

A WITTGENSTEINIAN REVIEW OF  
CARTESIAN PRIVACY

by 

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## Introduction

Rene Descartes molded modern philosophy around his duality of substance, and his two famous maxims: "I think therefore I am," and "The mind is easier known than the body." For "The Father of Modern Philosophy," at the foundation of all knowledge is the former maxim, the latter following directly from it. He believed he knew the former to be indubitably certain for the clearness and distinctness with which it was perceived eliminated the opposite possibility. Clarity and distinctness became the criterion for true ideas, and Descartes now was able to investigate the world for additional certainties.

What am I? A thinking thing...A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, and also imagines and senses.<sup>1</sup>  
...as for the body...I experienced all my appetites in it and for it, and I was affected by sensations of pleasure and pains in its parts, but not in those other bodies that were separate from it.<sup>2</sup>  
...lastly I bring forward all the reasons from which we infer the existence of material things.<sup>3</sup>

For Descartes what one senses is indubitable, but that sense have any correlates outside the mind can be doubted. All that the mind perceives concerning the world of extension either comes through the sense organs of the body, from the interior of the body (the one with which the mind is closely

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<sup>1</sup>Rene Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy, in Essential Works of Descartes, trans. by Lowell Blair (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1966), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>ibid. p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>ibid. p. 58.

conjoined), or by direct intervention of God. It is with the privacy entailed by the Cartesian explanation of bodily sensation and the doctrine of representative perception that I am concerned with in this thesis.

Ludwig Wittgenstein is a pinnacle in the twentieth century field of linguistic philosophy, and deserves to be called "The Father of Contemporary Philosophy." He was the first to regard all metaphysics and epistemology as nonsense, or at least strange confusions, and his Philosophical Investigations presupposes none whatsoever. His method was to note the way in which ordinary language functions and where it goes astray in philosophy. "For philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday."<sup>4</sup> It is this approach Wittgenstein took toward the conundrums in Cartesian doctrine.

The phrase "ordinary language" needs to be explained in order to understand the Wittgensteinian approach. Ordinary language is words which make sense within the bounds of ordinary discourse. Certainly a highly specialized language such as logic or physics makes sense, but these language games are of little concern to Wittgenstein. A "language game" is all the uses of utterances, words, phrases, sentences, and accompanying human gestures woven together in daily discourse. Language follows implied rules, where one knows if he is using

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<sup>4</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. by G.E.M. Anscombe (2nd ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1958), section, 36.

a word correctly or incorrectly. Only if discourse makes sense in a language game (where "sense" means it can be used, acted upon if necessary, responded to, or rephrased) is it intelligible. Some supposed language games such as Cartesian private language are actually nonsense and therefore not a language. It took Wittgenstein to demonstrate this.

One of the most remarkable things about the two philosophers I am presenting here is the great amount of over-lapping and dove-tailing in their respective philosophies. In Descartes' writings the metaphysical notion of mind and body immediately implies consideration of the epistemological issues inherent in duality. The duality leads in turn to a myriad of issues subsumed within interaction. In interaction one of the most important issues is the privacy of the mind. The mind's privacy reduces philosophy to epistemological skepticism. It is to dispell as a misuse of language the problems of privacy implied by the metaphysical equating of the terms "mind" and "body" that I have turned my attention to the privacy of bodily sensations and to representative perception.

The same point can be noted in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations and Zettel. His observations concerning language games concentrate on the "use" of words, rather than their "meaning" (where "meaning" means naming). Consideration of language leads to explaining the use of words which in turn leads to the many sections which deal directly with Cartesian issues.

Paragraphs about "pain" lead to sections about sight, consciousness, and imagination. Both men are intellectual giants surrounded by interlocking volumes of philosophic discourse.

Thus it has been necessary for me to make a comprehensive study of merely a select few of the issues which are related to both philosophers, rather than a general outline of their respective works—which would not adequately explain anything. I am concerned mainly with Cartesian privacy and with the Wittgensteinian approach to this subject. This means I have been obliged to omit several important discussions in Descartes' writings, such as those considering "I think therefore I am," the criterion of clear and distinct perceptions, and such lengthy debate over interaction, in favor of issues more to my point. From Wittgenstein I have omitted much of his discussion of language games, though in chapter three I have devoted a few pages to the notion of "ordinary language." But I hope these sacrifices will be worth the study I am offering of the problems of knowledge of the world and the misunderstanding of language which results in thinking of "mind" and "body" as substances.

The subjects which I will have to consider in relation to the issue of privacy and the Wittgensteinian treatment of it, even with the narrowing of concern noted above, are still many and varied. Among these are the Cartesian dualism of extension and immaterial substance, the use of the words "to know," the unintelligibility of the notion of private language,

and a short review of ordinary language and the application of that notion. These related subjects are not introduced as main topics, but rather are developed only in so far as necessary to demonstrate the thesis of this work. As typical examples of bodily sensations I will refer to pains and tickles. For a typical example of representative perception I will refer to visual perception.

The basic relation between Descartes and Wittgenstein is clear, for as Anthony Kenny points out, "If Descartes innovation was to identify the mental with the private, Wittgenstein's contribution was to separate the two. Since Wittgenstein, we tend to equate the mental with what is peculiar to language-users,"<sup>5</sup> not to a substance which Descartes named "mind" whose composition was unextended soul substance. The privacy of sensations and perceptions were made public events once again wherein everyone knows what it means to say "he is in pain," and no one is at a loss to understand someone who says "look at how blue the sky is."

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<sup>5</sup>Anthony Kenny, Cartesian Privacy, in Wittgenstein, ed. by George Pitcher (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 361.



## Chapter One—Cartesian Dualism

### Descartes' Dualist Doctrine

Since the time of Descartes, if never before, one of the fundamental problems of philosophy has been to explain the relation between mind and matter. Descartes stated this problem so clearly that those who immediately followed him had their whole philosophy characterized largely by the position they held upon the subject. How are mind and matter related? How do they react upon one another when apparently there are no grounds of inter-relation?<sup>1</sup>

The metaphysics of Descartes divided everything into two irreducible substances—mind and matter. These two substances were mutually exclusive, completely different, in no way dependant on one another, yet in some way related. Mind was composed of unextended soul substance which was indivisible and whose basic attribute was that of thought. The defining characteristic of body was extension—it was infinitely divisible and could not think or sense. Souls were composed of the former substance; rocks, trees and grass of the latter. Human beings had both entities which in some way interacted.

The epistemology of Descartes centered about the concept of interaction between mind and body which provided for thought sensation, and action. Extended motion in the organs of sense transferred information about matter to the mind, where in the form of dimensionless sense data the mind experienced it. The

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<sup>1</sup>Halbert Hains Britan, Introduction, in The Principles of Descartes' Philosophy (Chicago, 1905), p. iv.

reverse processes provided for thoughts, desires, and emotions in the mind to be the causes of motion in the extended body.

This dualist philosophy appeared to answer many of the riddles concerning man and his world, seemingly followed the common sense view, but it still managed to raise what appeared to be inexplicable problems. The problem which I am concerned with in this work arises from the interaction between soul and body. Specifically I wish to consider the issue of privacy as entailed by the mind's apprehension of bodily sensation and in the perception of sense data.

Descartes' description of "body" follows directly from his preoccupation with mathematics, which for him actually meant geometry. "That the nature of the body consists not in weight, hardness, color and the like, but in extension alone."<sup>2</sup> With geometry, which was an indubitable science for Descartes, size and shape of objects could be known, but this was all. Thus, the only information that the mind could know indubitably concerning the world of extension was that which could be described in terms of geometry. Since it appeared impossible that mathematics could ever be applicable to hardness and color, all man could know indubitably through his senses of the outer world was extension. "In this way we will discern that the nature of matter or body, considered in general, does not consist in its being hard, or ponderous, or colored, or that

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<sup>2</sup>René Descartes, The Principles of Philosophy, in A Discourse on Method, trans. by John Veitch (New York: E. P. Lutton and Co. Inc., 1957), p. 200.

which affects our senses in any other way, but simply in its being a substance extended in length, breadth, and depth."<sup>3</sup> Extended substance, therefore, makes up the material world of tables and chairs, and that which could be known for certain concerning matter was its dimension, form and motion (or "local motion").

As for the world of unextended soul substance, here attributes of immaterial entities were at complete opposites with the physical world. "For examining what we are while supposing, as we do, that there is nothing really existing apart from thought, we clearly perceive that neither extension, nor figure, nor local motion, nor anything similar that can be attributed to body, pertains to our nature, and nothing save thought alone...."<sup>4</sup> The mind is to be viewed on the analogy of a geometrical point in space. It is locatable in space, yet it itself is spaceless. Its essence is thought, and subsumed in this general category of thought is all that "we of ourselves are immediately conscious of...."<sup>5</sup> This includes willing, imagining, conceiving, desiring, and cognizing. The mind is in space, although spaceless, and is located in the body of man within the pineal gland.

Rene Descartes introduced into philosophy the modern dichotomy between soul and body wherein the soul is better known than

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 167

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 167

the body.

...I saw that while I could pretend that I had no body...I could not pretend that I did not exist; on the contrary, from the very fact that I was thinking...it followed manifestly and certainly that I existed, whereas if I had ceased to think...I had no reason to believe that I would have existed.<sup>6</sup>

And from this Descartes reaches a conclusion that provides for one of his two famous maxims:

Thus the self, that is, the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, is even easier to know than the body, and would still be all that is if the body did not exist.<sup>7</sup>

The mind is better known than "body" for the "self" has direct apprehension of the mind, whereas for knowledge of the body it must depend on sense data. Sense data gives only second-hand information about the world of extension--this is made explicit in the doctrine of representative perception. The term "mind" was transformed into the name of an entity, which is known only to itself; it is the seat of consciousness, locked-away from the outer world, and private unto the self.

Although mind and body are completely distinct from one another, they still interact. After listing the properties of the mind and then of the body, Descartes comments:

There are, however, besides these, certain things of which we have an internal experience that ought not to be referred either to the mind itself, or to the body alone, but to the close and intimate union between them,

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<sup>6</sup> Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method, in Essential Works of Descartes, trans. by Lowell Blair (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1966), p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

as will hereafter be shown in its place. Of this class are the appetites of hunger and thirst, etc., and also the emotions or passions of the mind which are not exclusively mental affections, as the emotions of anger, joy, sadness, love, etc., and, finally, all the sensations, as of pain, titillation, light, and colours, sounds, smells, tastes, heat, hardness, and other tactile qualities.<sup>8</sup>

These are all the internal experiences man has which are attributes of the mind and body conjoined and interacting. It takes both extension and unextended soul substance functioning in unison in order to hear the dinner bell ring. Just how the mind and body interact is one of Descartes' major problems, and I hope that this first chapter amply illustrates the problem of interaction and a few of its related side issues.

If this is that which is of importance in my consideration of the metaphysical notions in Descartes philosophy, what then is of value in his epistemology? In his metaphysics the mind and body are posited as two distinct, irreducible entities; in his epistemology the question arises how the mind knows anything about the body and about objects external to the body. From Cartesian considerations about bodily sensations the issue of the privacy of bodily sensations arises. From considerations concerning the knowledge of objects external to the body come the issue of the privacy entailed in the doctrine of representative perceptions. These two specific issues is that which I am especially concerned with in this

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<sup>8</sup>Descartes, Principles, pp. 183-184

thesis.

Descartes believes there are three different notions which the mind can be concerned with. Each notion comes from a different source and is concepts or ideas about something. Descartes "knows" that there are three distinct species of notions in the mind, because he conceives this to be so, through clear and distinct perceptions. (Descartes' criterion for the truth of an idea is that the idea be clearly and distinctly conceived.)

The soul apprehends itself solely by means of the pure understanding; body...can be known by the understanding acting alone, but much better by the understanding aided by the imagination; and finally the things that pertain to the union of the body and soul...are known very clearly by the senses.<sup>9</sup>

The soul knows itself through the understanding. When Descartes doubts his mind into existence, he is using thinking processes, doubting, to ascertain that he exists as unextended soul substance. There is no need for recourse to the imagination or the senses; it is an indubitable fact known to the understanding through introspection. The use of the understanding in this way is one way in which the search for truth and knowledge can be undertaken according to Descartes. To conceive of extension either the understanding must be employed or both the understanding and the imagination must be used.

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<sup>9</sup>Rene Descartes, Letters to Princess Elizabeth, in Descartes--Philosophical Writings, ed. by Norman Kemp Smith, Modern Library (New York: Random House, Inc., 1956), p. 255.

This is Descartes' second epistemological notion. Since extension is seen in terms of numbers, and geometry can give the mind truth, it can therefore convey truths about extension to the mind. Sometimes, Descartes is willing to concede, it helps to imagine what a certain body looks like when we employ just the understanding utilizing mathematics to conceive of material structures. Thus sometimes the understanding and imagination work together in this second category.

The third notion is probably the most perplexing in terms of the problems in interaction, and it is just these problems that are of interest to me in this work. The things which pertain to the union of the body and soul are pains, tickles, feelings of hunger, etc. Adding the use of the sense organs to this set of sensations, the perceptions in sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell are hence also included. Upon considering bodily sensations, it is to be noted that the physiological cause of the sensation in the body sends a "message" to the mind, where through some vague process of interaction, the "message" in the mind becomes the sensation—whether it be of pain, pleasure, itches or tickles. What results from this is that bodily sensations can only be apprehended in each person's mind, which makes the sensation private and known only to the sensing mind. Not only is there the problem here of how interaction actually does occur in the transference of bodily "message" into bodily sensations, but also the issue of "know-

ing" one's pains, the use of a private language to name the sensations, and the privacy of sensations, wherein only the mind having the sensation knows what it feels like and cannot share this experience with any other mind, arise here. The case is the same for the mind's apprehension of objects external to the organs of sense. Only the "self" knows what an apple looks like to itself, or what a bell sounds like, or pear tastes like. Thus when Mary speaks about what she sees, given Descartes' hypothesis, it is actually only what she thinks she sees, and she can never be sure if Grace is seeing the same thing.

Thus Descartes' philosophy evolves as a metaphysics which posits two irreducible entities, mind and body, which are entirely separate, yet interact. His epistemology contains what he considers a primary criterion of truth, which he uses to demonstrate how the mind can have knowledge of itself, the body it is conjoined with and other objects external to it, and the interaction between mind and body.

But as I have been pointing out, great difficulties arise when interaction is rigorously considered. If ideas or sense in the mind are merely representations of the world of extension, how can the individual get around his sense data to see how they correspond, if they do, to the physical world? Secondly, granting Descartes' philosophy it would be totally logical to say that each individual has his own private world which only he can know, and possibly never be able to convey to other minds. The reason this arises is that only the individual



private mind can know what is transpiring in itself—for minds can only have sense data of bodies—their own and others. There cannot be "sense-data" of a mind, that is you cannot see one, touch one, smell one, etc. The phrase "sense data" is merely inapplicable here, and being that there are no other means for knowing that other minds exist or what is transpiring within them, it must be concluded that each mind can know what is going on only in that mind.

#### Selected Arguments for Cartesian Dualism

Norman Kemp Smith in his Studies in the Cartesian Philosophy writes in regards to the direction in philosophy to consider the soul as better known than the body. "This tendency towards subjectivity was highly developed by the fourth century A.D., and we need not, therefore, be surprised to find quite explicit in Augustine the cogito ergo sum of Descartes."<sup>10</sup> Descartes was greatly influenced by both his scholastic education and Church theology. Well-versed in Augustinian philosophy, Descartes adopted old problems as his own and at times only reiterated conceptions already formulated by early Christian thinkers. "Descartes had never any thought of 'chewing' or in any way analysing what his spiritual doctors prescribed. He was concerned to prove that such spiritual pre-

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<sup>10</sup>Norman Kemp Smith, Studies in Cartesian Philosophy (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1962), p.3.

criptions were necessary, and to justify that view of the world upon which they were based."<sup>11</sup> Christian theology had already designated to the body a soul, one which was immutable and indivisible. As to the metaphysical substances which composed these two entities, this had not been fully considered, but it is interesting to note that in Descartes' Meditations, upon considering how man has false ideas, he mentions that man is part heaven and part hell. The soul is of heavenly matter, the body of sub-earthly material. Obviously seen here is the influence of Church doctrine on his thinking. It is well-known that he hoped that his writings would be accepted as the official philosophical writings of the Church.

Of course Augustine, Anselm, or Aquinas are not referred to as "The Father of Modern Philosophy." for it is in Descartes' works that a clear formulation appears of the issues still perplexing philosophy today. In his theorizing concerning relations between mind and body, Descartes raised problems which often merely redefined, or made explicit, implied issues in Christian theology, non-school metaphysics and epistemology, and seventeenth century science.

Concerning the issue of the metaphysical dichotomy of mind and body, it is found that Descartes adopted much from Augustine. Like Augustine, Descartes viewed the unextended

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<sup>11</sup>A. D. Lindsay, "Introduction", in A Discourse on Method, ed. by John Veitch (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1957), p. XIII.

wind as located (in the same fashion that a geometrical point is located in space) in an infinitely extended material world, but always in a particular region in it, namely the brain. As the brain changes location in the plenum, so does the mind. The question of explaining unextended substances' relation to extension is not answered by Augustine—he admits he has no solution, but Descartes attempts a solution in several of his works. One passage is in The Passions of the Soul, Article 31:

But on carefully examining the matter I seem to find evidence that the part of the body in which the soul exercises its functions immediately is...the innermost part of the brain, viz., a certain very small gland, situated in a midway position, and suspended over the passage by which the animal spirits of the anterior cavities communicate with those of the posterior cavities, in such a fashion that its slightest movements can greatly alter the course of those spirits; and reciprocally that any change, however slight, taking place in the course of the spirits can greatly change the movements of this gland.<sup>12</sup>

Because of two excellent reasons from Descartes' viewpoint, the pineal gland was selected as the organ through which the mind interacted with the brain. The first justification for selection of the pineal gland as the seat of the mind was that Descartes' physics was not advanced past the theory of immediate causative motion. His theory of motion was quite

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<sup>12</sup> René Descartes, Passions of the Soul, in Descartes—Philosophical Writings, ed. by Norman Kemp Smith, Modern Library (New York: Random House, Inc., 1958), Article 31.

simplistic, at least that much of it which can be understood. He states, "Motion...is the transporting of one part of matter or of one body from the vicinity of those bodies that are in immediate contact with it, or which we regard as at rest, to the vicinity of other bodies."<sup>13</sup> The Cartesian physical world was a plenum in which A moved because B, directly behind A, pushed it. He viewed cause and effect on the analogy of a great tide of water pushing the water in front of it. Cause and effect was a fluid motion wherein the cause directly preceded the effect. Being that the pineal gland was in direct contact with the brain, interaction was thought to be explainable in terms of motion in the brain caused by the animal spirits effecting the adjacent pineal gland. Small vibrating movements in the pineal gland supposedly influenced the animal spirits, when desires and willing were changed from thought into action.

The second reason for placing the mind in the pineal gland was that the pineal gland was the only singular organ he could locate. In Article 32 of The Passions of the Soul, Descartes explains:

The reason which persuades me that the soul cannot have anywhere in the body any other location for the immediate exercise of its functions is that I observe all other parts of the brain to be double, just as we have two eyes, two hands, two ears, and indeed, all the organs of our external senses double; and that since of any one thing at any one time we have only one single and simple thought, there must be some place where the two images which come from the two eyes, and

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<sup>13</sup>Descartes, Principles, p. 211.

where the two impressions which come from one single object by way of the double organs of the other senses, can unite before reaching the soul, and so prevent their representing to it two objects in place of one.<sup>14</sup>

The pineal gland, being singular, appeared to be the only place where the duality of animal spirits representing the same object could become conjoined. In terms of the representation of perceptions to the mind, this was an explanation for how the two images coming from the back of the eyes were turned into one picture of the outer world for the mind to perceive.

Both of the reasons were intended to explain how interaction was able to take place between two completely heterogeneous substances; in actuality they explained nothing.

Although Descartes attempted to explain the mind's influence on the body by pointing to motions in the pineal gland (and the reverse process of body acting on mind in the same way), this really did not solve the problem. The physics of Descartes was applicable only to matter acting on matter. Even more sophisticated contemporary physics would be useless in considering interaction between material and immaterial entities.

In an exposition of Descartes, Norman Kemp Smith points out:

...discussing in his Traite de l'Homme how movements in the pineal gland may be supposed to condition

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<sup>14</sup>Descartes, Passions, Article 32.

the occurrences of sensations and feelings, and taking as an example the feeling of pain, he tells us that the movements 'give occasion to the soul....to have the feeling of pain.'.... Speaking of brain-movements which condition the sensation of tickling he states that they 'will give occasion to the soul to feel certain bodily pleasure, which we entitle tickling, and which... while being very closely akin to pain in respect of its cause, is quite contrary to it in respect to its effect.<sup>15</sup>

The word "occasion" plays a considerable role in stating how mind and body interact, but it is obvious that this word does not really explain anything. It could still be easily asked what process the word "occasion" stands for. Brain movements in some way must transfer the motion of tickling to the soul, so that man can feel bodily pleasure. The terminology of "in some way" is replaced by "occasion" in the work cited above. But rather than "occasion" acting as a further explanation of interaction, it only functions as a multi-syllable synonym for "in some way". The reader of Descartes is in no way closer to an understanding of the process of interaction after hearing that "movements give occasion to the soul"<sup>16</sup> than he was before hearing that phrase. Descartes uses "occasion" in his Notes in Programme, "...he is again treating of the bodily conditions of our sensory experiences, and again dwells on the differences between brain-movements

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<sup>15</sup>Norman Kemp Smith, New Studies in the Philosophy of Descartes (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1952), pp. 215.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

and what we sensuously apprehend on the 'occasion' of such movements...."<sup>17</sup> But once again for all this nothing is being clarified by Descartes' use of "occasion."

It should be noted that merely because Descartes often employs the word "occasion" that does not make him an Occasionalist. In the following Norman Kemp Smith dispells any such considerations and re-emphasizes that Descartes viewed the mind and body as vigorously interacting.

Just as the power which we have of initiating movements in the nerves 'does not depend solely on the mind alone but on the union there is between mind and body,' so too the power which the human body has of initiating sensations and passions is not a power proper to it alone, but to it only in its union with the mind. The human mind and the human body, each in its ipsissima natura adapted to the other, are jointly collaborative, not only in all the voluntary movements of the limbs, but also in the generation of the sensations and the passions.<sup>18</sup>

Although it appears clear what Descartes must do to explain interaction, actually it seems to be an inconceivable task. Certainly it is at this point where Descartes' picture breaks down, without even considering what might occur if Descartes' entire scheme was applied to man (so man's acts could be interpreted in terms of the Cartesian picture. But this will be fully considered in Chapter Three.)

In correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elizabeth

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

she repeatedly questions him concerning a clarification of the issue of interactionism. In at least one letter, it appears that Descartes is truly at a loss for an adequate reply to her queries. He states, "The human mind, as far as it seems to me, is not capable of conceiving distinctly at one and the same moment both the distinction between soul and body and their union. To do so, we should have to conceive them as one single thing, and at the same time to conceive of them as two; and this cannot be done."<sup>19</sup> This admission coming from Descartes is particularly devastating, since his criteria for truth are clarity and distinctness. Being that interaction cannot be clearly and distinctly conceived, because contradictory notions would arise, two alternatives become apparent. Either humans can never give an account of interaction, or interaction does not take place.

Hence the Cartesian scheme presents a mind-body distinction wherein the mind is better known than the body for it is known immediately to the self, and interaction occurs between these two entities so that the mind can express itself through motion in the world of extension, and in turn can perceive the outer world through bodily sensations and the organs of sense. But by granting this two perplexing issues arise. They are perplexing because though they follow from Descartes' picture they seem to be totally opposed to everything which is normally thought

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<sup>19</sup> Descartes, Letters to Princess Elizabeth, p. 256.



to be the case. Though to a cursory glance they only appear to be at odds with common sense, which is hardly grounds for philosophic dispute, with a Wittgensteinian review they are seen to be as nonsensical as the rest of Descartes' picture is inapplicable. Both issues have to do with the privacy of the mind; the first with the privacy of bodily sensations, the second with the privacy inherent in the doctrine of representative perception. Though for Descartes, "sensations" included both bodily sensations and perceptions, for convenience I shall here treat them separately. This approach will also facilitate easier treatment of them in Chapter Three, where speaking from a twentieth century viewpoint, bodily sensations have become a separate topic from perceptions.

In Descartes' "Sixth Meditation" in his Meditations on First Philosophy he considers what he knows external to the mind.

At first I sensed that I had a head, hands, feet, and all the other members composing the body which I considered to be part of myself, or perhaps all of myself. I also sensed that this body was only one among many which were capable of effecting it (mind) in various agreeable or disagreeable ways...sensations of pleasure  
...sensations of pain.<sup>20</sup>

Descartes finally concludes that he is closely conjoined to a body "which by a certain special right, I call my own,"<sup>21</sup> and that through interaction of his mind and body he becomes aware

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<sup>20</sup>Descartes, Meditations, p. 97.

<sup>21</sup>Descartes, Meditations, p. 98

of his bodily sensations. For Descartes, one "knows" if he is having a sensation rather than merely having a sensation.

"Yet I had been told by people who had had an arm or leg amputated that it sometimes seemed to them that they felt pain in the amputated limb, and from this I concluded that I could not be completely certain that I had a pain in one of my limbs when I seemed to feel it there."<sup>22</sup> And it is the mind which knows if there is pain in one of the limbs.

If only the mind whose body is closely conjoined with it, can know if that body is having a certain sensation, then the sensation becomes private unto that mind. Mary knows what her pains feel like, and Grace knows how her pains feel, but can the two girls ever communicate their respective feelings? Mary knows what the term "pain" and even "bodily sensation" means to her, but since she cannot feel Grace's sensations, she will never know the way in which Grace uses the word "pain." Entailed by this is the notion that each mind has a private language which it uses to name its own sensations, and when the private sensation language becomes public in daily discourse no one knows for certain, except the speaker, what is meant by certain terms.

For Descartes sensations are both known to the mind and felt in the mind. "There remain our sensations, affections, and appetites, of which we may also have a clear knowledge, if we

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<sup>22</sup>Descartes, Meditations, p. 96.

take care to comprehend in the judgements we form of them only that which is precisely contained in our perception of them, and of which we are immediately conscious."<sup>23</sup> By utilizing utmost care in the perception of bodily sensations, a man cannot fail to know them. Of course a man could also be wrong if he judged them without clearly and distinctly perceiving them. In regards to the location of bodily sensations Descartes' notes:

For though we are not in the habit of believing that there exist out of us objects that resemble titillation and pain, we do not nevertheless consider these sensations as in the mind alone, or in our perception, but as in the hand, or foot, or some other part of our body. There is no reason however, to constrain us to believe that the pain, for example, which we feel, as it were, in the foot, is something out of the mind existing in the foot....<sup>24</sup>

Not only are there no pains in hands, but "morning back-ache" is actually just a "head-ache". The mind is that entity which senses, body can only convey a motion which is "occasioned" to the mind through interaction. From this it follows that the only way the mind can know of a bodily sensation is to feel it. And each mind feels its own sensations. Hence, bodily sensations become private experiences, felt and therefore known only to the perceiving mind. Language used to talk about the sensations necessarily becomes a private language, wherein words are names for the various sensations. The mind and its contents becomes a locked-away strongbox.

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<sup>23</sup>Descartes, Principles, p. 192.

<sup>24</sup>Descartes, Principles, p. 192.

As for the privacy entailed by representative perceptions the arguments for it are closely related to those offered for bodily sensations, but its historical antecedents and its ramifications in Descartes' writings are considerably greater. Basically the reason for this is that many of the early Christian thinkers had considered this doctrine, and representative perception played a large role in Descartes' scientific endeavors as exemplified in La Dioptrique.

In reference to early Christian thought, Norman Kemp Smith relates,

Augustine runs the problem of knowledge into three mysteries....The first of these is how the unextended mind can contain images of the extended world....if bodies outside it (the mind) are to be known by it, that can only be by there appearing in it representations of them. The doctrine of representative perception is thus already full-blown in Augustine. Knowledge is a subjective process going on separately in the mind of each individual.<sup>25</sup>

The doctrine of representative perception maintains that in order for the mind, which is without dimension, to know the physical world, which is three-dimensional, unextended images of the physical world must represent extension in the mind. Although here only sight is considered (note the word "image"), it is obvious that representative perception must apply to any object perceived by the any one of the five senses.

Being that sense in the mind is produced by physical motions

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<sup>25</sup>Kemp Smith, Studies, pp. 4-5.

in the body, these physical motions and information concerning the world of extension, must first pass through the physical body before they reach the mind—it is here several distinct steps can be enumerated in representative perception. A bodily sense organ, i.e. the eyes, receives light waves from the object and then animal spirits rush through the nerves to the brain where a physical representation of the object is produced. Then the physical data must change into immaterial sensa so that the mind can perceive them. Thus the final perception in the mind is only in some obscure way representative of the originally sensed object. The mind is never aware of a physical object directly. I do not claim that Descartes explains in full detail what I have just summarized, but I believe that this view of representative perception logically follows from his writings as the following passage suggests.

Thus when we see the light of a torch, and hear the sound of a bell, this light and this sound are two different actions which, simply by exciting two different movements in certain of our nerves, and thereby the brain, give the soul two different sensations, which we so relate to the subjects we are supposing to be their causes that we think we see the torch itself and hear the bell, and not that we are merely sensing the movements which proceed from them.<sup>26</sup>

Man never actually sees the light of a torch but rather sense data in the mind which have been produced by the movements of the animal spirits in the optic nerve. Though this point is not

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<sup>26</sup>Descartes, Passions, Article 23.

often distinguished, the motions in the animal spirits in some way represent the object exterior to the senses, and sense data somehow represents the movement of the animal spirits about the pineal gland. In actuality there are two sets of representations of the original object, though it is true only the one in the mind is a representative perception, since only the mind can perceive.

In La Dioptrique the philosophical doctrine of representative perception is coupled with Descartes' scientific research concerning sight. To explain how it is man receives two motions from objects exterior to his sense organs, yet only perceives one "object" in his mind, Descartes explains:

And similarly, those which come from Y (an object in the field of vision) move to point 9 (part of the optic nerve), from which it is manifest that the picture 769, which is quite similar to the objects V,W,X, is formed on the interior surface of the brain, facing toward its concavities. And from there I could again transport it right to the certain small gland which is found about the center of the concavities, and which is strictly speaking the seat of common sense.<sup>27</sup>

(see plate 1)

Everywhere in the physical apparatus for sight the census is double—two images of one physical object. To explain the causes for man seeing only one object, Descartes assumes, in the guise of a scientific—philosophic hypothesis, that the

<sup>27</sup> René Descartes, La Dioptrique, in Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry, and Meteorology, trans. by Paul J. O'Connell, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965), p. 100.

sensus in the brain's right lobe, and the duplicate sensus in the left lobe, are "occasioned" to the pineal gland between them, to combine and form one image. In the pineal gland the mind, therefore, becomes aware of one image. Though it appears theoretically possible for Descartes, if not practically possible, to show his reader the path of physical impulses from the lense of the eye to the innermost regions of the brain, I think he would be at a loss to demonstrate how the mind becomes conscious of these. In other words, it must be asked how the mind apprehends the one image that is in the pineal gland.

Considerably more is presented in La Biontricus about eight and in Descartes' more philosophical writings concerning how physical motion in the pineal gland becomes a perception in the mind, but it is of no explanatory aid. The point of interest for this thesis is that this entire doctrine of the perception of bodies external to the mind and sense organs, implies the privacy of perceptions and in turn epistemological skepticism.

Granting Descartes' picture, all that the mind knows is its perceptions which in some way represent the outer, extended world. The mind has no way to get "around its sense data" to see just how they resemble their objects, or if there really are any objects. It is not necessary that what the mind perceives has to be exactly like the physical object, in fact it cannot be since the mind is unextended and physical objects are extended. Descartes states, "Thus you can clearly see that in order to perceive, the mind need not contemplate any images resembling

the things that it senses."<sup>28</sup> All the mind needs is a key for knowing that its representations in some way correlate with and relate to objects in the physical world.

So that often, in order to be more perfect as images and to represent an object better, they must not resemble it. Now we must think in the same way about the images that are found in our brain, and we must note that it is only a question of knowing how they can enable the mind to perceive all the diverse qualities of the objects to which they refer....<sup>29</sup>

As a lithograph of a tree represents a tree, so too with sense data in the mind representing the object "out there". At least this is the analogy Descartes' wants his readers to accept—but does it make an analogical sense? In what respects must images in the mind resemble objects, and in what respects need not resemble it? Descartes never explains this.

Thus the privacy of the sensation makes it known only to the apprehending mind what it perceives. Mary knows what she calls an apple, but not what Grace means by the word "apple". Man only knows what he perceives in his own mind, what transpires in other minds is beyond the bounds of knowledge. Language becomes private wherein the words function only to name what each mind perceives. Whether there even exists bodies is a question unanswerable by the intellect unless recourse is made to God. By following the logic of Descartes, if Mary says, "Look at how blue the sky is," and gestures to emphasize her remark with her finger, she should point at her forehead. She can only

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.



be certain the sky is blue in the perception in her mind. A perception is like a slide which is flashed before the mind's eye at uncertain intervals.

In spite of major difficulties and obscurities in Descartes' doctrines, it is still a monumental notion. Possibly one of the reasons for its universal appeal and continuing relevance is that "common sense" tells us that people are composed of minds and bodies. Given a theory of language which stated that words function as names, which was the commonly accepted theory until Wittgenstein, it is only a natural outcome of this that "mind" as well as "pain" names a thing, just as "body" does. The realization that bodies do not sense was also another argument for accepting the Cartesian position. Actually there is a multitude of arguments for slipping into the Cartesian picture; here I have only considered some of those relevant to this thesis. Generations of philosophers believed and many still do, that with just a little more clarification, or "a slight change here and there", everything will be set right. Even today, philosophy, psychology, and theology are greatly influenced by Descartes' scheme of man. Freudian psychology accepted Descartes' man and merely added a subconscious to the Cartesian mind. Behaviorism is a reaction against the Cartesian duality, maintaining that man does not have some entity defined as unextended soul substance, as if it were possible, though it just does not happen to be that way. As for theology the dichotomy between the body and soul still feels the

effects of Plato's reasoning as much as Descartes's. In philosophy the mind-body problem is one of the most basic issues.

Before turning my attention to Wittgenstein and a Wittgensteinian approach to these issues, I would like to consider three analogies which can be used to explain what is involved in the above doctrines. I use these analogies to illustrate Descartes' philosophy as regards the privacy entailed by bodily sensations and perceptions, and hope they will clarify and make more explicit that which I have attempted to point out.

#### Three Cartesian Analogies

Since the advent of Descartes' dualist interactionist position various analogies have been presented to explain the mind-body hypothesis. These analogies, by means of graphic language seemingly reproduce that which Descartes was presenting in a less descriptive style. These analogies are usually employed in the hope that neophytes in philosophy might grasp Cartesian Dualism, while for veterans they would serve to explain and resolve the difficulties found there.

What gives the Cartesian theory the illusion of sense is that it seems to be based on some such picture or analogy like the one here presented. These situations are intelligible and the questions raised about what is transpiring in them are intelligible questions. What will be shown about these analogies in my final chapter is that they have no application to the

mind-body problem, though they appear to. When it is seen that the analogies do not really explain the Cartesian picture one begins to realize not only that the truth of the Cartesian picture cannot be demonstrated, but also that it is unintelligible.

In this section I present three of these analogies. Each of them illustrates the contention that the mind and body are two completely heterogeneous substances. They are based upon the model of the existence of an "inner world" in reality, unextended soul substance, and an "outer world", the body and physical objects generally. The first verbal picture, "The Locked-Away-Place Analogy", illustrates that though many events are publicly observable, certain other events are only privately observable. In "The Television Camera Analogy" the mind is presented as it views the outer world of extended objects. Lastly, "The Private View" demonstrates the distinction between what the mind experiences and the stimuli in the physical world.

Before continuing it is to be noted that certainly there are other analogies employed as variations of those which I am presenting. Gilbert Ryle proposed to analogize the soul in the body like a ghost in a machine. No one analogy is archetypal. Also, there are other analogies employed to represent other aspects of Descartes' philosophy. One could view the memory as a filing cabinet where the mind can draw out stored-away information whenever it was needed; "The Movie Screen Analogy", in which imagining or dreaming is the mental act of flashing bright

pictures on a private movie screen; or, seeing cognitive processes as the work of a complex computer. But these are of no interest here.

The first verbal picture illustrates the difference between publicly observable events and private experience. What is analogized is the Cartesian theory that minds are concealed from one another, though extension is not. The mind and its contents are distinguished by the feature of "hidden-ness," while bodies are universally viewable. Hence, one feature of Cartesian Dualism appears by the juxtaposition of mind to body.

Two teenagers, Mary and Grace, are each given a music box for Christmas. Since they are sisters they fight constantly. The sisters are as jealous of each other's possessions as one cat is of another's catnip.

Within Mary's music box is a little toy soldier who marches in place while the box's mechanism plays the "Star-Spangled Banner". Mary hears Grace's present play "Swan Lake" and wonders what is in her box. But Grace refuses to show Mary the inside of her box. "I know what's in it," taunts Grace, "but you are not ever going to find out."

As the Christmas day passes Mary becomes overwhelmed with jealousy at the sound of "Swan Lake". Then her chance comes. That night when Grace is at the Christmas Ball, Mary sneaks into her sister's room and secures the music box. She surveys the outside, jealously admiring the carvings and inlay. But all too easily, when Mary attempts to open the lid, she learns that

the music box is locked. The inside of the box is the one place that Grace has all to herself, looked away from the rest of the world.

This small episode is easily identified with the Cartesian claim that there exists an inner and outer world in reality. The inner world is the mind, above symbolized by the inside of the music box. The toy soldier is to be likened to ideas, desires, imagination or cognition...only the box's owner (or the mind) can know what is inside. The outside of the box is likened to one's body; the carvings and inlay are observable by everyone. And finally there are the signs that hint at the box's contents...the "Star-Spangled Banner" or "Swan Lake". This is like Grace smiling; Mary interprets it to mean that Grace is happy.

Ludwig Wittgenstein offers a like analogy, "The Beetle-Box," of which mine is a more verbose adaptation of his. In my final chapter I will spell out all the implications of this analogy and show that while making sense it cannot be applied to Descartes' scheme.

The second analogy is utilized further to detail the notion of mind as a looked away place. "The Television Camera Analogy" brings to light the contention that the mind is once-removed from the world of extension.

Grace and Mary, during their freshman year at the city junior college, are both stricken with mononucleosis. Both girls are bed-ridden, but their parents realize the girls cannot afford

to miss six months of school. Therefore each daughter is given a television set which for six hours each day carries educational programming; the rest of the day Grace and Mary can watch what they wish. Curious as to the workings of television, Mary asks mother, to get a book describing this phenomenon. The book explains that somewhere beyond Mary's room the events seen on her television screen are actually happening. Instead of flat images on a glass tube, there are real physical objects "out there:" teachers, blackboards, buildings and grass. A television camera is focused on these objects and then via mysterious waves their likeness is produced on the television screen.

Mary wonders if that which she sees on her viewing screen is really a good representation of reality. Of late everything she sees comes via television and she does not wish to be misled. Sometimes the picture is wavy or dark and Mary is unable to tell whether her television set is at fault or if the event being televised really looks that way. The question that keeps bothering her is how is she to know if what is on her screen is an exact duplicate of what is occurring beyond the walls of her room?

Herein is presented the development of the contention that the mind's view of the physical world is much the same as Mary and Grace's view of the world beyond their rooms. Descartes held that the extended world (the teacher, blackboard, buildings, etc. in the analogy) sends rays to the eyes (the television camera), which in turn relays a message to the brain (the television

receiver), and finally an image flashes in the pineal gland (the television screen for Grace and Mary), where the mind, or the girls, sense it. The "flat image on the television screen" is like the representation in the mind of physical objects. In analogy form this is the doctrine of representative perception. Located within the pineal gland the mind is locked away from the physical world, but it makes contact with it through sense data.

But of course this verbal picture which aids in clarifying Descartes' philosophical scheme also exhibits one of his more serious difficulties. How does Grace "get around" her television screen to check if she really is getting proper reception? Though this analogy makes sense it will be demonstrated in my final chapter where what Descartes is trying to say is nonsense.

The last analogy completes the trilogy begun with the attribute of locked-away-ness Descartes ascribes to the mind. With the mind detached from the outer world of extension, not only does the mind view the outer world as in the second analogy, but this second analogy is impetus for the third. Here is illustrated how the mind contains all kinds of private objects with its own private view of extension.

Shortly before Mary and Grace return to health, each girl is placed in total isolation. Everything entering or leaving the room is in some way acted upon so as not to contaminate the sickroom or the outer world, depending on whether it is coming or going. Grace thinks it is great fun that no one can know what

is transpiring in her room but her. Only she knows if her room is warm enough and what her meals taste like. She realizes also that since all she sees, hears, smells, touches, and breathes, is once-removed from the world, everything in the world could change without her noticing it. Or just the reverse—she could change without the world knowing it. Grace likens her own situation to the figurine's in the music box, only greatly enlarged.

One afternoon Grace calls Mary on the intercom. "See everything in my room is mine...it is all private." Mary is quiet for a moment and then, "Oh no, I can still hear your voice!"

Grace still believes that during the last few days all her experiences have been private. "Naturally," she surmises to herself, "no one is in my room to experience life with me." But Grace is still perturbed; is Mary invading Grace's privacy via the intercom? This has Grace terribly bothered until she remembers how television operates.

"You are not hearing my voice!" stresses Grace. "I speak into my intercom and the sounds are changed into electrical impulses. These impulses then travel through wires to produce vibrations in a little mechanism on your intercom. You don't hear my voice, but rather estranged reproductions." Thus Grace has once more beaten Mary.

In this final analogy it should be noted that the room is the mind, as it was in the last analogy, and mental private



objects are objects in the room such as voices on the intercom and pictures on the television screen. The impulses on the intercom can be understood to represent sense data. What the final analogy gives rise to is the entire issue of private experience. In recent times the issue has been summed up in the question: does a red patch look the same to X as it does to Y? Imagine a sick Mary worrying, "I know what chicken soup tastes like in my room, but I wonder how it tastes to Grace in her room?"

This then is the total trilogy. It has been employed further to explain what has already been put forth in Descartes' work concerning those issues which I wish to discuss in this thesis. I hope to demonstrate through my Wittgensteinian approach to the issue of privacy that they actually have no explanatory value whatsoever in relation to Cartesianism.

## Chapter Two--The Philosophical Climate Surrounding Ludwig Wittgenstein

What are the elements that produced Ludwig Wittgenstein, who comes along after 2500 years of philosophical endeavors and regards it all as a curious species of nonsense? He did not give answers to philosophic conundrums, but rather showed them for what they really were--an intriguing set of pseudo-problems, inspired by pseudo-questions and in turn giving rise to others. A standard reply to a question like, "Do minds and bodies really interact," was always answered by either a "yes" or "no" followed by what appeared to be an explanation. Wittgenstein approached the standard "perplexities" of philosophers with great caution, realizing that merely in proffering a solution to these mysteries one had already committed an error. He realized that the first step was not to give a solution and then defend it against all attackers, but rather to see if there was any problem. And what seemed to be problems turned out to be mere pseudo-problems caused by a radical misuse of language. The answers "yes" or "no" may have been expedient, or considered to be the proper approach for many, but not for Wittgenstein. As O. K. Bouwsma quaintly explains, "He doesn't say 'yes' and he doesn't say 'no'. The flexible man! Was Descartes right in his statement of the cogito or not? What we want is an answer: yes or no. And

what do we get? Not even a weak answer such as 'Probably' or 'Not likely'.<sup>1</sup> Upsetting philosophic monuments, whichever he considered, he announced that the issues which were plaguing metaphysics and epistemology could be eradicated once it was shown that they only appeared to be problems. What is to be done with such a man, such a philosopher? Deny him the title and if he could he would probably thank you.

Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on April 26, 1889, and died sixty-one years later, leaving behind the Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus, the Blue and Brown Books, the Philosophical Investigations, and assorted zettel. Though he was not related to the family of German princes of the same name, he nevertheless came from a family both wealthy and cultured. Early in life Wittgenstein considered following his father's profession, but by 1911 he was at Cambridge studying with Russell. The first writings of Wittgenstein were influenced by Russell, Frege, Schopenhauer and Spinoza, but by 1936 he undertook unique and original studies that resulted in the Philosophical Investigations. Most of the following decade he taught at Cambridge, in 1938 succeeding Moore to a chair in philosophy. In 1947 he gave his last lecture. Three years later he died of cancer in Norway.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>O. K. Bouwsma, The Blue Book, in Philosophical Essays (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press), p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>This information was gathered from: Georg Henrik von Wright, "Ludwig Wittgenstein, A Biographical Sketch", Philosophical Review.

Wittgenstein, after he published the Tractatus, considered all philosophical issues solved—but it is quite obvious what many of his critics and followers think. "Philosophers ought to be wary of claiming that philosophical problems have been finally solved. Aristotle and Descartes and Spinoza and Berkeley and Hume and the author of the Tractatus Logico Philosophicus lie at the bottom of the sea not far from this rock, with the skeletons of many lesser men to keep them company."<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted that Wittgenstein as the author of the Tractatus is in Davy Jones' locker, not the Wittgenstein of the Investigations or the Blue and Brown Books. It is the viewpoint of these latter books I and many of the authors I have quoted agree with.

With all due respect to Georg Henrik von Wright, a biographer of Wittgenstein who claims, "The author of the Philosophical Investigations has no ancestors in philosophy,"<sup>4</sup> I would here like to present the philosophical milieu of the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, to illustrate what was of philosophic concern in this era and how Wittgenstein's thought fitted into it.

#### The Search for a Criterion of Meaning

Wittgenstein spent most of his early philosophically produc-

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<sup>3</sup>Renford Bambrough, Universals and Family Resemblances, in Wittgenstein, ed. by George Pitcher (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 186.

<sup>4</sup>von Wright, "Wittgenstein," p. 539.

tive years in England studying the notions of logical analysis from the Russellian point of view. Logical analysis, and here I use this phrase as all-encompassing, marks out the past seventy years in philosophy from all that has gone before. Until 1953, the publication date of the Philosophical Investigations, David Hume was lauded as being the father of the movement, with the tradition carried on by Mill in England, Mach in Europe, and Pierce in the United States. What American Pragmatism, the Vienna Circle's Logical Positivism, and British Logical Analysis had in common, was a logical analysis approach to language coupled with a radically empirical epistemology, utilized in an attempt to show the meaninglessness of metaphysics while demonstrating at the same time what sentences are meaningful.

In this chapter I wish to present a context into which Wittgenstein can be placed so that the philosophical milieu in which he worked can be studied. This "background" should serve to show antecedents to what Wittgenstein contended and the various efforts at language analysis that had preceded him and were going on at the same time he was writing.

In this chapter the doctrines of William James will be discussed as an exemplification of American Pragmatism, Russell will be considered as he exemplifies Logical Analysis, and A. J. Ayer in relation to Logical Positivism. Each of these philosophic schools can be viewed as in revolt against the grand metaphysical systems of the past centuries since Descartes, and

in a common search for some theory of verification for the meaningfulness of a sentence. Each theory was a bit different, yet they all had in common the idea of verification of meaning through logical analysis of a sentence, wherein "meaning" was defined either in terms of the law of contradiction or empirical verifiability.

The early writings of Wittgenstein, i.e., the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, were greatly influenced by language analysis, especially Russellian logical analysis. The Tractatus, in turn became the "bible" of the Logical Positivists. As to Wittgenstein's latter writings it is only natural that they were influenced by the doctrines of the schools of philosophic thought above mentioned, yet overwhelmingly they are nevertheless marked by a total break from any doctrine, school of thought, or philosopher, that had passed before.

#### American Pragmatism

Though William James believed that Pragmatism had its roots in traditional philosophy,

Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed.

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.... But these forerunners of Pragmatism used it in

fragments: they were preluders only.<sup>5</sup>

here it is not necessary nor advantageous to consider what passed before. It is in Pragmatism that any explicit statement concerning verification as a test of meaning was first formulated as a rule for contemporary thought.

Greatly influenced by empiricism and the notion of observation, James writes,

The pragmatic method...to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true....If I can find nothing that would become different, then the alternative has no sense.

That is, the rival views mean practically the same thing, and meaning, other than practical, there is for us none.<sup>6</sup>

"Practical meaning" is a key phrase in James' work. If there is no "practical meaning" for a given proposition then it is devoid of sense. Understanding exactly what "practical meaning" meant for James as well as other Pragmatists seems to be a major difficulty in arriving at a basic comprehension of their philosophy. At times James states that "practical" refers to any difference that might be made by accepting one hypothesis over another. An example of this is the debate carried on in the nineteenth century concerning the process of combustion. Many scientists maintained that "phlogistan" was an active ingredient in every particle of matter which was given off during

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<sup>5</sup>William James, What Pragmatism Means, in The American Pragmatists, ed. by Wilson Kowitz, Meridian Book, 4th ed. (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1965), p. 31.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30

combustion. A second group of scientists disregarded their colleagues' claims and opted for hydrogenized ether. And a small segment of "heretic scientists" thought the entire debate was wrong-headed; no such elements were present or even existed. The Pragmatists' approach to this issue was to first ask the following question: "What would be the practical difference whether phlogiston, ether, or nothing is used to explain the process of combustion?" If either phlogiston or hydrogenized ether can be chosen then by "Occam's Razor" the least involved should be utilized. Since the practical effects of either phlogiston or ether cannot be discerned than either will do. But if there are no practical effects changed or explained by one of these two supposed elements, than they are meaningless and the group of "heretic scientists" actually have the best solution.

"Practical meaning" also was applicable to philosophic doctrine and religious beliefs. Though James maintains a strict empiricist doctrine in his notion of verifiability, it becomes trusted at times. Though God can not be empirically tested for the influence of "the belief in God" certainly can. Hence the statement, "There is a God," is practically meaningful, for it makes an observable difference in people who believe it to be true, even though the statement itself can never tested for meaningfulness. Hence, the proposition, "There is a God," though as empirically unverifiable as phlogiston or hydrogenized ether, is still nevertheless "practically meaningful." In



In regards to the "practical meaning" entailed in philosophic discourse the Pragmatists wished to deny that metaphysics had any sense, though they still maintained a radical empiricist doctrine themselves. This same dilemma is apparent in philosophy up until the later writings of Wittgenstein.

Two valuable points in the tracing of language analysis can be noted here. Instead of the search for the ascertaining of the truth or falsity of a proposition, the emphasis has now been placed on ascertaining the "meaningfulness" of a proposition. If phlogistan is selected instead of hydrogenized ether, does it really matter? Since there is no practical difference whether phlogistan or ether is present, or neither, the terms are meaningless. If these entities cannot be tested for, lack explanatory value for phenomena, and are functionless in making scientific predictions, they have no practical value. Hence these terms play no meaningful role in language. Following a strict application of this empirical principle of meaning, it is easy to imagine a difficulty arising with the first Cartesian analogy presented in the last chapter. The difficulty consists of, according to the pragmatic doctrine, that which is said to be transpiring in Cartesian minds (the music box in the analogy) is meaningless. Imagine Mary claiming that she has placed a silver dollar in her music box. She wants Grace to agree with her, but yet offers Grace no way of verifying the claim. The music box is locked in Mary's room, it cannot be rattled, opened, or x-rayed. There is no way for Grace to ascertain the truth

or falsity of Mary's statement—hence, according to the Pragmatists, it makes no practical difference whether there is a silver dollar in the music box or not. If Pragmatism was "pushed" to answer questions about psychological terminology the result would probably be a type of Behaviorist doctrine. Propositions about people could only be meaningful if their truth or falsity could be ascertained through observing physiological and publically observable communication of thought and human design.

The second valuable notion to be derived from pragmatic doctrine was that if there is no practical difference between accepting theory A or theory B than either hypothesis may be accepted (with due consideration given to "Ockham's Razor," and to the point made above, namely, possibly neither alternative is of practical consequence). An example of this from Cartesian philosophy is found in Article 5 of The Passions of the Soul.

The error has consisted in concluding, from the observation that dead bodies are devoid of heat and consequently of movement, that it was the absence of the soul which caused the heat and movement to cease. Thus it has been wrongly believed that our natural heat and all the movements of our body depend on the soul, whereas what we ought to believe is that, when we die, our soul departs only because this heat ceases and the organs which serve to move the body fall into decay.<sup>7</sup>

One theory maintains that if the soul was absent from the human then there would be no heat or movement in the body. The conclusion is that heat and movement come from the soul. But Cartesian

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<sup>7</sup>Descartes, Passions, p. 110.

doctrine claims that because the heat terminates and the body falls into decay, the soul leaves the body. The pragmatists ask here if there is any practical difference between the former or latter. Not only does the claim seem to be empirically unverifiable, and therefore devoid of meaning, but also nothing would be different no matter which doctrine was accepted. The similarity here to somethings Wittgenstein says is quite startling, e.g. "Here I should like to say: a wheel that can be turned though nothing turns with it, is not part of the mechanism."<sup>8</sup> (Though it is true Wittgenstein is referring here to meaningless words, or rather "sounds," its application can still be seen.)

The worth of this doctrine to philosophy is obvious.<sup>9</sup> Leibniz explained the "total metaphysical view" in terms of monads, yet no methodology of verification is offered so that his reviewer can agree or disagree with him, to find the practical differences for accepting or rejecting his doctrine. Thus, what James writes in the following is particularly relevant:

Pragmatism, on the other, asks its usual question. 'Grant an idea or belief to be true,' it says, 'what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's life? How will the truth be realized? What experiences would be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?'<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 271.

<sup>9</sup>The worth of this is obvious if it is correct. This seems to be a problem not only the Pragmatists fell into but also the Logical Positivists. The point will be raised again when I discuss the Logical Positivists.

<sup>10</sup>William James, Pragmatism's Conception of Truth, in The

It is quite true that usually the criteria for verifiability were empirical data, but because James wanted to leave many possibilities open from which to select criteria, it is not certain if empirical data is the only species allowable, or just what should count for and how it should count as empirical.

### Logical Analysis

Within the expansive boundaries of the appellation "Logical Analysis" the standard-bearers of doctrine were the works of Bertrand Russell's prolific "middle period." The empiricism of Hume and Mill was combined with the new formal logic of Russell to produce Logical Atomism and the twentieth century logical analyst trend. "...logical analysts concluded that an essential preliminary to a theory of knowledge...was a theory of meaning to distinguish between the significant and the senseless."<sup>11</sup> It was the Logical Analysts in England and the Continent who carried on the search for a criterion of meaning much as the Pragmatists were doing in America.

Russell's approach to the issue of verification followed from analytic approach to language and a reliance on empiricism. Though Russell preceded Wittgenstein in claiming, "words are used

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American Pragmatists, ed. by Wilton Kowitz, Meridian Book, 4th ed. (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1965), p. 31.

<sup>11</sup>A. M. Quinton, Contemporary British Philosophy, in A Critical History of Western Philosophy, ed. by E. J. O'Connor (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1968), pp. 535-536.

in many ways: in narrative, in request, in command, in imaginative fiction, and so on,"<sup>12</sup> he still conceived of the primary function of words as a descriptive one wherein words were signs for objects. "...it will be seen that language is a species of the genus 'sign'."<sup>13</sup> Thus words used in discourse in some way were used to name objects in the world.

Coupled to this view of words was the notion that ordinary sentences could be analysed into "atomic propositions," wherein the basic relation between sentences and the world could be seen. Where a sentence might be, "There are apples on the table," an "atomic proposition" would be a part of this sentence which exactly described sense datum. It was the basic unit in sentences. The above cited sentence might be broken down into, "these are apples," "apples on the table," "this is red," "this is round," "this is juicy," ad infinitum. "This is red," is the sign in language for the most basic piece of sense data the one can be conscious of. This "atomic proposition" is either true or false in how well describes this piece of sense data.

Joined to this view of language and truth and falsity there in, was Russell's notion of the meaningfulness of a proposition. Even granting Russell's theory of "naming" as the function of words, and that atomic propositions described sense datum, it

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<sup>12</sup>Bertrand Russell, An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Bishop and Sons Ltd., 1961), p. 26

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. p. 14.

still needed to be explained in what way grammatically correct sentences could nevertheless be meaningless. Russell had seen that grammatically correct sentences could still be nonsense. Though ordinary daily discourse is controlled by grammatical syntax, there is no logical syntax inherent in language. This led many philosophers to conclude that one of the major reasons that philosophical puzzles arose was the lack of this logical syntax in ordinary discourse. With a logical syntax, ordinary language could not be utilized to make nonsense sentences that appeared to be sensible.

Examples of this kind of thing are in great abundance in language. The most familiar and humorous examples are found in Lewis Carroll's writings. Note the following conversations:

1. "Alice runs faster than the White Rabbit....Ah then she must be in the garden for here comes the White Rabbit."
2. "Somebody runs faster than the White Rabbit....Yes, he is in the garden and here comes the White Rabbit." 3. "Nobody runs faster than the White Rabbit....That's funny, I do not see him in the garden and here comes the White Rabbit." What has happened is though the first and second conversations make sense the third makes nonsense, for though each sentence is grammatically correct, the third is not logically correct. The cause of this seemed to be that the logic of the term "nobody" was not the same as that of a proper name, yet the pronoun could easily enough be grammatically fitted into the same position in a proposition. It should be noted that it was because of this

feature in language, namely its openness to nonsense, that led many philosophers to attempt to construct "ideal languages." Possibly the shortcoming in their criticisms of ordinary daily discourse is that they failed to see it served its purpose, and it served it quite well.

Hence, combining both parts of Russell's doctrine of language analysis, it can be seen how the process of verification of meaning functioned. Words named, and sentences could be broken up into atomic propositions which described sense data. How adequately they described the sense datum was the measure of whether the atomic proposition was true or false. Yet a seemingly atomic proposition could be shown to be nonsense if it could be demonstrated that though the proposition was grammatically correct it was logically nonsensical.

Of course, though Russell made a worthy attempt, and several later the logical Positivists would again search for "atomic propositions" only this time calling them "protocol statements", several problems plagued him. The most obvious was that there was not any answer for the question, "What is this sense datum," or even more simply, "What are sense data?" Another problem that arose was the impossibility of checking one's atomic proposition against the sense datum to see if the proposition were true or false. Since, granting this picture, only I have this sense data, how can an objective test be made so I can check if my atomic proposition really describes by sense datum or only seems to. Finally by Russell starting with the assumption that the chief

and basic function of language is to name or describe many of those sentences he viewed as sensible are actually nonsensical once it is realized that language and words can be used in many different ways.

### Logical Positivism

As the Pragmatists' conception of meaning was derived from the notion of practical difference, the Logical Positivists' conception of meaning came from specific attention to the empirical verifiability of assertions. More sophisticated, they claimed that if a metaphysician was promoting a "total view" about the world, this "view" must be subject to an empirical methodology for ascertaining its truth value. In other words, if a metaphysician claims to have discovered statement A to be true, then because truth and falsity only have significance, supposedly, in an empirical context, the metaphysician must lay his theory open to empirical verification. If a theory cannot either be "practically" or "in principle" verified, it contains no sense. This can be explained by referring to the example used previously: phlogistan or hydrogenized ether—both? one? or neither? What the Logical Positivists would maintain in regards to the phlogistan issue is that the entire problem is nonsensical. It is an empirically unverifiable hypothesis (the same goes for hydrogenized ether), which meant it was no hypothesis at all.



To juxtapose and compare, the Pragmatist at this point would be noting that philogistens made no "practical difference to anyone," so therefore it was nonsensical. What they have in common is the notion of verification and the reliance on empiricism as a criteria for validity.

Specifically, the Logical Positivists' claim was:

The criterion which we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criterion of verifiability. We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express---that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false.<sup>14</sup>

Much has been made of the emphasis on empirical verifiability in the twentieth century. The major reason for this was the amazing progress the physical sciences were making. Within a span of fifty years, from 1875 to 1925, biology had acquired Darwinism, physics had received Einsteinian super-physics, and physiology had gone to Pavlov's dogs. Meanwhile philosophers were becoming disgusted with their own inability to solve philosophic quandries. Thus, the need to make philosophy more scientific in order to achieve progress. The Logical Positivists did this by maintaining that linguistic analysis could be combined with empirical means of verification.

Of course the Logical Positivists depended on linguistic

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<sup>14</sup>A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth, and Logic (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1946), p. 35.

analysis is a main feature of their philosophy, and it is this and the underlying notion of "what it is like 'to know' if proposition A is true," which is important for understanding Wittgenstein. Certainly it is true that the phrase "language analysis" has become overworked and excessively broad, but it cannot be denied that concentration on the linguistic aspects of man and the world is the main concern of twentieth century philosophy.

During the inter-war years in Britain, while realism was the official form of academic philosophy, logical analysis, first in its atomistic and then in its positivist stage, developed as an increasingly powerful opposition. By the early 1920's, idealism was in full retreat....<sup>15</sup>

Logical Analysis as was seen above developed in Russell's doctrine as a combination of language analysis and atomicity in propositions and related sense data. The Logical Positivists placed heavy dependence on the empirical verification of sentences and took over Russellian atomic propositions and changed them into Carnapian protocol sentences. The protocol sentence was the basic form of report about one's perceptions. If a seemingly protocol sentence could not be verified, or a compound of protocol sentences, then supposedly they were nonsensical. One of the major draw-backs to this notion of protocol sentences, is that no one seems to be sure what they are. And even if they could be specified the reliance on empiricism as a criterion for sensibility could never be proven. More will be said about this

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<sup>15</sup>Quinton, British Philosophy, p. 540.

later, but the resemblance of this search for meaning to what Wittgenstein did should be noted. Note the following excerpt from Ayer's introduction to Logical Positivism.

The originality of the Logical Positivists lay in their making the impossibility of metaphysics depend not upon the nature of what could be known, but what could be said. Their charge against the metaphysician was that he breaks the rules which any utterance must satisfy if it is to be literally significant.<sup>16</sup>

The emphasis on language is the main feature which separates not only Logical Positivism from Pragmatism, but also the twentieth century from the rest of philosophy. Of course the criterion for the application of the phrase "literally significant" still depended on an empirical metaphysic.

"The metaphysician, on the other hand, does not intend to write nonsense. He lapses into it through being deceived by grammar,"<sup>17</sup> sounds exactly like Wittgenstein; but upon finishing this statement "or through committing errors of reasoning, such as that which leads to the view that the sensible world is unreal,"<sup>18</sup> it is seen that it is a product of the Vienna Circle. The clue to this is in the phrases "errors of reasoning" and "the sensible world is unreal." Specifically in the latter phrase the Vienna Circle's own radical empiricism obviously comes through. Since Wittgenstein denounced all metaphysics

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<sup>16</sup>A. J. Ayer, "Introduction", in Logical Positivism, ed. by A. J. Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ayer, Language, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup>Ayer, Language, p. 45.

as nonsense, the notion of "sensible" as relating to sense data and "sense content" was just as nonsensical to him.

In regard to the passage cited above from Descartes' Meditations, Article 15, the Logical Positivists would have considered it meaningless. Whether the first or second (Cartesian) hypothesis was accepted as an explanation of how the soul adds life to the body, neither is empirically verifiable. Since these two hypotheses purported to be stating a fact about man, according to the Positivists' criterion, these two hypotheses were therefore open to the investigatory methodology of the Positivist verification principle. What observations would lead the philosopher to know if the proposition "it was the absence of the soul which caused the heat and movement to cease," was true? Obviously none since according to Descartes the soul was unextended substance and therefore could not be empirically dealt with. For the Positivists this reduced theories about the soul to meaninglessness. Whereas the Pragmatists maintained a proposition was devoid of meaning if it was not "practically significant," the Logical Positivists conceived of a proposition as being devoid of meaning if it could not be either practically or in principle verified.

#### Wittgenstein

Within the context of the language analyst and positivist

movements, whose writings had completely permeated philosophic discussions and journals by the 1930's, arose Ludwig Wittgenstein who completely left behind any last remnants of metaphysics and mistaken notions about language which had so crippled any worthwhile intellection. Terms like "atomic proposition," "protocol sentence," "sense content," or "empiricism," are missing from the Philosophical Investigations. Beginning both the Investigations, and The Brown and Blue Books by considering language, in the former these considerations lead Wittgenstein to note that language has many uses, to inform, to command, to pass away idle hours, to question, ad. infinitum, with no basic underlying feature such as Russell's notion that language is really a sign language or that, as in the Tractatus, language is really picture language. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein basically followed the doctrines concerning language that Russell had developed. The picture theory of language is quite close to the sign theory of Russell. "A picture, or sentence, is isomorphic with the reality it pictures or describes. The structure the sentence shares with what it describes is called its form of representation."<sup>19</sup> This is very much like Russell's notion that words serve to name and sentences serve to describe sense data.

What is found in the Philosophical Investigations is a completely different perspective than that of the Tractatus. Though

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<sup>19</sup> Benjamin R. Tilghman, "Problems and Perplexities," in Review of Metaphysics Dec. 1962.

the Tractatus shows the influence of Russell and later became the bible of the Vienna Circle, the Investigations is totally removed from any of this "logical analyst-positivist" speculation. It is true that the Investigations is marked with the same questions as earlier works, i. e., How does language function?, How are words used?, but the answers bare no resemblance to earlier considerations. Wittgenstein viewed language on the model of a game, words on the model of items in a tool box, and many universals and particulars on a family resemblance analogy. As in a football game there are rules, players, right, wrong and nonsensical moves, so too with language. As in a tool box their are tools for hammering, sawing, gluing, measuring, and holding, so in language words do many different jobs. Some words name, some describe, some connect, some negate, ad. infinitum. And as in the "family face" their may be overlapping traits between parents and child, or crisscrossing patterns, in various words and their uses this same kind of resemblance exists rather than necessary and sufficient conditions.

In Wittgenstein's Investigations there is no movement toward the construction of an ideal language for whatever is to be said, and said sensibly, can be said in ordinary language. Wittgenstein is especially engrossed by psychological terminology, and he spends many passages clearing up the philosophical confusions which have arisen because of the misuse of these concepts. His approach is along the lines of, "Well what do we normally say here when we are making sense?" He notes that

words, clauses and sentences cannot be studied out of context but rather accompanied by the way people respond to them and the gestures that the speaker makes. Language is not an artificial device invented by man for communication, or to stand as a written or spoken sign for objects in the world, but rather it is naturally to man to speak--just as natural to use language as it is for a baby to cry. And this Wittgensteinian approach to philosophy is a refreshing new approach to philosophy.

After considering the same old conundrums for twenty-five hundred years, and they are still problems, even one as timeless as a philosopher should begin to suspect that somewhere, something is amiss. For five thousand semesters students of philosophy have listened to their professors violently asserting the inscrutability of the enigma, "It is not possible to step twice into the same river," and then offering a solution to the seemingly "flowing river problem" to which no one else agrees. Frankly, the student often becomes nauseated with the entire affair, until, if he too is of a philosophic bent (called by outsiders, "warped"), he becomes a professor of philosophy. After so much water has passed between the banks it would be thought that someone would come along to actually see if there is any problem, rather than merely offering another unanimously rejected solution for another unanimously disturbing "thought-to-be" problem. And of course, if someone finds that there really is not any problem, it should be explained why so many intelligent individuals were deluded.

In other words Wittgenstein's genius was present at the right time to develop a new approach to issues that Classical Greece had introduced and the rest of Western philosophy had dedicated itself to solve. Too often the comment has been made that "Plato wrote his dialogues in 396 B.C. and all thought since then has merely been in the form of footnotes." Whether a philosopher is an avowed Platonist or enemy of that camp, Plato's lead still appears to lead. His philosophy was reiterated by Western man till St. Thomas Aquinas showed a preference for Aristotle. Yet St. Augustine in the Neo-Platonic tradition wrote "Cogito Ergo Sum,"<sup>20</sup> which Descartes "originally" adopted twelve hundred years later to give impetus to the "modern" tradition in philosophy. And the German historian and philosopher, Hegel, and his successors through Lenin, were captivated by the notion of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. Dialectical Materialism and Dialectical Idealism is easily seen to be a readaptation of Platonic Dialectics to economics and idealism instead of discourse.

How often is the cry for "first principles" heard in philosophy, as if philosophy were mathematics; but is not this exactly the notion that is found in Plato because of his infatuation with Pythagoras? And all the speculating about systems-

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<sup>20</sup> Kemp Smith, Studies, pp. 5-6. "And it is a consequence of this doctrine or representative perception that Augustine formulates the Cogito Ergo Sum as the sole immediate certainty. 'We both are, and know that we are....But, without any delusive representation of images or phantasms, I am most certain that I am, and that I know and delight in this.'"



tising, "A is like B," "What does C have in common with D," and the question most often heard in metaphysics, "How few categories can everything be divided up into?" No one is exempting the early writings of Wittgenstein either; some have maintained that the Tractatus reads like an enraged Plato.

Thus, Wittgenstein in the analytic tradition presents a totally new perspective on language, which is not merely another theory of language, but just how language is. He presents a new explanation to the problems inherent in the mind-body issue and the terminology found in a modern day psychology which reeks with confusions, and his explanation is the path through the philosophical forest.

### Chapter Three—The Wittgensteinian Way

A Wittgensteinian does not offer a more adequate solution to the problems which arise once the Mind-Body thesis is granted, but rather proposes that if the terms "mind" and "body" are understood in the Cartesian sense, then they become nonsense. Descartes' theorizing was acceptable because his explanations of certain phenomena seemed more plausible than other doctrines, and "possibly with just a little cleaning up" interaction could be adequately explained and the problems involved in the privacy of representative perception and bodily sensations could be solved. For the Wittgensteinian then, not only is it necessary to demonstrate that certain terminology is devoid of sense as employed by Descartes, but it also remains to be shown how one does have sensations and perceptions. It is to the issues of presenting a correct account of the terminology of "mind" and "body", and the problems inherent in representative perception and bodily sensation that I here address myself.

#### Ordinary Language

To demonstrate that Descartes misused words it is necessary to make recourse to the subject of ordinary language. Wittgenstein often referred to this as a device for illustrating where philosophical discourse was at odds with ordinary conversation.

In examining various statements he would query, "But how is this sentence applied--that is in our everyday language?";<sup>1</sup> or, while considering the application of the word "reading", "The use of this word in the ordinary circumstances of our life is of course extremely familiar to us.";<sup>2</sup> or, again, "when as in this case, we disapprove of the expressions of ordinary language (which are after all performing their office), we have got a picture in our heads which conflicts with the picture of our ordinary way of speaking."<sup>3</sup> Recourse to ordinary language was a test for aberrations which had occurred in the use of a word when it was employed in philosophical discourse. These deviations might consist of unnoted redefinitions, loss of meaning, or unspecified usage. Wittgenstein realized that the postulating of mind and body as the two irreducible entities in each person was exactly the result of such an aberration in usage, and his stated aim was, "to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense."<sup>4</sup>

Ordinary language is not composed of that which wives speak over the back fence, or husbands use at the neighborhood tavern. Rather it is, simply, language which makes sense. It would be a difficult task to enumerate all the criteria for making sense

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<sup>1</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 134.

<sup>2</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 156.

<sup>3</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 402.

<sup>4</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 464.

(if this is either necessary or possible), but certainly there are several well-worn keys. One notes the customary use of phrases in communication, and when something is being understood or misunderstood. There are implicit rules which, though mostly un verbalized, are inherent in our speech.

Nonsense in philosophy is derived from analogies that are applied to explain some item to which they have no application. This is the case in the analogies which are utilized to explain Cartesian privacy. They certainly serve to explain Cartesianism but they have no application to the way the world really is. Nonsense also develops when it is believed that words only function to name. Thus as the word "body" names "that over in the morgue," likewise does "mind" names "that up in heaven." "Rather language used to make sense is language which functions in many ways: to name, command, inform, question, ad. infinitum.

Questions become pseudo-questions, when it is impossible to imagine what answers to them would be like. Someone may not know the answer to the question, "How far is the moon from the earth?", but at least they know what an answer would be like--- it would be in terms of measurement. But to a question like, "How much does the color red eat daily?", we are at a loss to know what type of a response is being asked for. If none can be specified, it is a nonsense question.

Wittgenstein introduces the phrase "language-game," which denotes the entire context in which words are used to make sense.

The analogy here is with a game, i.e. a football game, where certain moves, plays, and a sportscaster's reports, make sense within that game. The game of football has certain rules and people know when they are broken, just like in a language game. If there are no rules—no football game. If someone asked what the quarterback was doing, one would know how to reply—he is throwing a short pass. But it would not be a move in this game to say that the fullback just scored a homerun. This is nonsensical. The same can be said for a language-game. Words and phrases have roles to play in the game, and to say, "The doghouse is battleship," is like saying, "The fullback scored a homerun." Or to note that the only function of words is to name, is like thinking that the only function of a quarterback is to throw a short pass. This Wittgensteinian analogy was introduced by him to explain how language makes sense and how words become mere "jabberwock."

Two common confusions often surround the notion of ordinary language. If ordinary language is viewed as common daily discourse then it must be free from the influence of philosophical theorizing. This means that when Mary says she sees the blue sky through her bedroom window, she does not mean as Descartes would have us suppose, that she thinks she sees a blue sky through the window. Ordinarily one would understand her saying that she sees a blue sky. And as Anthony Kenny points out, by grafting a philosophical theory onto ordinary discourse, "If Macbeth says he sees a dagger where no dagger is, we may hesitate

to say whether he sees anything at all; but it is perfectly natural to say he thinks he sees a dagger. Now this same thought, on Descartes' view, occurs also when Macbeth really is, in the normal sense, seeing a dagger...<sup>5</sup> In other words, ordinary usage, of "He thinks he sees" become indistinguishable from "He sees." Man's ordinary use of language provides a way of explaining when one thinks he sees something, as in imagining or hallucinating, and a way to say that there is an object over there. And there really is an object "over-there" which no one has any difficulty in seeing. In other words, by adopting Descartes' notions about the privacy of perception into everyday discourse people commence "not knowing what is being said."—"I think I see it," and "I see it," become indistinguishable.

Yet on the other hand it must not be thought that ordinary language is the talk of the grocer. Often he too is waddled in philosophical dilemmas. Ordinary language, once again, is discourse which makes sense.

The second confusion which often arises concerning ordinary language is that it is not influenced by the massive stipulations of the languages of geometry, algebra, physics, or logic. Though it is certainly true that many words have strict definitions, or necessary and sufficient conditions for their applications, many do not. Amongst those that do not there are those that fit better

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<sup>5</sup>Kenny, Cartesian Privacy, p. 356.

into the family resemblance analogy, or are open-context words. Also, though ordinary language does have a given syntax, it does not have a logical syntax as many philosophers would wish. And not surprisingly at all, people daily use a great deal of the English language with no problem whatsoever. Yet the philosopher often searches for some Carnapian 'protocol language', or believes that philosophical difficulties come from a language, ordinary language, which unlike a geometer's language, is not as rigorous and strictly defined. When Messrs. Feigl and Maxwell contended that "The terms of ordinary language are notoriously ambiguous and vague."<sup>6</sup> O. K. Bouwsma answered,

Is it more fantastic on the part of Don Quixote to mistake windmills for giants (because he had read too many Romance novels) than for Feigl and Maxwell to mistake ordinary language for geometry? Suppose that someone proposed to make the story of the Three Little Pigs sound like the proof of the Pythagorean theorem with all the preliminary clutter concerning the hypotenuse of the third pig and the tangent drawn to the curl in the wolf's tale. Mixed up? Only a detail made up out of the general mix-up. If you look at all terms in ordinary language as designed for the purpose of proof, that's what you get."<sup>7</sup>

The point here is that ordinary language seems to be inadequate if it is taken on the model of geometry or logic. But on the other hand the terms of geometry, though seemingly very pre-

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<sup>6</sup> An excerpt from a paper by Feigl and Maxwell read at the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association's symposium.

<sup>7</sup> O. K. Bouwsma, The Terms of Ordinary Language Are..., in Philosophical Essays (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press), p. 208.

cise, are quite vague when considering that the language of geometry leaves no room for tenses, or psychological verbs. "We need triangles that think and hope and call chickens and cry. Geometry as at present constituted is dumb. And think of it, no personal pronouns!"<sup>8</sup>

Though it is true that the language of geometry or logic, or physics and biology make sense, i.e., anyone with the proper training can understand most of Scientific American, and in this regard are ordinary languages, although it is more than a little strange to call them such. They are not ordinary, rather they are highly technical. It is true that all Wittgenstein would ask of any form of communication was that it be sensible. Yet when Wittgenstein refers to "ordinary language," he is mainly concerned with language used in everyday situations and not the technical languages of physics, logic, mathematics, etc. In the Philosophical Investigations he was interested in psychological concepts and these are found in daily discourse, not a highly technical language. It is true that problems do arise when terms from a highly technical language become intermixed with daily discourse, or vice versa, but once again the emphasis is placed on what happens when these terms enter into daily discourse.

The point to be made here is complex. Ordinary language is language that is free from philosophic confusions. Also,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 209.



though a highly technical language makes sense, daily discourse should not be viewed on the model of this form of intercourse. Finally, if psychological terms of common discourse are adopted into philosophy, their use still must make sense, or at least new meaningful uses must be specified for them.

The question to be approached now is: How are the terms "mind" and "body" used in ordinary language? In the first chapter I explained in what way Descartes gave the illusion of using these terms—and his seeming employment of them in his philosophical writings led to the problems inherent in dualism, representative perception, and bodily sensations. If it can be shown how such terminology is normally used, and how Cartesian analogies necessarily fail to explain anything because they cannot faithfully reproduce what Descartes' seemingly said, possibly some of the confusion Descartes' philosophy gave birth to will shortly expire.

The Ordinary Use  
of  
"Mind" and "Body"

For Descartes the essence of mind is thought, while that of body is extension. They are irreducible to one another but yet interact. One functions as the clockwork of man, while the other functions as thinking substance, wishing, willing, perceiving, and sensing. Yet these concepts of body and mind pose innumerable difficulties; can an ordinary language approach to these

terms clear up matters?

"'This body has extension.' To this we might reply: 'non-sense!' but are inclined to reply 'of course!' - why is this?"<sup>9</sup> This remark by Wittgenstein is directed at Descartes' "profound intuition" which was realized through the primary criterion of truth, clarity and distinctness of perceptions. But what kind of truth is being dealt with here? Since it would be impossible to conceive of body without extension, instead of being handed a profound truth, which would add to man's knowledge about himself and the universe, we have been given a tautology. It seems that most of the "true ideas" which Descartes sets forth, by utilizing his criterion of clarity and distinctness, are merely a priori statements. Surely a priori statements are always true, and are known to be so without sense data verification, but nevertheless they add nothing to man's storehouse of knowledge. Hence, though Descartes is correct in believing that he has made a true assertion, he is incorrect in believing that he has said anything "new," or of importance. Descartes' information that the essence of body is extension is as useful as the information that to be a bachelor one must be an unmarried male.

Let us note how the term "body" is commonly used, without confusing the mind with tautological explanations of extension. A detective might say of a newly slain gang leader, "His body is over at county morgue." Or a young man might say to a friend concerning the woman he has been dating, "She has a terrific body,

but absolutely no brains," and here no one is going to think that the woman has no physical mass of cells within her cranium. Or we could imagine the physicist saying to his class, "This body floats only if the water is heated to 100 degrees centigrade." And the astronomer may talk of heavenly bodies.

It is easy to enumerate like sentences for the use of the word "mind". Richard's Almanac tells us to "mind our p's and q's." Mother tells us to "mind our manners." Sister Jane says to "Mind your own business." And the bathing beauty who fell in love with the nuclear physicist might say, "True he hasn't much of a body, but what a mind," and here, as before, no one is going to think that the physicist is missing an arm or a leg.

Of the above uses cited for the terms "mind" and "body," two are of notable importance here. When it is said of someone that they have no mind or no body, it is easy to imagine a Cartesian ready to stick his foot in the door. A full explanation must be given of these two phrases.

We meet someone at a party and begin a conversation. We try various topics with this person, but the person cannot comment on any of them, he cannot carry on a conversation. We note that he is dull, and we may say, he is not very bright, or he has absolutely no "brains". What is being said is not that some part of his physical or immaterial essence is missing, but rather that he is dull, unintelligent, and not a particularly interesting human being. This is all that is meant until, pushed by the philosopher's notion that statements about "mind" are really about

an immaterial structure which goes into every human, we conclude that some non-physical entity is missing from one's composition, or this entity is of poor quality. This is the Cartesian mind. But the existence of such an entity is a hypothesis spawned of a misunderstanding about the way in which the word "mind" functions in language.

'Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learned 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.'

These words, it seems to me give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: The individual words in language name objects...Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the words. It is the object for which the word stands.<sup>10</sup>

Two points must be here noted. Wittgenstein spends considerable energy in the Philosophical Investigations battling the notion exemplified in the above quotation from St. Augustine and synopsised by Wittgenstein himself. Not all words name and the word "mind" is one of these. It is not used in ordinary language to denote some internal structure in man. One could imagine a philosopher noting that words sometimes name, and, deducing from this that just as "rock" names "that round, heavy thing over there," "mind" must name some object "in here" (pointing at his forehead). Rather, I speak, laugh, wish, will, do a thousand human things, and that is why I am said to have a mind. Yet this must not be misunderstood to imply that Wittgen-

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<sup>10</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 1.

stein is either a materialist or a behaviorist. Wittgenstein is not a materialist for he does not claim that man is only composed of extension. For then man merely would be a body, but that is what is found in morgues, bathing beauty contests, physics laboratories, or up in the midnight sky. And Wittgenstein is not a behaviorist either, for he is not claiming "By the outward signs ye shall know the inner man." In section 307, Wittgenstein denies any link with this movement in psychology, "'Are you not really a behaviorist in disguise? Aren't you at bottom really saying that everything except human behavior is a fiction?' If I do speak of a fiction, then it is of a grammatical fiction."<sup>11</sup> What is being stated is that where the behaviorist claims that it is merely a fiction that there is a mind in the body (as if it were possible that there could be minds in bodies, but it just so happens there are not), Wittgenstein maintains that the only way one could believe minds either are in bodies or are not is to have misunderstood the grammar of the word.

As for the term "body" the same difficulties arise after positing Cartesianism, and are dispelled after a Wittgensteinian ordinary language campaign against them. A woman or man who "hasn't any body" is not a disembodied soul, rather they are ugly or at least homely. People are not composed of bodies;

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<sup>11</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 307.

though certainly is it not true that I have a body? And this question is like "How can I imagine 'every rod having a length?' Well I simply imagine a rod."<sup>12</sup> To explain: The statement "people are not composed of bodies, yet certainly have a body" is quite complex. If I would accept the position that I am merely a body then I would have to note that bodies do not feel sensations. "But isn't it absurd to say of a body that it has pain? And why does one feel the absurdity in that? In what sense is it true that my hand does not feel pains, but I in my hands?"<sup>13</sup> Machines do not feel pain and man does not feel compassion for a computer that malfunctions. On the other hand if man is composed of a body and something more, some entity which senses, one is back to the problem inherent in Cartesian dualism. And yet certainly I have a body, as certain as a rod has length. In other words as much is being stated about man when it is said that man has a body as when it is announced that a rod has length. No one is being informed of any metaphysical truth.

Thus, in this section I hope I have illustrated the normal role of the terms "mind" and "body" in language. To think that the word "mind" names an entity is merely a mistaken notion, to use it in this fashion in a sentence, alone or juxtaposed to "body," is to write or speak nonsense.

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<sup>12</sup> Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 251.

<sup>13</sup> Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 286.

### The Privacy of Bodily Sensations

Granting that the Cartesian distinction between mind and body is nonsensical, I wish to point out that the notion that bodily sensations are private is just as nonsensical. John Cook addresses himself to this issue by carefully constructing the argument for the privacy of sensations which follows from Descartes' dualism.

- Premise:
1. No one can feel (experience, be acquainted with) another person's sensations.
  2. The proper and necessary means of coming to know what sensation another person is having is to feel that person's sensation.
  3. Anyone who has a sensation knows that he has it because he feels it, and whatever can be known to exist by being felt cannot be known (in the same sense of "known") to exist in any other way.

Conclusion: No one can know what sensations another person is having.<sup>14</sup>

This line of argument can be applied to any of the bodily sensations. Feeling warm, hot, or cool, tickles, itches, stings, shooting sensations, "that throbbing headache," or "heart burn." It presupposes that there is a mind which knows its bodily sensations, and that since the mind is locked away from other minds only A's mind can know A's sensations, while B can at best only infer the existence of his sensations.

Premise one supposes that bodily sensations are private.

<sup>14</sup> John Cook, Wittgenstein on Privacy, in Wittgenstein, ed. by George Pitcher (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 289-290.

This follows logically from Cartesianism wherein the mind, which receives sensations, is locked away from the outer world.<sup>15</sup> Only I can know what is going on in my mind, thus, only I can know my sensations. But is this really the case?

The Cartesian asks, "Surely only I can feel this pain," as he points to his chest. Here it must be noted the role "this" plays in the sentence and whether it is possible that two people can have the same pain.

"253. 'Another person can't have my pains.' Which are my pains? What counts for a criterion of identity here? 'Insofar as it makes sense to say that my pain is the same as his, it is also possible for us to have the same pain...'

"I have seen a person in a discussion on this subject strike himself on the breast and say: 'But surely another person can't have this pain?' The answer to this is that one does not define a criterion of identity by emphatic stressing of the word "this." 16

Mary often felt the same as Grace when they were both sick—— they both sniffled, coughed, had sore throats, and "splitting headaches." Mary's throat felt rough, scratchy, and was terribly inflamed, and she knew when Grace said her throat hurt, felt rough, scratchy, etc., that they both felt the same. The criterion for identity here is that Mary says it's the same pain, or sore throat. No other criterion for first person statements could make sense. One of the causes that gives rise

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<sup>15</sup>It is true that Descartes includes in "sensations" both bodily sensations and perceptions, but since today bodily sensations are distinguished from perceptions, I will leave perceptions to be discussed in the following section.

<sup>16</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 253.



to the problem of sameness is when bodily sensations are mistakenly viewed on the model of ownership of physical objects. It could be said this mohair coat is Mary's coat; or, this mohair coat is the same as Mary's (where "same" means that Mary's coat in her closet is made of like material and from the same pattern as Grace's coat in her closet); or, Mary wears the same coat she does (where the same coat means that Mary wears the coat from 8 till 5 and Grace wears it from 5 to 11). Yet if these same distinctions are made for bodily sensations the results are nonsensical. What is the criterion for "the same pain?" —it being honestly said, not the emphasizing of this.

Premise two asserts that "I know I am in pain because I feel it." Since it is said to be impossible to feel someone else's pains, it is impossible to know anyone else is in pain. According to Descartes, "...pain, like any other thought, is known with certainty to the sufferer: pain is clearly and distinctly perceived when it is considered merely as a sensation or thought."<sup>17</sup>

Here it is necessary to consider the notion of private language to understand Descartes' intentions, and what is nonsensical about them. "By a 'private' language is meant one that not merely is not but cannot be understood by anyone other than the speaker. The reason for this is that the words of this language are supposed to 'refer to what can only be known

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<sup>17</sup>Descartes, Principles, p. 178.

to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations' (243).<sup>18</sup> The function of language corresponding to this is that of naming. I know I am having a certain sensation and I will call that sensation "pain" whenever it occurs. Of course one can never know what another calls pain because A cannot feel B's sensations. Thus, the language of bodily sensations is private for only each individual can know what his words name.

One consequence to be drawn from the view that I know only from my own case what, say, 'tickling' means is that 'I know only what I call that, not what anyone else does' (347). I have not learned what 'tickling' means, I have only called something by that name. Perhaps others use the name differently. This is a regrettable difficulty; but one may think, the word will still work for me as a name, provided that I apply it consistently to a certain sensation.<sup>19</sup>

But assuredly the "notion of private language" is without sense, i. e., is not a notion at all! In order to use language to make sense there must be rules for the application of words; a criterion for knowing if the words are being used correctly. For example, the meaning of the word "tickle" according to those who ascribe to this private language thesis is the sensation the word names. When I have this feeling I will call it "tickling." But two difficulties immediately arise. First, the sensation is allegedly private—I know what I call tickling, and you know what you call tickling, but they might be two entirely unlike sensations. The second difficulty turns

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<sup>18</sup> Norman Malcolm, Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, in Wittgenstein, ed. by George Pitcher (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

the notion of private language into nonsense. The word "tickling" is defined by the sensation named, but how is it to be ascertained whether or not the word is applied correctly in successive instances? "What will be the difference between my having used it consistently and its seeming to me that I have?"<sup>20</sup>

The point here is that in language it is possible to know when a word is used correctly or not. This is a major requirement of language for without it a word can be used in a hundred different ways and hence loses its meaning. The notion of "using a word correctly" is all important. If one is unsure as to whether he is using a word correctly or not there are ways of checking: looking at a dictionary, asking a friend, or noting if you are understood. But within the context of a private language one is able to apply a word whenever and in whatever fashion one wants, and no misunderstanding occurs—and of course no understanding occurs either. In private language I apply the word "tickling" or "pain" to some sensation when it seems to me that I have selected out the "proper" sensation. But how do I know I am making the correct application?—actually I can never know. How will I know when I have correctly identified my sensation, and when it only seems to me that I have identified the right sensation? And the answer is not that, "Well, I intuit the proper sensation, for

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

is not "intuition" here merely believing one is right because he thinks he is right?—for there is no check here either. Hence, the Cartesian begins and ends calling this "pain" and now this "pain" and this "pleasure" and this"pain" again. Sadly he does not know what he is doing. Here there is no check for correct usage of pain, pleasure, tickling, itching, and so on.

I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have this sensation....A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign.—Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation.<sup>21</sup>

This is Wittgenstein speaking like a Cartesian to illustrate what the Cartesian wishes to say. But does this make sense?

—But 'I can impress it on myself' can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right.'<sup>22</sup>

And this destroys the notion of private language, for within its bounds I have absolutely no way of knowing whether I am using its words correctly. One term may name eight different sensations, or eight terms may name the same sensation and one would never be able to know. Private language cannot follow

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<sup>21</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 258.

<sup>22</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 258.

any rules and therefore one cannot have such a language, for discourse to be intelligible one must know when he is or is not making sense. Private language lacks this essential feature. Thus the statement, "I know I am in pain; I call that sensation pain each time I feel it," is gibberish, however familiar the sounds. It is impossible to name private sensations privately for one could never know whether he identified correctly.

Premise three has been also subjected to the "nonsense" stamp of Wittgensteinians. The question they ask is, "Does it make sense, then, to say 'I know I am in pain?'"<sup>23</sup> And invariably the answer is no. By recalling what was stated earlier concerning ordinary language and private language the reason for this response is clear. "More generally, for 'I know...' to be an expression of certainty, it is at least necessary that the sense of the sentence filling the blank allow the speaker to be ignorant in some circumstances of the truth value of statements made by means of the sentence (or equivalents thereof)."<sup>24</sup>

Only if the Cartesian picture is supposed does it make sense within that picture to say "I know I am in pain." Here it can be imagined that the mind is cognizant of some bodily activity which should be giving occasion to pain. So we feel about in our knee and "ah Ha!"—there is a stinging pain there. But is

<sup>23</sup>Cook, Privacy, p. 291

<sup>24</sup>Cook, Privacy, p. 291.

this anything like what really transpires, for is not all that occurs is that my knee hurts and I moan, or say, "My knee hurts - it is painful."

Since each premise is nonsensical the conclusion is also unintelligible. A man merely feels pain. He says he is in pain. To know he was in pain he would need to check and how does he go about checking if there is any pain in his knee-cap? "Well he feels around for it, I guess like he feels around for a stone in his shoe." But note the difference between pains in a knee and stones in a shoe. I could say there is a pain in my knee and I could say I feel a pain in my knee and the meaning of these two sentences is the same. But "I feel a stone in my shoe" and "there is a stone in my shoe," do not mean the same thing. It is no trouble to imagine a person saying, "there is a stone in my shoe but I do not feel it," but what would it mean for a person to say, "there is a pain in my knee that I do not feel."<sup>25</sup>

By destroying the Cartesian argument for the privacy of sensations as exemplified by pains, Wittgenstein removes not only another nonsensical doctrine from the mind-body issue, but also demonstrates the way to the correct view of bodily sensations. Men have bodily sensations—they do not know they have bodily sensations. If one could know he had such-and-such a sensation, he then could also be mistaken, or not

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<sup>25</sup>Paraphrased from Cook, Privacy, p. 295.

know. But this is not the case. There is no room for error or scepticism. The criterion for being in pain, is honestly saying it—there is no apprehending of pain as the Cartesian picture tries to portray. As for bodily sensations being private, certainly Mary knows how Grace's sore throat feels—she had one exactly like it two days ago. And also it should be noted that Mary can know how Grace feels without having had a sore throat—Grace merely says that her throat feels rough and dry and scratchy. Also, whereas "sensation words cannot be objects of verbs of perception in first person sentences,"<sup>26</sup> a sentence like, "Mary knows Grace is in pain" is perfectly intelligible. For it is possible Mary is mistaken, or has not seen Grace in a few days and did not know she was ill.

But the Cartesian lurking in the background can still be heard mumbling, "But bodies do not sense." If this means that machines or dead people do not get cold this is true, but Wittgenstein is only claiming that it is people that have bodily sensations. "Only what behaves like a human being can one say it has pains."<sup>27</sup> Not minds and bodies, or, minds or bodies.

Of course Cartesianism appears convincing because of the pictures it seems to be drawing, but here the picture is

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<sup>26</sup>Cook, pp. 295-296.

<sup>27</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 263.

dispelled. The first analogy cited in Chapter One is seen to be inapplicable to whatever Descartes is attempting to say. "The Locked-Away-Place-Analogy" seemed to represent the hiddenness of the Cartesian mind, as it was shown that only Mary could look inside her music box, and Grace hers. But we had peeked inside too, so we knew and could check with Mary if her perception was correct. But this is not what Descartes' picture is asking for; here only I can know what is in the box.

"The Locked-Away-Place-Analogy" was modeled on Wittgenstein's own example of the beetle-box. Wittgenstein presents this in section 293 in the Philosophical Investigations:

...Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle." (Or the figurine inside Grace or Mary's music box.) 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.<sup>28</sup>

Here the entire argument presented against bodily sensations is seen reiterated against a Cartesian analogy. The word "pain," or "beetle," or the word "figurine" (from the music box analogy), might be used in daily discourse but not as the name of some hidden object. If these words were used in a

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<sup>28</sup> Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 293.



private language they would be useless for they could not be used correctly or incorrectly and no one would ever know. The only reason that talk about the figurine-in-the-box is intelligible is because actually it is public, not private as bodily sensations are supposed to be in the Cartesian picture.

There is one other point of interest here. As the music box's melody appears to indicate what is in the box, many philosophers have proposed that at the very least one can guess what is transpiring in other men's minds by interpreting outward signs. A smile on someone's face is "interpreted" as meaning that there is a feeling of happiness in that someone's mind. From birth men learn to "interpret" the physical signs of thought as embodied in facial lines, gestures, and gross bodily actions. These, according to the theory, are the outward signs of the private mind. (Though it is not to the point of this thesis to go into this notion, in passing let us note two problems with it. First, men seldom infer a smile and "laughing eye" to mean that someone is happy. The man is merely seen to be happy. Secondly, the question must still be asked, "How is it known that a smile is the outward sign of inner happiness?" The standard reply is that "on the model of myself, I note that his smile probably means the same as my smile." But since the inductive reasoning, of necessity, can only be based on the observances of what transpires in only one person, the probability is extremely low and hence this is a very weak inference.)

Now suppose someone tells me that he knows what

pain is only from his own case!—

If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain" means—must I not say the same of other people too? And how can I generalize the one case so irresponsibly?<sup>29</sup>

But not only is it the case that a generalization from one instance is very weak, but the whole notion of a word which could not be used meaningfully is at stake.

Thus as the Cartesian misuse of "mind" and "body" was shown to be a nonsensical move in the ordinary-language-game, the notion of the privacy of bodily sensations is also nonsensical. What I wish to consider next is the supposed privacy resulting from the Cartesian notion of representative perceptions.

#### The Privacy of Representative Perceptions

all the objects of sight communicate themselves to us only because they move locally, through the agency of the transparent bodies that are between them and us....and it is not immediately the movements that take place in the eye, but those that take place in the brain which represent these objects to the soul....that these diverse movements of the brain cause our souls to have diverse sensations.<sup>30</sup>

This is a skeletal formulation of the manner in which representative perception occurs in the Cartesian system. The mind, which has sensations of the outer, extended world, never directly perceives that world, but rather unextended images of it.

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<sup>29</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 293.

<sup>30</sup>Descartes, Passions, Article 13.

The perception of an object is a sensation in the mind, and each person is witness only to his own perceptions. It follows from this that though Mary knows quite well what orange looks like to her, she can never be sure what orange looks like to Grace. In terms of private language, a Cartesian claims that Mary knows what she calls orange, but not what Grace names orange. The same line of reasoning applies to all five senses. Mary can never know what an apple tastes like to Grace.

A quick scanning of the problem turns up several absurdities. One wants to say he sees an orange flag, but by granting the Cartesian picture, all one sees is sense data. To this Wittgenstein asks, "Think for example of the question: 'Are sense data the material of which the universe is made?'"<sup>31</sup> One wishes to say no, but cannot unless the Cartesian picture can be demonstrated to either be false or unintelligible. The standard issues which have perplexed philosophers through the centuries since Descartes can be stated in these questions: "granted representative perception is it possible to check to see if one's perceptions really duplicate the world of extension," and, "are my perceptions like yours and how can I ever know?"

There are several steps in the demonstration of the unintelligibility of such a doctrine, and some already have been taken. The first step was a demonstration that there is no

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<sup>31</sup> Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 401.

interaction between winds and bodies, for to believe that people are composed of these is radically to misunderstand the function of these terms in language. The next move was to illustrate that the notion that bodily sensations are private is nonsense because: 1. Men are obviously aware of how other men feel; 2. The nonsensicality of private language disposes of the issue of being able to identify correctly and name one's sensations; and 3. One does not know if he is having such and such sensation, for he cannot either not know or be mistaken—"know" has no application here. The next step is to present a case against perceptions that parallels the arguments for the unintelligibility of the privacy of bodily sensations.

Look at the blue of the sky and say to yourself "How blue the sky is!"—when you do it spontaneously—without philosophical intentions—the idea never crosses your mind that this impression of colour belongs only to you.<sup>32</sup>

This remark strictly parallels observations that were made upon considering that one knows quite well when a fellow human is in pain, and knows exactly what it feels like. The patch of blue is overhead not in the wind as the Cartesian doctrine suggests. If the sense data of the sky were in the head this is where one would point to emphasize his remark. But no one even thinks of the sky as a perception in the mind.

Secondly, according to Descartes, only I can know what my patch of blue looks like—the representation of the blue sky

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<sup>32</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 275.

is private in my mind unto me. "The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have this or something else."<sup>33</sup> Now it can be seen why the statement "Look at how blue the sky is," when taken as a request to observe a private object, is at least absurd if not nonsensical. No one can look at Mary's patch of blue except Mary. Her command to "look," even granting the Cartesian context, becomes impossible to carry out because Grace can never look into Mary's mind.

The nonsense of this can be called to our attention by asking the meaning of this in "but nobody knows whether other people also have this or something else."<sup>34</sup> This seems to become some kind of criterion of identity for "Mary's and Grace's patch of blue." The Cartesian claims that surely no one can have Mary's patch of blue—her private perception in her mind. It is as if a slide with a painted picture of blue sky is held before Mary's mind's eye—but where does the analogy tie into the act of seeing the sky? Where is the slide and the mind's eye? And being that there is no slide the emphasizing of the word "this" plays no role. Why the confusion rises concerning "this" is because it is seen on the model of "this apple" as juxtaposed to "that apple." Of course there is no parallel

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<sup>33</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 272.

<sup>34</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 272

application of this when Mary points to the same blue sky Grace is looking at. "This apple" can be picked up and held in the right hand, while "that apple" can be held in the left hand. But it is nonsensically applied to perception. The object of perception is the apple or sky, not some slide flashed before the mind's eye.

The second approach to demonstrating that the notion of privacy entailed by representative perception is devoid of sense, is to show that this notion is deeply intertwined with the issue of private language. In reference to Cartesian hypothesis that the blue patch impression is private to each mind, Wittgenstein comments, "I am saying: you have not the feeling of pointing-into-yourself, which often accompanies 'naming the sensation' when one is thinking about 'private language.'"<sup>35</sup> If the blue perception is private, granting Cartesianism, then the statement, "I have a blue patch," is at least understood by the speaker. Only he knows what he calls a blue patch. But to say he knows that it is a blue patch is really quite nonsensical, for he has no reason for claiming to know when he is using the phrase "blue patch" correctly. He cannot ask others, for only he has the blue patch. And yet he cannot ask himself if he is applying the phrase correctly for this would be "knowing you are right because you think you are right." Imagine someone saying: 'But I know how tell I am; and

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<sup>35</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 275.

laying his hand on top of his head to prove it."<sup>36</sup> In other words the impression of blue is named blue within the private language, but it is impossible to know when to use "blue" again. It might be said, "Well I remember that the patch I had an impression of yesterday was blue and it looked exactly like the one I am experiencing now." The issue now is one of checking the correctness of one's memory, and this cannot be accomplished by remembering something and then "feeling" it was remembered correctly. Memory claims cannot be checked like a newspaper file. A check which is subjective is no check at all. What can the term "memory" even mean in this context? At this point private language disintegrates into nonsense because its words can be used at any time to mean anything, and this is gibberish. Thus it would be nonsense to speak about Mary's knowing of her private perception of blue for in actuality she knows nothing. Anything could be called a blue impression and she would never know the difference.

Yet, it is known when one is seeing blue and when one is seeing green. This is because colors and objects of the senses, in general, are public not private perceptions in the mind. If one is in doubt concerning a particular color he can ask a friend or check a color chart at the art store. Here it makes sense to say, "I see blue," or, "I know it is blue," for if there is any doubt it can be dispelled by asking someone who

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<sup>36</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 279.

is in a position to know which colors are which. This may be an art critic, a painter, or merely a friend who is standing in better light. One can be wrong or right concerning that which he sees; in the private language-private perception scheme one can never be right or wrong. The concept of correctness drops out, and it becomes nonsensical to say, "I see blue," or, "I know I see a blue patch."

The last point that Wittgenstein makes against the notion of privacy in the doctrine of representative perception is expressed in his remark, "Nor do you think that really you ought not to point to the colour with your hand, but with your attention. (Consider what it means 'to point to something with the attention.')<sup>37</sup> What is being revealed here is that excluding the instance considered above, wherein one points at his head when emphasizing "that beautiful patch of blue," it is often suggested that one can somehow focus inwardly on something to secure a better view. It is imagined that to concentrate on some aspect of the "slide before the mind's eye" one looks harder with his attention. But what is this?—A frowning of the brow, a shutting of one's eyes so that people suppose that one is deeply involved with something? The Cartesian analogy is squinting through the mind's eye at the impression-slide, as if one is peering through a microscope. But there is absolutely no application for the analogy in what actions one performs as

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<sup>37</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 275.



he pays attention to aspects of an object. Concentrating on a specific detail is turning one's attention to something, but not pointing "to something with your attention"<sup>36</sup> as if there was a mental organ that functioned in this way. Rather we note a man who is deeply concentrating; he does not hear us approach, he makes little notations on a scratch pad, he may even tug at his beard—and this is turning his attention to something. Certainly there are other features also; when he is asked what he is doing he gives a response which assures his questioner that the man is concentrating. In other words, instead of some hypothesized mental process going on, it is rather a whole family of actions performed by he who is concentrating and he who is observing. Only within the analogy that is the Cartesian picture, both of which are lacking application can "pointing to something with your attention" make sense. Since none of this is applicable, when it is proffered as fitting, nonsense is the result.

A brief summary of my argument will put all the important points in order. Since, according to Descartes, the mind is a different substance than the body, only representations of extended objects can be perceived there. The mind and its contents are known only to the perceiver and therefore looked away from others. Thus only I can know what I perceive. To show this is nonsense a Wittgensteinian first illustrates how

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<sup>36</sup>Wittgenstein, Investigations, Section 275.

the terms "mind" and "body" actually function in language. Next to suppose that each person's perceptions are private is to raise various absurdities, e. g. talk concerning slides of blue, and pointing into one's head. Finally to know what one perceives one has to suppose private language. But private language is a nonsensical idea at best for one would have to have a criterion for the application of its words, and this is impossible. Thus, after realizing that the privacy of representative perception is unintelligible, the path is open to accept that which one does when normally considering the objects of his senses. I take this line of argument to apply to any of the five senses.

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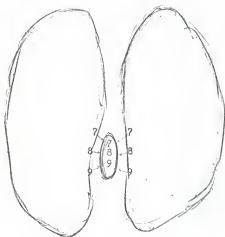
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objects in field  
of vision

eyes

picture 7,8,9,  
in optic nerves  
is similar to  
y, x, v.



top view-cross-  
section of brain

pineal gland, in  
which the mind  
is located

PLATE ONE

The Cartesian picture of the way in which objects  
are supposedly viewed by the "mind."



A WITTGENSTEINIAN REVIEW OF  
CARTESIAN PRIVACY

by

BARRY JOEL PERST

B.A., University of Illinois, 1968

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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Rather than having demonstrated what is correct or incorrect in Rene Descartes philosophy, which had formerly constituted the standard critique of his work, Wittgenstein illustrated that Cartesianism, as a doctrine purporting to explain various philosophical problems concerning man, is sheer nonsense. Though Descartes' theories are appealing, inasmuch as the solutions they appear to offer follow directly from the philosophical puzzles, they nevertheless provided impetus for as many perplexities and absurdities as they purportedly solved. It was only through the Wittgensteinian approach that the issues which occupied Descartes were demonstrated to be pseudo-problems, and his solutions only causes for more pseudo-problems. The issues were unreal because they arose from the misuse of language rather than from real questions concerning man. Wittgenstein realized that if it could be shown when language is making sense in particular applications then the problems of Descartes could be revealed as mere pseudo-problems and the solutions as nonsensical.

It is the objective of my thesis to illustrate, by following Wittgensteinian guideposts, when and where language "goes on a holiday" in relation to specific Cartesian Concerns. My primary interest is in the issue of ordinary language (as language making sense) utilization of the terms "mind" and "body," and in the problem of privacy entailed by the Cartesian explanation of bodily sensations and sense organ perceptions. What is to be explained is that Cartesian linguistic and doctrinal equating of mind and body violates the "rules" of language, and that the notion

of the privacy of sensations and perceptions commits the same error and is therefore equally unintelligible.

To accomplish my aim, after a short introduction, I have devoted my first chapter to an examination of the reasons which gave rise to Cartesianism and the arguments this philosophy offers for adopting its position. Great emphasis is placed on historical factors, the Cartesian maxim that the mind is better known than the body, and the doctrine of representative perception. Underlying the latter two items is of course the dualist notion of interaction, and it is here that the theory of the privacy of sensations and perceptions is found.

The second chapter presents a background upon which the considerations of Wittgenstein can be more easily viewed. Beginning with the American Pragmatists' innovations concerning the meaning of statements, I review in what fashion they would approach and criticize a selection from Descartes' writings. Next is discussed Logical Analysis as exemplified by the philosophy of Bertrand Russell. Following this is the Logical Positivists' contribution of the notion of the empirical verifiability of philosophic doctrines. This includes an explication of their theory which utilizes the same passage from Descartes I selected to exemplify the American Pragmatists' position. Finally I will set Wittgenstein into the picture emphasizing his viewpoint in relation to those already cited. What they all have in common is the questioning of the sensibility of philosophic discourse or doctrine.

The final chapter demonstrates why the dualist theory of persons being composed of "minds" and "bodies" is nonsensical, and why the privacy of sensations and perceptions is likewise unintelligible. In examining each issue I will consider: the ordinary language employment of the terms "mind" and "body" as juxtaposed to the fashion in which Descartes utilized them (which will be illustrated in my first chapter): pains as they represent private bodily sensations: and, sight as a paradigm for the other sense perceptions. In this way I hope to demonstrate why the problems which disturbed Descartes were those stemming from language rather than actual issues, and that his purported answers were nonsensical for they misused language.