantage over the no-names view of avoiding the puzzle of seeming to deny an obvious fact, viz., that we do have names for sensations.

Donagan's Exposition of the Composite View

Donagan's positive account of the workings of sensation words turns out, as we shall see, to be a sort of composite of Cartesianism (i.e., the traditional view of Chapter II) and behaviorism, and so I shall refer to it as the "composite view". The first major element of this view Donagan puts forth under the heading "Wittgenstein's Concessions to Cartesianism", and here the view is defended that sensa-

tions are private occurrences.

That 'sensations are private' is a true statement is shown by several "grammatical facts", according to Donagan. First, there is the fact that "one of the criteria of identity of the same instance of a sensation or bodily injury is that it be the sensation or injury of the same individual"[11] (hence, the Cartesian assertion that another person cannot have my pains). Second, "often only the man who has a sensation can tell that he has it...it makes no sense to wonder whether he is mistaken".[12] Donagan recognizes that the Cartesian inference that "only I, and not you...can know whether I'm having a sensation"[13] does not follow from these "grammatical facts" (since it is not always the case that you cannot tell that I have a certain sensation), but he asserts that

> Wittgenstein would not have denied that the grammatical statement "sensations are private" is a priori true, when taken as summing up three reminders: (i) that it is nonsense to suppose that more than one sentient being can have the same instance of a sensation, (ii) that if a man has a sensation, it may be that only he can tell whether he is having it; and (iii) that when a man reports that he has a sensation, it is nonsense to suppose him mistaken.[14]

That Wittgenstein conceded to Cartesianism that sensations are occurrences Donagan takes to be shown by passages such as the following, in which Wittgenstein apparently rejects any dispositional analysis:

> 'Yes, but there is something there all the same accompanying my cry of pain. And it is on account of that that I utter it. And this something is what is important — and frightful.' Only whom are we informing ofthis? And on what occassion?[15]

Donagan takes this passage to indicate that the remarks in inverted

commas (and thus to be attributed to Wittgenstein's imaginary interlocutor rather than to Wittgenstein himself) Wittgenstein would have considered to be a legitimate philosophical reminder (to a dispositional behaviorist) that

> the important difference between an analgesic and a gag is not that the analgesic suppresses a disposition and the gag only suppresses behavior, but that the analgesic removes what accompanies the disposition. It is the accompaniment, not the disposition, that is frightful.[16]

Thus, the first main element of the composite view is that sensations are private occurrences which accompany behavior and dispositions to behave in characteristic ways.

The second major element of the composite view comes under the heading "Cartesian Doctrines Rejected By Wittgenstein". In this section Donagan includes a discussion of Wittgenstein's memory argument against the possibility of a private language (which comprised a part of the no-names view of the last chapter) in which Donagan concludes that the memory argument is, as a matter of fact, fallacious. Donagan's objections to the memory argument may be passed over for the present, however, since no part of the composite view actually hinges upon its validity or invalidity. The fact is, Donagan points out, that "sensations are things with names in our common language, not things nameable by the player alone".[17]

Thus, the Cartesian or traditional doctrine rejected by the composite view is that the meanings of names of sensations are incommunicable. That not only the word 'sensation', but all the words and phrases by which various kinds of sensations are referred to belong to our common language and thus do not constitute a private language, as

the traditional view would have it, is a truism, according to Donagan.[18]

Here, however, arises the problem for the composite view: "in view of the fact that sensations are...private, it is puzzling how this truism can be true."[19] If sensations are indeed private occurrences, and if the no-names solution that sensation words are not names of these private objects is rejected, how avoid the conclusion of the traditionalist that the areas of our language dealing with sensations are private?

The composite answer is that sensations must be named by means of the behavior associated with them, but that the actual referent or meaning of sensation words is the private sensation, not its overt manifestations:

> Each kind of painful sensation has certain natural physical expressions...and a word is made the name of a specific pain by laying down that it shall stand for whatever has certain specific natural expressions. What has them will, of course, be private.[20]

The problem here, Donagan is quite aware of:

> Is it not flatly self-contradictory to hold on the one hand that sensations are private and non-dispositional, and on the other that they are named by reference to such external circumstances as their natural expressions?[21]

Donagan believes Wittgenstein to have offered a coherent, though gnomic, theory to explain this apparent contradiction. It's key, he believes, is to be found in the following passage from the Investigations.

> 'But you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain-behavior accompanied by pain and pain behavior without any pain?' — Admit it? What greater difference could there be? — 'And yet you again and again reach the

> conclusion that the sensation itself is a nothing.' — Not at all. It is not a something, but not a nothing either! The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said. We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here.[22]

The formulation of the composite view comes out in Donagan's explanation and interpretation of the above remark that pain "is not a something but not a nothing either". Pain is not a something because, although there is no greater difference than pain behavior without any pain and pain behavior with that frightful accompaniment, still "that frightful accompaniment only enters our common language as what is naturally expressed by pain-behavior".[23] "What accompanies behavior, inasmuch as it is private, plays no part in determining the meanings of the words and phrases that refer to sensations".[24] Or, as Donagan puts the matter in other words: "provided what a man truthfully reports as pain is always what he would naturally express by pain-behavior, it matters not at all what it is that he truthfully reports as pain".[25]

Donagan's explanation of the sense in which pain is, however, not a nothing either, comes with his interpretation of Wittgenstein's beetle-in-the-box example which, recall, played an important part in the no-names view of the previous chapter (and which is quoted there). Donagan paraphrases the parable and then quotes the line, "The thing in the box has no place in the language game at all; not even as a something".[26] Donagan goes on to quote the final part of this passage (which Pitcher omitted):

> That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and name' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.[27]

What Donagan believes to be involved here is a "slip" by Wittgenstein into dismissing altogether the private accompaniment of pain behavior.[28] For the passage, according to Donagan,

> can only mean: if we construe an expression like 'toothache' as the name of the frightful accompaniment of toothache behavior, then what it names, or whether it names anything, is irrelevant to the meaning of 'toothache'.[29]

But the "slip" involved here, according to Donagan, is that "In the language-game of beetles in boxes there is no place for the utterance, 'My box has no beetle'; and that is why it does not matter if a box is empty."[30] In our common language with 'pain' however, we have use for 'I am not in pain',

> and one of its uses is to indicate when one's pain behavior is not accompanied by pain. The existence of the 'object', of that which accompanies natural pain-behavior, is not only not irrelevant to the meaning of pain words, it is cardinal. What is irrelevant is not the existence of the object but what it happens to be. You and I could not have a common word for pain unless our natural pain-behavior was accompanied by something frightful; but whether that accompaniment is the same for both of us or not, or even whether it changes or not (provided we do not notice it) is irrelevant.[31]

Thus, the composite view is that sensations are indeed private occurrences, but also that it is by reference to behavior, the "external circumstances" of the private occurrence, that we are able to refer to the private objects:

> That is, a sensation is defined by reference to its external circumstances. Yet it is not ...reducible to those external circumstances; for it is defined as their private and non-dispositional accompaniment...Whether the internal character of what is expressed in these ways [e.g., rubbing one's jaws, grimacing] is the same for you as for me is irrelevant to the meaning of the word 'toothache'.[32]

To review the composite view in its entirety then: (1) it begins by asserting that, contrary to the no-names view, we do have names for sensations; (2) it also affirms the privacy of sensations, but (3) denies the conclusion of the traditional view that the language of sensations is private, since words like 'pain' are part of our common language and their meanings are thus not incommunicable; and (4) it offers as a solution to the apparent contradiction involved in (1), (2), and (3) the assertion that a word is made the name of a specific pain by laying down that it shall stand for whatever has certain specific natural expressions. This view raises difficulties, as we shall see.

Puzzles Generated by the Composite View

What seems to be the primary puzzle of this view is understanding (4) above, and so I have made liberal use of Donagan's own words in putting forth this view, in an effort to avoid misrepresenting his position. However I think the puzzle here is one which no amount of explanation could resolve. If 'pain' means "that which has these natural expressions", how can it mean, "the private, non-dispositional accompaniment" of these natural expressions? That is, if one holds that the "internal character" of what has certain natural expressions may not "be the same for you as for me", may even not always be "the same" for one individual, then there is no sense in which a word can mean "what has certain natural expressions", for nothing has been identified which has certain natural expressions.

To put the matter in yet another way, which may make the puzzle here clearer, the composite view has not avoided a form of the puzzle

of the traditional view that what I call 'pain', you might call 'tickle'. If the word 'pain' means the "private accompaniment of pain behavior", and if the "character" of this private accompaniment might be different with each use of the word, then it must be said that the word might mean something different with each use. But, on the other hand, if one tries to avoid this conclusion by saying that it does not matter what the accompaniment is like, so long as the behavior is appropriate (e.g., in the case of pain, so long as it is crying, grimacing, etc.) then the criterion for the correct application of the word will be the occurrence of this behavior in the appropriate circumstances or surroundings (i.e., not in a dramatic performance, etc.). But in this case, the private accompaniment does drop out as irrelevant, and one is in Pitcher's position, which is just what Donagan wants to avoid. Thus, the composite view does not avoid the puzzles of the traditional and no-names views; rather, it involves the composite puzzle that on the one hand 'pain' might always mean something different, and on the other the sensation, the "private accompaniment" of behavior, plays no part in the language game. Thus, the composite view must be rejected also.

It should be noted here also that Donagan's composite view implicitly agrees with the explanation of names found in Pitcher's no names view. For Donagan as for Pitcher a name refers to an object, and the object, the referent of the word, is the meaning of the name. In Pitcher's view, given that this is what is involved in names and naming; the privacy of sensations makes it impossible for these private objects to have names. Donagan, on the other hand, agrees that sensations are private, but asserts that they do have names. That Donagan agrees that

the meaning of a name is its referent, can be seen in the fact that his composite view is supposed to explain how a sensation word can mean the private object (the "accompaniment" of behavior), but at the same time be defined by reference to its "external circumstances".

We have now seen two different interpretations of Wittgenstein's work on sensations and the private language problem, each of which has led to puzzles of its own. The first part of the next chapter will be aimed at showing that neither of these interpretations correctly represents Wittgenstein's view.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Alan Donagan, "Wittgenstein On Sensation", Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher, (Garden City, 1966).

[2]Ibid., p. 324.

[3]Ibid., p. 329.

[4]Ibid., p. 325.

[5]Ibid., pp. 325-26.

[6]Wittgenstein, p. 101.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Pitcher, p. 307.

[9]Donagan, p. 332. I think Donagan's objection is misleading. My own interpretation of the relevant passages from the Investigations appears in Chapter V.

[10]Ibid., p. 327.

[11]Ibid., p. 333.

[12]Ibid., p. 334.

[13]Ibid.,

[14]Ibid., p. 335.

[15]Wittgenstein, p. 101.

[16]Donagan, p. 336.

[17]Ibid., pp. 340-41.

[18]Ibid., p. 342.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 343.

[21]Ibid., p. 344.

[22]Wittgenstein, p. 102.

[23]Donagan, p. 345.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 346.

[26]Wittgenstein, p. 100.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Donagan, p. 346.

[29]Ibid., p. 347.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., p. 348.

CHAPTER V

THE COMMON ERROR OF THE TRADITIONAL, NO-NAMES, AND COMPOSITE VIEWS

This chapter has several objectives. We have now before us three different views of names, naming, and the private language problem, all of which are unacceptable. The latter two views have been offered as alternatives to the traditional view and as attempts to solve the puzzles generated by it. In this chapter I hope, first, to show that (and how) Pitcher and Donagan have been led to misinterpret Wittgenstein's Investigations, and at the same time to bring into clearer form the positions of each of these views with respect to the private language problem, per se. The final portion of this chapter will be devoted to suggesting a solution (Wittgenstein's) to the puzzles of the traditional view which avoids the difficulties of the two alternatives we have seen. As is evident in the previous discussions of their views, it is primarily the interpretation of a few key passages from Wittgenstein which will be involved in the criticism of the interpretations of Pitcher and Donagan.

Criticism of the No-Names Interpretation

The first major element of the no-names view was the identification of the "essence of naming", so to speak, or the character of genuine names, as opposed to names in a trivial sense. The criticism of the traditional view thus implied was the failure to notice the variety of

kinds of words that there are, or in other words, the mistake of thinking all words function in the same way, as names which refer to objects which are the meanings of the words.

Of course Wittgenstein had much to say about the variety of "language-games" and, as seen in Chapter II, used Augustine as an example of someone who used a too narrow view of language, thinking all words were names.[1] Pitcher obviously seized upon this aspect of Wittgenstein's work. What Pitcher seems to have missed, however, is the idea, which Wittgenstein also put forth, that there are many different kinds of "naming-games" as well. It is not too difficult to understand how Pitcher might have done this, as a look at several passages from the Investigations will show.

Wittgenstein's stress on the idea of the many different language games is evident in the passages quoted in the previous note and in many others such as the following:

> But how many kinds of sentence are there?... There are countless kinds; and this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all... new language-games...come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten...[2]

> If you do not keep the multiplicity of language-games in view you will perhaps be inclined to ask questions like 'What is a question?'.[3]

In a later passage, Wittgenstein says:

> One thinks that learning language consists in giving names to objects viz., to human beings, to shapes, to colours, to pains, to moods, to numbers, etc....To repeat — naming is something like attaching a label to a thing.[4]

Now it is obvious that the first sentence of this last passage is referring to the mistaken view that language is a sort of unitary operation, that all words are names, and, thus, that learning language

consists in learning names of objects — in short the traditional view, as an example of which Wittgenstein has used Augustine. But Pitcher, it seems, would take the latter part of this passage to indicate something like: it is a mistake to think that all of these (human beings, shapes, pains, etc.) are things that have names, because naming is like attaching a label to a thing, and pains, for example, are things which cannot have labels attached to them (because of their private nature, and the memory problem).

The point of this passage, however, is not to remind someone that "real" names are like labels, and that, thus, some things can't have them. Rather, the point is to give an example of the kind of thinking which may get someone into philosophical difficulty. The significance of this passage is more like: Someone thinks that learning language consists in giving names to objects (to people, shapes, pains, etc.). And, to repeat, this person thinks that naming is like attaching a label to a thing (because he thinks that language consists of giving names <u>to objects</u>), so he will find difficulty explaining our language of sensations because, if he thinks of sensations as objects, they will seem to be sorts of private objects. The point here is not that we don't have names for human beings, shapes, colours, pains, moods, numbers, etc., but that not all of these things can be thought of as <u>objects</u>, and thus that the model of naming as attaching a label to a thing does not apply to all of these cases of naming (it does apply to the case of people, for example). If one thinks that it must, he will be forced into philosophical difficulties.

This interpretation is borne out by the following remarks from Wittgenstein:

> We call very different things 'names; the word 'name' is used to characterize many different kinds of use of a word, related to one another in many different ways...[5]

Pitcher quotes this passage himself, but, as seen in Chapter III, takes it to be pointing out that some words are names "in name only", or, as he puts it, are only trivially names. But such an interpretation ignores the point Wittgenstein took great pains to bring out, and for which he is perhaps most famous: the point that it is a mistake to think that all things called by the same name must have something in common (his well-known example is that of the word 'games'). He argued, rather, that for many words one finds "family resemblances" among the things to which the word applies, and not a common "essence". Pitcher's interpretation makes out Wittgenstein to have identified an "essence" of naming and as having recommended the revision of our language to distinguish between words which are genuinely names, and those which are only imprecisely, or even incorrectly, called "names". But this should be recognized as counter to some of the points on which Wittgenstein insisted most strenuously. Wittgenstein's remarks about the word 'games' must be taken as applying equally to the word "names". Wittgenstein specifically forewarned against this kind of misinterpretation:

> when philosophers use a word — 'knowledge', 'being', ...'object', 'name' — and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?[6]

And, as to revising the language, Wittgenstein forewarned against this kind of misinterpretation of his work, also:

> We shall constantly be giving prominence to distinctions which our ordinary forms of

> language easily make us overlook. This may make it look as if we saw it as our task to reform language.
>
> Such a reform for particular practical purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, is perfectly possible. But these are not the cases we have to do with. The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.[7]

One may say then, that Pitcher grasped Wittgenstein's criticisms of the traditional view as having neglected the diversity of language games, but that Pitcher has neglected Wittgenstein's reminders about the diversity of naming-games, and this should help explain how Pitcher could have interpreted Wittgenstein's later passages as affirming that sensations are private, rather than as opposing that idea.

After having correctly identified one element of Wittgenstein's view, viz., that the memory argument is intended to establish the impossibility of private ostensive definitions, Pitcher quotes the passage which, as we have seen, plays a key role in the expositions of both Pitcher and Donagan: the beetle-in-the-box example.[8] The portion of this passage quoted by Pitcher was:

> 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.

This portion is followed, however, by these lines:

> That is to say, if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object'

> and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.[9]

Pitcher does not quote this final portion of the beetle-in-the-box passage, but he must have taken it to mean that names consist of object and designation, and that when sensation words are analysed on this model the sensation drops out of consideration as irrelevant, and so sensation words are not names, and sensations play no role in the language game.

But the purpose of this final portion of the beetle passage is to point out that thinking that all names function on the model of labels for objects, and thus that sensations are objects, leads to the view that sensations must be a sort of private object; but that view leads to the absurd consequence that sensations play no part in our common language of sensations. Thus, the point of the whole beetle passage is, in other words, that

> since the view that sensations are private allows sensations to have no place in the language-game and thereby makes it impossible to give any account of the actual (that is, the 'public') use of sensation words, we must, if we are to give an account of that language-game, reject the view that sensations are private.[10]

Pitcher, by failing to realize the significance of the final part of the beetle-in-the-box example, misses the point of this crucial passage entirely.

We shall return later to the discussion of Wittgenstein's attack on the proposition "sensations are private", but first we shall turn to the interpretation of some of these same passages in Donagan's composite view.

Criticism of the Composite Interpretation

The preceeding discussion of the inadequacy of the no-names interpretation helps throw light on the inadequacy of Donagan's interpertation of Wittgenstein as well. To begin with, recall Pitcher's interpretation of the steam-coming-out-of-the-pot passage (quoted on p. 42 of this paper) and Donagan's criticism of it (p. 43 of this paper). Now Donagan here justly criticizes Pitcher for having taken these passages to indicate that sensation words do not really refer to sensations, but only to behavior. We have already seen that it would be incorrect to think of Wittgenstein as having said that some apparent names are not really names, although Wittgenstein was saying that one must not think of all names on one model: that of object and designation. But Donagan, in affirming his valid criticism, neglects this latter point. His statement of the matter was:

> It is true that Wittgenstein denied that pain is imaginatively represented by a picture of a mental object behind the pain-behavior, but that is not the same as denying that a mental object is referred to...[11]

Thus, here is the misleading nature of Donagan's criticism of Pitcher (referred to in note 9, p. 52): Donagan, like Pitcher, makes out Wittgenstein to have thought of sensations, e.g., pains, as mental objects; but that, again, is the very notion Wittgenstein views as pernicious.

Failing to realize this, Donagan manages to misinterpret the crucial beetle-in-the-box passage as well. Since he views Wittgenstein as having accepted the idea that sensations are private objects, Donagan must, as we have seen, take Wittgenstein as having "slipped" when, in the beetle passage Wittgenstein says "the object drops out of con-

sideration as irrelevant". Donagan "corrects" this slip by indicating that it is not the existence of the object that is irrelevant, but what the object happens to be. But Wittgenstein meant just what he said: if one construes sensations as private objects (like beetles in private boxes) then these "objects" can have no place in (public) language games, because the necessary public criteria for the presence of such an "object" will be missing. The point again, is that, therefore, one must not construe sensations as "objects" nor, a fortiori, words like 'pain', as labels for objects.

That Donagan has missed Wittgenstein's point about the necessary criteria for the application of a word in the beetle-in-the-box passage is not surprising, however, since he missed the same point in Wittgenstein's "memory argument", against the possibility of private ostensive definitions. This argument was a part of the no-names view and, although Donagan agreed that private ostensive definitions are not what are involved in the use of sensation words in our common language, he contended that the memory argument was, nontheless, fallacious.

In the passage in question here, Wittgenstein had described a diarist who was supposed to associate the sign 'E' with a sensation (that is, give himself a private ostensive definition) and then keep a record of the sensation's occurrence. But, Wittgenstein said,

> I impress...on myself [the connection between the sign and the sensation] can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection 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 one can't talk about 'right'.[12]

Donagan's objection was that Wittgenstein

> appears to have confounded a player's inability to verify his recollection of the meaning of 'E' with inability to understand what it would be for his recollection to be right...[13]

> A Cartesian might...argue that nothing prevents a player of the E-game from forming the general concept of recollection as true and false, and from applying that concept to his recollection of what sensation he was recording when he wrote down a particular sign. Wittgenstein would presumably disagree. But on what ground? The unverifiability of a given recollection does not entail that it is pointless to think of it as true or false.[14]

But Wittgenstein's point here is that it is senseless to think of the procedure the diarist goes through, marking down an 'E' from time to time, as a language game, or of the sign 'E' as a word, because in this "language" there is no such thing as an incorrect use of the sign 'E'. For a sign to be a word, it must have correct and incorrect uses. There must be criteria for its application, which will distinguish between correct and incorrect uses. But in the private "language" of the diarist, there is no such thing as identifying an incorrect use of 'E'. 'E' is not a word in a private language for the same reason that its analogue (i.e., a sign with no criterion for its application) in our public language would not be a word. Such a thing is perhaps difficult to imagine because in the context of public language it is so obviously a non-word. But, suppose someone said there was a word 'X' and that it was to be used when it seemed appropriate, so that people went around saying "I feel X","Did you X yesterday?", "You X!", "X", "X is nice", and so on. Clearly 'X' would not be a word. But this point is perhaps difficult to see in the case of the diarist, although the situation is the same. The diarist's "criterion" for using the

sign 'E' is: "I put down 'E' when what seems to be the same sensation recurs"; but that is just the same as "One shall use 'X' when it seems appropriate", and 'E' is no more a word than 'X' would be. The point here, has been stated more clearly (and succinctly) by Rush Rhees: "[I]f a sign has meaning it can be used wrongly."[15] But in the case of the alleged diarist, nothing may count as using the sign 'E' wrongly, for there is no criterion by which to establish that an entry in the diary is an incorrect one. Thus, Donagan has missed a similar and important point in both the beetle and memory passages: there must be criteria for the application of a word.

What should be evident at this point is that the no-names and composite views have each interpreted Wittgenstein's Investigations correctly on some points, but incorrectly on the more crucial ones, and that it is thus the no-names and composite views themselves that are rendered unacceptable by the puzzles we have seen to follow from them — not Wittgenstein's own view, which remains to be positively stated.

Before going on to this task, it should be helpful, by way of review, to set out in schematic form the views that have so far been examined. This will also be helpful as a means of bringing out some elements common to all three of these views and as a means of clarifying the positions of these views with respect to the private language problem, per se. We have seen then, the following.

The traditional view asserts that:

(1) names refer to objects, which are their meanings,

(2) sensations are private,

(3) sensation words are names (we have names for sensations),

and concludes that our language of sensation words is private.

The No-Names view asserts that:

(1) names refer to objects, which are their meanings,

(2) sensations are private,

(3) private objects cannot be named (private language is not possible),

and concludes that sensation words are not (genuine) names. This second view criticises the first, in Wittgensteinian terms, as having failed to note the "multiplicity of language-games", i.e., as having made the mistake of thinking all words are in some sense names, erroneously including sensation words, which in fact cannot be, since private objects (sensations) cannot be named.

The Composite view asserts that:

(1) the referent of a word is what it means,

(2) sensations are private,

(3) we have names for sensations,

(4) our language of sensations is not private (one can know another is in pain),

and concludes that sensations must be defined as "the private non-dispositional accompaniments of behavior and dispositions to behavior." This third view criticises the second as neglecting the obvious fact that we do have names for sensations, and, incidentally, as being mistaken about the impossibility of a private language.

It is clear from the above schemata that we have represented here three different views of the private language problem. The first view makes out our common language of sensations to be, in fact, private.

The second asserts that a private language is impossible because of the difficulty about naming private objects and, a fortiori, that no part of our common language is private. The third asserts that, although a private language is not impossible, no part of our common language is private, for then it would not be a part of a common, public language.

Thus, the no-names and composite views agree that we do not have a private language (that conclusion of the traditional view is the general form of its unacceptable consequences), but for different reasons. What all three of these views have in common, however, is the acceptance of the assertion "sensations are private" (premiss (2) in each of the above schemata). But that is the proposition which Wittgenstein sought to expose as nonsense. If Wittgenstein's view of the private language problem (i.e., his solution to the puzzles of the traditional view) were to be stated in one sentence, that sentence would have to be "The proposition 'sensations are private' is nonsense".

We have seen, in the discussion of how Pitcher and Donagan misinterpreted Wittgenstein, certain individual passages which we found were directed against the idea that our common language has private areas, and others directed against the idea of even the possibility of an invented private language. But the most powerful and important aspect of Wittgenstein's work in this area is his attack on the very idea of a realm of "private experience" which would serve as the subject matter of a private language, the attack both Pitcher and Donagan have missed and thus rendered their views as puzzling as the traditional view they sought to supplant.

A wider look at the thrust of the Investigations in this area is

needed to bring the attack into clear focus. This will show that Wittgenstein really has solved the puzzles generated by the traditional view (in a way which avoids those of the no names and composite views), although quite differently than either Pitcher or Donagan envisioned.

The Privacy of Sensations

As we have seen, the idea of the privacy of sensations in the traditional view is a result of the following sort of thinking (again using the example of the word 'pain'). No one can feel, experience, another's pain; only I may experience my pain, and only you yours. Thus, sensations are private (I have direct access only to mine, you only to yours). This means that only I can know with certainty whether I am in pain, and I can only surmise that another is in pain (by inference from his behavior, the external phenomena which are directly observable by me, and which I infer to be the outward manifestations of pain in him).

Now this conclusion of the traditional view (that our language of sensations is private) has been rejected by both the no-names and composite views; in the former case for the reason that it presupposes that words like 'pain' are labels for private objects — but that private objects cannot be labeled; and in the latter case for the reason that, as a matter of fact, words like 'pain' are part of our public language and so must have communicable meanings.

The particular adjustments Pitcher and Donagan have made in their respective views, in order to avoid the unacceptable conclusion of the traditional view, need not be reviewed again here. What we shall see is that, in accepting the proposition "Sensations are private", both

have accepted a thesis which differs only insignificantly from the traditional conclusion, and which is just as unacceptable. The traditional conclusion may be stated thus: I have a sort of knowledge in my own case that no one else may have and that I may not have in the case of anyone else, namely the knowledge of whether I am at any particular time experiencing any particular sensation, whether I am, for example, in pain. A review of Pitcher's and Donagan's expressions of the conviction that sensations are private will show that they, in effect, express a similarly unacceptable thesis.

Pitcher said:

> Everyone acknowledges that sensations are private, that no one can experience another person's sensations, so that the special felt quality of each person's sensations is known to him alone...Thus, when you are in pain, I do not know, cannot know, the character of your sensation — whether, for example it is exactly like what I might feel [in the same circumstances] or whether it is something altogether different.[16]

Thus, Pitcher's claim is that one does have a kind of knowledge only in his own case, although it is not, as the traditionalist would have it, that he is in pain; it is that he knows "the special felt quality" of his own pain — something he cannot know in the case of another. Presumably, "knowing the special felt quality of one's pain" means "knowing what one's pain feels like", and what it is that I cannot know of another is what his pain feels like.

Donagan expresses a similar view of the matter:

> the crux is that provided what a man truthfully reports as pain is always what he would naturally express by pain-behavior, it matters not at all what it is that he truthfully reports as pain.[17]

Now what a man truthfully reports as pain is pain, of course, so when Donagan says here "it matters not at all what it is", what sort of possible difference is he implying? Here is his answer:

> whether the internal character of what is expressed in these ways [by pain-behavior for example] is the same for you as for me is irrelevant to the meaning of the word [to that of the word 'pain', for example].[18]

Each of us, then, does have knowledge in his own case which he doesn't have in the case of others — knowledge of the "internal character" of his own pain.[19] By the "internal character" of one's sensations, I take it, Donagan means something like what Pitcher meant by their "special felt quality", namely, what one's sensations feel like. For both Pitcher and Donagan then, "sensations are private", comes to something like "I cannot know what another's sensations feel like". This proposition seems to be asserted by both Pitcher and Donagan as a sort of necessary truth, as we shall see.

Pitcher, as seen in the quotation above, states that it is not just that I do not, but that I <u>cannot</u> know the character of your sensations. This indicates that what Pitcher sees as being involved here is some sort of logical impossibility. Donagan's remark that "the proposition, 'Sensations are private', is absurd if it is advanced as equivalent to: 'Sensations happen to be private; it is not the case that they are public'"[20] (along with other of his remarks about the privacy of sensations, which we have already seen), indicates that he too sees the matter as involving a sort of logical impossibility (that sensations are private does not happen to be the case, it <u>must</u> be the case, i.e., it is not a contingent, but a necessary truth).

What we have then is the following. Sensations are private in the sense that only I can know what my sensations feel like (e.g., what pain feels like to me). This is a necessary truth, because its opposite, my knowing what someone else's sensations feel like is a logical impossibility. The latter is logically impossible because the only way for me to know what another's sensations feel like is to have them, but it is logically impossible that one person experience another's sensations, or in other words, that two people have the same sensation. When the matter is stated this way, and it seems clear that this is what Pitcher's and Donagan's assertions that sensations are private come to, it is more easily seen that, far from assenting to this assertion, as Pitcher and Donagan say, this is the very same position (with only a minor terminological alteration) that Wittgenstein attacked as in one sense false and in another nonsense:

> In what sense are my sensations private? Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another can only surmise it. — In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense. If we are using the word 'to know' as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain. — Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know it myself! — It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean — except perhaps that I am in pain?[21]

Now one can see that the no-names and composite expressions of the proposition "sensations are private" differ from the position being attacked in the above passage from the Investigations only in that they have substituted the contention "only I can know what my sensations (e.g., pain) feel like" for "only I can know whether I am really in pain". This version of the privacy of sensation fares no better

than the traditional version, for Wittgenstein's comments above apply equally to it.

If we are using 'to know' as it normally is used, then other people very often know what my sensations feel like. Innumerable cases like the following can be readily brought to mind. I have just lost a loved one, say, and someone else who has recently suffered a similar bereavement says, "I know just what it feels like to you — having lost her this way, for the same thing happened to me". And this case can be imagined as one in which the knowledge that someone else knows how he feels is a comfort to the sufferer. The example is of an emotion rather than a sensation, chosen for its familiarity, but the case may be altered to one of, say, having hit a thumb with a hammer, if that seems to make the point clearer: "I know how that feels to you — having hit your thumb with the hammer — I did the same thing last week". So if we are using 'to know' as it is ordinarily used, then others very often know what my sensations feel like. This points out that having another's sensations is not the criterion in our ordinary language game for knowing what another's sensations are like, and thus, that "it is logically impossible for one person to have another's sensations" does not entail "only I can know what my sensations feel like".

And it can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know what my sensations feel like: "I know what my sensations feel like; my pain hurts (my tickle tickles, etc.) — What do yours feel like?". That should strike one as curious if not humorous, for what is "I know what my sensations feel like" supposed to mean, except perhaps that I have sensations. There is the possible objection here that 'I

know what my sensations feel like' is not nonsense because, for one thing, that sentence may be used to distinguish men from animals. Animals have sensations, but we might not want to say that they know what their sensations feel like, as we might of humans. But here "I know what my sensations feel like" just means that I, like all human beings, have self-consciousness or, in other words, is just equivalent to "I am a human being". But that, of course, is not something that only I may know. Although there may be a use for the proposition "I know what my sensations feel like" (the use above, for example), it is not the expression of a kind of private knowledge.

The following remark from Wittgenstein is directed at just this problem: "I know how the color green looks to me — surely that makes sense! — Certainly. What use of the proposition are you thinking of?".[22] One might easily substitute in this passage "I know how pain feels to me". One may imagine a use for almost any sentence. "I know how the color green looks to me" might be used in a dispute over what color to paint a room. One person says, "Let's paint the room green." The other says, "Let's not; I don't like green." The first person replies, "But I think green is a beautiful color!" and the second person says "I know how the color green looks to me — it looks awful!". One could probably also imagine a context in which there would be a use for "I know how pain feels to me" (perhaps a masochist might follow this assertion with "...it feels good."). But it will not be used to express something which only I can know. Thus, Wittgenstein's remarks attacking the traditional notion of the privacy of sensations apply equally to the slightly modified versions of Pitcher and Donagan. "Sensations are private" again turns out to be in one way false, in another

nonsense.

Another, rather different, source of the tendency to assert 'sensations are private' is that produced by the idea that this proposition expresses a necessary truth, since two people's having the same sensation seems to be a logical impossibility. As we have seen, this seems to be at least a partial motive in the cases of both Pitcher and Donagan. But it should be clear from our earlier discussion of that, if 'to know' is being used normally, having another's sensations is not the criterion for saying that one knows what another's sensation (e.g., pain) or his emotion (e.g., grief) feels like. If this is understood, then the idea that it is logically impossible that two people have the same sensation should not tempt one to say that the proposition 'sensations are private' expresses a necessary truth. As we shall see, however, this notion of "logical impossibility" is itself unclear (at least in the present case).[23]

There seem to be two important interpretations of the notion of logical impossibility. One is that the claim that 'p' asserts a logical impossibility is equivalent to the assertion that 'p' is senseless. In the case before us, this version of logical impossibility asserts, e.g., that "I felt his pain" is senseless. The other interpretation is that to say 'p' is logically impossible is to say the negation of 'p' is a necessary truth. Thus the claim that it is logically impossible that one experience another's sensations is, on this view, equivalent to the assertion that 'I did not feel his pain' (or 'All pains I feel are my own') is a necessary truth. One difficulty here is in specifying precisely what is said to be senseless or a necessary truth.

There is one sense in which I may be said to have another's pain: we sometimes say things like "I've got the very same backache you had last week" or "I've got your headache". It may seem, however, that such uses are only metaphorical, that two people can't literally have the same pain. But now what is being denied? What is this other, literal, sense of "having another's pain"?

The reply may be something like the following:[24] We sometimes say two people have the same car when they own identical models. But then there is another sense in which two people may be said to have the same car, and that is when they own a single car jointly. Now it is in the former sense of "having the same one" that two people may be said to have the same pain, as when we say things like "We have the same backache". But it is in the second sense of 'having the same one' (that given by the example of joint car owners) that it is logically impossible that two people have the same sensation.

But here, although one may say that the sense of 'the same' in "two people having the same sensation" which is logically impossible, is that of 'the same' in the case of joint car ownership, and be under the impression that he has specified a literal sense of "two people having the same sensation", still no literal sense has been specified. The attempt was to say that what 'having the same one' means in the second sense above of 'two people have the same car', is what 'having the same one' means in the literal sense of 'two people having the same sensation'. But, as Cook puts it,

> What could it mean to speak of transferring a word or expression and its meaning from a context in which it has a particular use to a sentence in which it has no use (except as a part of speech) — and certainly not the

> use it had in the context from which it was allegedly transferred? [25]

Now, as to the two versions of logical impossibility, those who opt for the first version "find themselves in the odd position of saying that it is the literal sense of a sentence which is senseless"[26] and with the adoption of either version, one is faced with specifying the alleged literal sense of a proposition which is supposed to express a logical impossibility. But that, as we have seen, is just what cannot be done. It appears then, that the proposition 'sensations are private' fares no better as a necessary truth than it did as the expression of a peculiar kind of knowledge each person has only in his own case. 'Sensations are private' must be given up as confused. The premiss common to all three of the views which we have seen is a confusion common to them all.

Wittgenstein's Position

This last point, that the proposition 'sensations are private' is itself nonsense (or else false), is the most important point of Wittgenstein's elucidation of the private language problem, and it is the missing of this point which led to the failure of the no-names and composite attempts at solving the puzzles generated by the traditional view. It was the notion that sensations are private which was the basis for Pitcher's view that sensation words are not really names of sensations, and it was the same notion which required Donagan to say, in effect, that everyone's pain might be different, but that so long as it was the accompaniment of the same behavior, it was correctly called 'pain'. These puzzles do not arise once 'sensations are private'

is given up.

It is important at this point to remember that Wittgenstein, and, of course, Pitcher and Donagan indirectly, have been trying to clear up some puzzles generated by particular ways of looking at the matter of our language of sensations. The most important part of such a project is the identification (or "diagnosis") of any misunderstandings involved in the views in question. If misunderstandings can be identified which are responsible for the puzzles generated, then that may be all that it is necessary — one may be in a position to see that there is no longer anything puzzling in the matter at hand.

As Wittgenstein puts it:

> Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. — Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain.[27]

This is the sort of solution Wittgenstein has offered to the private language problem. He has identified misunderstandings about how language functions (e.g., the mistakes of thinking that all words are names, that names always function on the model of labels, that 'sensations are private' makes sense) which are the sources of the puzzles we have seen. It is a mistake to think that Wittgenstein offers a general theory of sensation, or of anything else;[28] what he offers is a description of the language-games we play. With this in mind, we may proceed to a brief look at Wittgenstein's view of our actual use of sensation words, the sort of thing that "lies open before us". As we have seen, one of the recurrent puzzles in the problem of sensation and private language was the idea that one has a special kind of knowledge in his own case that he cannot have in the case of others. Wittgenstein explains the asymmetry between first and third

person sensation statements which is the source of this puzzle, as follows.

In the cases of third person sensation statements, the first important thing to notice is that there are cases in which one is certain of another's pain ("I can be as <u>certain</u> of someone else's sensations as of any fact..."[29]), as well as doubtful cases and cases in which one may be certain another is only pretending. Cases of the first sort are paradigms for the use of phrases like 'he is in pain'. It is from such cases that one learns the use of such expressions. To use a previous example, a child screaming in pain from having boiling water spilled on him is a paradigm case of someone being in pain — the concept of doubt has no place in this context, but can only be injected as a manifestation of philosophical confusion over the use of these words (e.g., as a result of thinking that having another's pain is the criterion for knowing another is in pain).

Cases of the second sort allow the possibility of one's being mistaken about another's being in pain ("he was only pretending after all") or about who was in pain ("I thought you had the toothache, but I see now it was that fellow moaning over there in the corner"). And then, of course, there are also cases of the third sort, such as the pretend-pain of a dramatic performance. Although it is quite possible that I be mistaken about another's pain, (he may be in pain but conceal it, or fool me by pretending to be in pain when he is not), there is nothing essentially private (private in the "philosophical" sense) in any of these cases. The other person, as we have seen, has no knowledge that I could not have.

In the cases of first person sensation statements, on the other

hand, it is important to remember that there is not the possibility of mistake as in third-person utterances. It makes no sense to speak of one's being mistaken about whether he, himself, is in pain (although he may lie of course), and so, as discussed earlier, neither does it make sense to think of one's having special knowledge in his own case.

This does not seem puzzling, once one has gotten rid of the idea that sensations are private objects, an idea which resulted from construing sensation words on analogy with words for physical objects, and which thus gave rise to the idea of private ostensive definitions by which one would associate names with these private objects. Wittgenstein suggested the following alternative account of how one learns first person sensation statements.

> How do words refer to sensations? — There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations everyday, and give them names? But how is the connexion between the name and the thing named set up? This question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? — of the word 'pain' for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensations and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior.[30]

This is the sort of way in which first person uses of sensation words are names of sensations. Someone learns exclamations (such as 'ouch'!) to replace natural pain behavior (such as crying and screaming) or sentences (such as 'I have a toothache') to replace, or to go alone with, moaning and holding one's jaw. One can imagine, as Wittgenstein suggests, "not merely the words 'I am in pain', but also the answer 'It's not so bad' replaced by instinctive noises and gestures."[31]

The important point here, again, is that once one comes to see that what generates the puzzles of the traditional, no-names and composite views are misunderstandings and false analogies, the puzzles dissolve and what is left is merely the description of our language games — what is open to everyone's view who is unhindered by such misunderstandings.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Cf, Wittgenstein, p. 2ff.

[2]Wittgenstein, p. 11.

[3]Ibid., p. 12.

[4]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[5]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[6]Ibid., p. 48.

[7]Ibid., p. 51. Emphasis added.

[8]The following criticism of Pitcher's interpretation of the beetle passage has been similarly made by John Cook in "Wittgenstein on Privacy" and I am indebted to him for it.

[9]Wittgenstein, p. 100.

[10]John Cook, "Wittgenstein On Privacy", Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher (Garden City, 1966), p. 322.

[11]Donagan, p. 332.

[12]Wittgenstein, p. 92. Donagan credits Henri Castaneda with having subjected this argument to "justified criticism"; and A. J. Ayer has expressed objections similar to Donagan's.

[13]Donagan, p. 339.

[14]Ibid., p. 340.

[15]Rush Rhees, "Can There Be A Pricate Language", Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations, ed. George Pitcher (Garden City, 1966), p. 276.

[16]Pitcher, pp. 297-98.

[17]Donagan, p. 346.

[18]Ibid., p. 348.

[19]I presume that Donagan would want to say that each of us is acquainted with this "internal character" of his own sensations.

[20]Donagan, p. 334.

[21]Wittgenstein, p. 89.

[22]Ibid., p. 96.

[23]The following discussion of necessary truth and logical impossibility is largely an adaptation of John Cook's discussion of this point in "Wittgenstein On Privacy".

[24]This example is my own.

[25]Cook, p. 301.

[26]Ibid., p. 300. Cf, also, Wittgenstein, p. 139.

[27]Wittgenstein, p. 50.

[28]Cf, Donagan, p. 344: "Where, in Wittgenstein's album of reminders, questions, and suggestions is a coherent theory to be found?"

[29]Wittgenstein, p. 224.

[30]Ibid., p. 89.

[31]Ibid., p. 103.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As outlined in the Chapter I, the objectives of this thesis were multiple. After an initial characterization of the traditional view that areas of our common language are private, two examples of possible alternative views which have been entertained as solutions to the puzzles of the traditional view were examined. These were Pitcher's view that a private language is impossible, and Donagan's view that although our common language is indeed public, a private language is not impossible.

We have seen as elements of these three views, three theories of names and naming: (1) the traditional view that names function as labels for objects and that names (such as 'pain') are assigned to sensations by each individual, privately, since sensations are private objects, (2) the no-names view that names are indeed like labels for objects, but that words like 'pain' are therefore not names, since sensations are private objects, and private objects cannot be named, and (3) the composite view that names are assigned to private sensations indirectly, through reference to their outward manifestations and the circumstances of their occurrence. All of these views were rejected as involving unacceptable consequences.

Views (2) and (3) above were also rejected as interpretations of Wittgenstein's view in the Philosophical Investigations, primarily because they involve the mistake of taking Wittgenstein to have accepted as true the proposition that sensations are private, when in

fact he correctly rejected that proposition as nonsense (or else false). It was thus shown that Wittgenstein's position was in fact that a private language is impossible (or better, that the notion of the possibility of a private language rested on a confusion), but that his view of the matter was quite different from that depicted by either Pitcher or Donagan. And hence, we have seen that the correct view of names and naming (as well as the correct interpretation of Wittgenstein's work on this problem) was that there are different kinds of names (not just names on the model of labels) and that there is neither point in saying that sensation words are not names (contrary to Pitcher's view) nor sense in saying that sensation words are names of private objects (contrary to Donagan's view).

In conclusion, a final analysis of the private language problem and Wittgenstein's solution to it is here offered.[1] The basic questions of the problem are (1) whether I use a private language when I talk about my sensations and feelings, and (2) whether it might be possible to invent one, should it be that I do not already have one.

Wittgenstein has shown that question (1) either has an obvious answer, or is senseless. If it merely means, "Do I understand others and they me?", the answer is obvious, and affirmative, and I do not use a private language when I speak of my sensations and feelings. There may be a tendency to ask "But do others <u>really</u> mean the same by their sensation words as I do?". However, the only criterion of one's understanding the meaning of a word is his making correct <u>use</u> of it, and so the question, "Do others understand me when I <u>use</u> sensation words?" (and vice-versa), is senseless.

There are several possible approaches to answering question (2).

A conclusive demonstration, of course, would be to produce a private language, but this solution is not possible, since the claim to have invented a private language is uncheckable. But if one were to say that question (2) is unanswerable in principle, the charge seems justified that the question is therefore senseless.

A feasible approach to defending the possibility of an invented private language would be by showing that the definition of a private language does not contain a contradiction: that (1) one might invent a vocabulary and rules for its use, (2) associate terms with his own numerically and qualitatively distinct (private) experiences, and (3) check questions about correct use of these terms by consulting his memory.

Thus, it would have to be shown that there is a subject matter for the private language, that talk of directly associating names with logically private data makes sense, and that questions about the correct application of these names make sense and could be settled by appeals to memory. Showing that a private language is impossible will involve showing that the foregoing conditions cannot be met. This is what Wittgenstein may be seen as having done.

He has shown that the required notion of private ostensive definition is defective, and that talk of correct use of words in a private language does not make sense. Above all, he has shown that there is no subject matter for a private language, for claims of the privacy of sensations or of a realm of private data or knowledge turn out to be senseless.

FOOTNOTES

[1] I am indebted to Professor G. G. Clements for this way of looking at the matter.

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APPENDIX

AN HISTORICAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

The two primary reasons for attaching this note are, first, as mentioned in Chapter I, it seems that the full significance of the private language problem can only be realized when its connection with the history of philosophy is recognized, and second, it seems that an example is called for in partial justification for referring to the view characterized in Chapter II as the "traditional" view. For these purposes parts of the works of Thomas Hobbes will be examined here, in order to show that his views entail the view that we use private languages in speaking of our sensations and feelings. The choice to use Hobbes as such an example was made because it seems that an example "diagnosis" can be produced rather briefly in his case.

Hobbes' logic includes a section on names which begins with a discussion of marks and signs. 'Marks' he defines as "sensible things taken at pleasure, that, by the sense of them, such thoughts may be recalled to our mind as are like those thoughts for which we took them."[1] Marks are devised by an individual as an aid to his own memory. Signs, on the other hand, (aside from "natural signs", such as a thick cloud being a sign of rain) are devised so that "what one man finds out may be manifested and made known to others".[2] And names perform the function of both marks and signs, "but they serve for marks before they be used as signs".[3] That is, "though a man were

alone in the world they would be useful to him in helping him to remember"[4] but, there being no other people, would not in this case serve as signs. Names may serve as signs to others only when combined in sentences:

> Words so connected as that they become signs of our thoughts, are called SPEECH, of which every part is a name ...they cannot be signs otherwise than by being disposed and ordered in speech.[5]

Hobbes sums up this part of his theory of names and naming as follows:

> [T]he nature of a name consists principally in this, that it is a mark taken for memory's sake; but it serves also by accident to signify and make known to others what we remember ourselves, and, therefore, I will define it thus: ....A name is a word taken at pleasure to serve for a mark, which may raise in our mind a thought like to some thought we had before, and which being pronounced to others, may be to them a sign of what thought the speaker had, or had not before in his mind.[6]

As indicated in one of the passages above, Hobbes sees all words as names. He emphasizes this point by pointing out that, though 'man', 'tree', and 'stone' are obviously names, so also are 'future', 'nothing', and 'impossible', and in general, "seeing every name has some relation to that which is named...it is lawful for doctrine's sake to apply the word 'thing' to whatsoever we name".[7] Thus, Hobbes' view of the matter is that all words are names and that different sorts of "things" have names: nothing and the future have names, as well as men, trees, and stones.

However, as we have seen, for Hobbes

> names are signs not of things, but of our cognitions...for that the sound of this word 'stone' should be the sign of a stone, cannot be understood in any sense but this,

> that he that hears it collects that he
> that pronounces it thinks of a stone.[8]

Now, however one interprets Hobbes' statement that names are signs of cognitions, and his use of the word "cognitions", Hobbes' views of names and naming will lead to the view either that all of our words have private meanings, or that, at least, our words for sensations and emotions do.

This can be made clear by applying Hobbes' theory of language to the area of our words for sensations (he does not himself discuss this area when formulating the principles we have seen). First, since all words are names, according to Hobbes, words like 'pain' must be. And if the word 'pain' is first a mark, a help to one's own memory which only "accidentally" serves as a sign to others of what conceptions are in the mind of the speaker, then one must employ the sort of private ostensive definition discussed as part of the traditional view of Chapter II. One must undertake to associate the mark 'pain' with the sensation, the "thing" which this mark signifies, privately. Only later, when this mark is used in speech, will it serve as a sign to others of what is in one's own consciousness (i.e., of what "cognition" one is having). But here, as Wittgenstein pointed out, one will have no criterion of having remembered correctly what sensation this mark is to be a sign of.

This view will also generate the analogical argument puzzle, for others will have no way of knowing what cognition the sign 'pain' is a sign of, except in his own case. So communication with the word 'pain' will have to be explained in terms of each persons' assuming that others indicate the same cognition by the word 'pain as he does,

on the basis of the other's similar behavior and constitution. But here, since the meaning of the word 'pain' is the cognition or conception it names ("the truth of a proposition is never evident, until we conceive the meaning of the words or terms whereof it consisteth, which are always conceptions of the mind"[9]) no one may be <u>certain</u> that another means the same by the word 'pain' as he does.

Thus Hobbes' general view of language (that it consists of names, the meanings of which are the things they refer to) entails the existence of a private language, at least in the areas of our talk of sensations.

Hobbes' view might even be taken as entailing the view that <u>all</u> of our language is actually private, that is, that each of us is certain only of what he means by the words he uses, since Hobbes views all words as naming the conceptions of the speaker. This interpretation would be less generous to Hobbes, however, and would require a more lengthy discussion. At any rate, Hobbes' view entails the view that at least our language of sensations is private, and that is sufficient for the purpose of this appendix.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Thomas Hobbes, Body, Man, and Citizen, ed. Richard S. Peters (New York, 1962), p. 32.

[2]Ibid., p. 33.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[7]Ibid., p. 35.

[8]Ibid., p. 34.

[9]Ibid., p. 204.

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