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Wittgenstein on Subjectivity: A Phenomenological Interpretation

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Joshua N. W. Gray

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

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Bibliography

List of Abbreviations

Works by Wittgenstein

LWI – Wittgenstein, L., *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, v. 1, Blackwell, 1982

LWII – Wittgenstein, L., *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, v. 2, Blackwell, 1992

OC – Wittgenstein, L., *On Certainty*, Harper & Row, 1972

PG – Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Grammar*, Blackwell, 1974

PI – Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, Blackwell, 2001 (page numbers for Part II refer to both Blackwell paginations as follows: *PI*, p. 1953/2001)

PO – Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Occasions*, *1912-1951*, Hackett Publishing, 1993

RPPI – Wittgenstein, L., *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, v. 1, Blackwell, 1980

RPPII – Wittgenstein, L., *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, v. 2, Blackwell, 1980

TS – Wittgenstein, L., *The Big Typescript*, Blackwell, 2005

Z – Wittgenstein, L., *Zettel*, Blackwell, 1967

<u>Works by Other Authors</u>

BT – Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*, Harper & Row, 1962

CPR – Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, Macmillan, 1990

PP – Merleau-Ponty, M., *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge, 2002 (page numbers refer to both Routledge paginations as follows: *PP*, p. 1962/2002)

__Introduction__

__Background and Aims__

In the Anglo-American world, Ludwig Wittgenstein is widely thought of as the most important philosopher of the twentieth century. From the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, to *On Certainty*, via the acclaimed *Philosophical Investigations*, his work concerns areas of philosophy as varied as logic, epistemology, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of language, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion and metaphilosophy. In all of these areas, he offers controversial ways of looking at the very questions that are in play, in an attempt to completely change the way we think. This bold project, together with his aphoristic style of writing, and his self-confessed inability to formulate anything more than short remarks jotted down in a notebook, and then reworked into some kind of order, rather than structured sets of arguments, make Wittgenstein's philosophy very difficult to understand. As a result of this, his work has been the subject of great discordance when it comes to how one should correctly interpret his words. One such debate concerns his opinions when it comes to the philosophy of mind. The celebrated private language argument has come to be one of the best known passages of Wittgenstein's work, and yet, among the seemingly infinite number of papers written on and around the subject, it is difficult to find two which agree as to the correct way to interpret what is said. It is broadly agreed, though not universally, that the argument rejects the idea that the mind is built up of private, inner mental states, which only I can access (the Cartesian view).[1] Beyond this, however, it is not clear how the argument is constructed, what its exact goals are, what consequences should be drawn from it, whether or not it is

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[1] This term will be discussed in the following chapter. The term Cartesian is not intended to apply to Descartes and his immediate followers, but to a certain way of considering the mind as an inner theatre which has permeated most of western philosophy, and would appear to be attributable to Descartes, given that his starting point for all philosophy was the famous *cogito*. The term Cartesian is widely used in this sense and I take up this usage here without particular reference to Descartes himself. The relevance of Descartes will be further discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

successful, or even if it is intended as an argument at all. Though I by no means intend to resolve over half a century of debate and disagreement, some of these issues will be discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The scope of this dissertation, however, goes far beyond the private language argument. As I have said, the argument concerns the nature of the mind and rejects the idea that it is inner and private. Thus, subjectivity is no longer construed as what goes on in the private, inner theatre of the mind. But what is subjectivity? What picture of subjectivity does Wittgenstein leave us with, once a certain picture of the inner mind has been rejected? This is the central question which this dissertation aims to address. Many interpreters, upon reading the private language argument as a rejection of the inner, have jumped to the opposite end of the spectrum and read Wittgenstein as a kind of behaviourist. Behaviourist theories of the mind are third-personal theories which claim that all it means to have a mental state is to behave or be disposed to behave in such-and-such a way. Thus, according to this picture, when I say that someone is in pain, what I mean is that he is behaving in a certain way (wincing, groaning, saying that he is in pain, etc.), and that his body, upon examination, will show some sign of damage, as well as the other bodily modifications that may go with this (blood pressure, heart-rate, temperature, etc.) Thus the first person is eliminated from the behaviourist's picture of subjectivity (cf. Chapter 2). And Wittgenstein has often been read as doing the same. The problem with this view, in my opinion, is that it does not account for my first-person experience of pain, and thus lacks phenomenological accuracy. When I am in pain, not only do I behave in such-and-such a way, but I *feel* something quite particular and unpleasant. I will argue in this dissertation that this is also Wittgenstein's view. Wittgenstein does allow for the first person to have its importance, only not in the way the Cartesian suggests. Rather, he navigates between Cartesianism and behaviourism by showing that both misunderstand my relation to my own mind. I do not observe my pains, be it inwardly or outwardly, I *have* them. I am much closer to my pains than either of these views suggests (cf. Chapter 5). Thus one of the central aims of this dissertation is to reintegrate the first person into Wittgenstein interpretation, which often omits it. This is partly done by reintegrating the subject into its natural surroundings. Philosophy has all too often cut the subject out of its practical intercourse with the world, and one of Wittgenstein's major insights is that this distorts the way we study

the mind. The mind is not cut off from practical involvement with the world and with people, and thus to study it as such is like studying the behaviour of a caged animal, and thinking that our results will apply to those we find in the wild. The mind must be studied in its "natural habitat" so to speak, in its ordinary commerce with the world around it (cf. Chapters 3 & 4). It is thanks to this that it will be possible to recognise the importance of the first person. The first person, far from implying an isolated mind in an introspective self-relation, will be one aspect of our natural involvement in the world, part of an integrated whole which includes subject and world. And here the phenomenological tradition will help to understand some of Wittgenstein's claims. Until recently, there has been very little literature which linked Wittgenstein to the phenomenological tradition.[2] A recent interest seems to have developed, however, with philosophers such as Søren Overgaard and Chantal Bax discussing Wittgenstein, particularly on the topic of subjectivity, in relation to the phenomenological tradition.[3] Similarly, in this dissertation, phenomenology will help shed light on some of the more difficult aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy. With particular emphasis on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, as well as discussions of other phenomenologists such as Heidegger and Scheler, and even their intellectual forefather, Kant, I allow the phenomenological tradition to give a new perspective on some of the most difficult passages of Wittgenstein's later work, and show how, if integrated into this tradition, some of his thoughts become less obscure.[4] There are many areas where Wittgenstein appears to be very close to phenomenology, and these resemblances will be highlighted. One such resemblance is methodological, and with the current debates concerning Wittgenstein particularly focussed on his metaphilosophical remarks, it seems appropriate to discuss these before launching into any discussions on specific content. This will therefore be the topic of the next section of this introduction.

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[2] Exceptions include Lawhead 1977, Gier 1981 and Dwyer 1990
[3] Cf. Overgaard 2004, 2007; Bax 2008, 2011
[4] What is meant by Wittgenstein's "later work" may need clarification. Following the standard usage the expression refers to the *Philosophical Investigations* and the post-*Investigations* works: e.g. *Zettel*, the four volumes on the philosophy of psychology, *On Certainty*, etc. It must be noted however that the primary focus is on the *Investigations* and indeed, more narrowly on the sections which constitute the private language argument. Though there are long passages in which I will focus on other works, this is always intended to clarify questions which are raised in the *Investigations* and upon which these other works can shed light.

Therapy, Phenomenology and the Role of Philosophy

This section will concern philosophical therapy and will draw some links with phenomenology, so as to get a better understanding of Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy. Most of the literature concerning Wittgenstein has shifted in the last two decades or so, towards a metaphilosophical interpretation which claims that Wittgenstein doesn't advance any theories. This may be taken to mean that Wittgenstein's task is purely negative, and thus that he does not put forth any substantial philosophical accounts. In what follows, I will argue that this depends on what is meant by the word "theory," and I will give an interpretation of Wittgenstein which allows him to say something substantial. There are three current interpretations of Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy. First, the doctrinal view which claims Wittgenstein is an analytic philosopher; second, the elucidatory view, which claims there are two stages, first the destructive stage and then the reconstruction of a new account based on more solid grounds; third, the therapeutic view, which claims that his task is to dissolve philosophical problems. Given certain ways in which therapeutic readers speak of Wittgenstein, it might be considered that Wittgenstein's task is a purely negative one, that dissolving philosophical problems means not replacing them with an alternate picture. I will argue, however, that there is a way of employing the therapeutic view, which does not result only in the dissolution of ways of thinking, but also suggests some alternatives. It is at this stage that I will turn to phenomenology. I will discuss the phenomenological rejection of theory and the descriptive method which phenomenologists share with Wittgenstein, before showing how it seems strange to say that phenomenology is a purely negative or destructive philosophy. Phenomenologists seem to say something substantial. This, I will argue, hinges on our definition of "theory." I will argue that one can reject theory in the strict sense and yet put forth a "theory" in a wider sense. This is what phenomenology does and this very closely resembles Wittgenstein's philosophical therapy. This section of the introduction will end by giving some textual evidence of this resemblance.

I begin with the doctrinal interpretation, the so-called standard interpretation, which construes Wittgenstein's method as similar to analytic philosophy. On this view, Wittgenstein presents us with a number of philosophical arguments designed to support various theories. A good example is Saul Kripke's interpretation of the private language argument. Kripke presents Wittgenstein's remarks on private language in the form of a two-stage argument, the structure of which mirrors Hume's theory of causality. The first stage is to establish that there is no necessary connection between a rule and its correct application, since the rule itself gives us no criterion to distinguish between its correct and incorrect applications. The second stage is to side-step this scepticism by means of a sceptical solution: to follow a rule is to be deemed by a community to be following a rule. We can therefore claim that we are using such-and-such a word correctly so long as there is an agreement that we are doing so by a community of language-users. [Kripke 1982] This looks like a systematic argument, like those which can be found in most analytic philosophy in the Anglo-American tradition. First, Kripke's Wittgenstein is claimed to have put forth a question or problem: What is the link between language and its correct use? Second, he is thought to have given it an answer: There is no such link. Thirdly, he is said to provide an alternative explanation as to how it is possible for us to use language correctly. We are, then, according to Kripke, given a systematic account of how language functions, namely that it is reliant on a community, engaged in a certain form of life, etc. Kripke's interpretation will be discussed a little more in Chapter 1, but, for now, it is only intended as an example of a doctrinal reading. Other examples include Malcolm [e.g. 1977, 1986], Strawson [1954], Ayer [1954], Cook [2000], Moyal-Sharrock [2007], and a great number of others.[5]

Secondly, there is the elucidatory view. Examples of elucidatory readings include Anthony Kenny [2004], Peter Hacker [1986, 1996a, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b], Gordon Baker, in what Katherine Morris identifies as his middle period, e.g. the books and papers co-written with Peter Hacker [Baker & Hacker 1984, 1985, cf. Morris 2007, p. 67 and introduction to Baker 2004, p. 1, written by Morris], etc. It would appear that doctrinal readings ignore some crucial passages of the *Investigations*. Wittgenstein famously claims that we should not advance theses, and that we should

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[5] A defense of this view can be found in Glock 2004

avoid explanations [cf. *PI* 109, discussed in more detail below], both of which are simply put to one side by the kind of readings just discussed. Elucidation aims to correct this. For elucidatory readers, on the one hand, philosophy should aim to put forth an account of the way grammar actually works. On this point it is close to the doctrinal reading. On the other hand, however, philosophy is also aimed at correcting misunderstandings and misconceptions by describing what is open to view and not searching for theoretical explanations. For Kenny, for example, there are two tasks in philosophy. 'First, there is the negative, therapeutic task of philosophy: the resolution of philosophical problems by the dissolution of philosophical illusion. Second, there is the more positive task of giving us an overview of the actual working of our language.' [Kenny 2004, p. 175] For Hacker too, 'there are two primary aspects to Wittgenstein's later conception of philosophy. On the one hand, philosophy is characterized as a quest for a surveyable representation of the grammar of a given problematic domain, which will enable us to find our way around when we encounter philosophical difficulties. On the other hand, philosophy is characterized as a cure for diseases of the understanding. These different aspects correspond to the difference between connective analysis and therapeutic analysis, but they are perfectly compatible.' [Hacker 1996b, p. 111] But neither the negative, nor the positive task, proceeds by any kind of theorising or arguing. 'Wittgenstein proceeds not by presenting arguments for a negative conclusion, but by assembling reminders of the obvious.' [Kenny 2004, p. 178] This is important because this distinguishes this view from the doctrinal view. Analytic philosophers also get rid of wrong pictures and replace them with new ones, but not in the same way. Elucidatory readers point out that Wittgenstein does not proceed with formal arguments and theories (what Katherine Morris elsewhere calls 'the usual analytic bag of tricks' [Morris 2007, p. 69]), but with reminders of the obvious. It is these reminders of the obvious which give this middle view the name "elucidatory." '"Elucidations" is quite a good word to cover the truisms, questions, distinctions, comparisons, etc. that make up more than ninety percent of the text of the *Investigations*.' [Kenny 2004, p. 181] The "two-task" philosophy discussed above is then attributed to these elucidations.

Thirdly, there is the therapeutic view, which began to develop in the nineties, with a series of papers by Gordon Baker, then edited posthumously by Katherine Morris, into a volume titled *Wittgenstein's Method: Neglected Aspects.* [Baker 2004] In the year 2000, a well-known book called *The New Wittgenstein* sparked of a great deal of interest, and a huge amount of literature on the subject ensued. [Crary & Read 2000][6] For therapeutic readers, like for elucidatory readers, the problem with doctrinal interpretations is not any particular argument or claim that is made, but rather a lack of concern for Wittgenstein's metaphilosophical remarks. In Phil Hutchinson's words, 'the problem this reading faces as an exegesis of Wittgenstein's writings is that it simply ignores his explicit remarks concerning the offering of explanation and the advancement of theses in philosophy.' [Hutchinson 2007, p. 696] Thus, therapeutic readers present Wittgenstein's work as ridding us of philosophical misunderstandings by unravelling explanations and showing, not that they are false, but that the questions which they purport to address stem from the philosopher's attachment to a certain way of seeing things, to his being in the grip of a particular picture. Guiding the philosopher away from these pictures will do away with the questions and philosophical confusion to which they give rise. But far from claiming that we should then map a positive account of the functioning of our language, as elucidatory readers would have it, therapeutic readers claims that we can only reach philosophical sanity (to continue the metaphor) once we have eliminated the questions themselves from our philosophical picture. The remarks Hutchinson is referring to are of the kind found at Section 109 of the *Investigations*, to which I will return later, because it is among the most quoted by therapeutic readers. It reads: 'And we could not advance any kind of theory. There may not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. […] The problems are solved, not by reporting new experience, but by arranging what we have always known.' [*PI* 109] One example of philosophical therapy might be Wittgenstein's treatment of the so-called "problem" of Other Minds. Under the grip of the Cartesian picture of the mind as an isolated and private inner theatre, philosophers have been troubled by the question, in Mill's words: 'By what evidence do I know, or by what considerations

am I led to believe, that there exist other sentient creatures; that the walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts, or in other words, possess Minds?' [Mill 1865, p. 255] Many a theory has been advanced to try to resolve this dilemma, most famously Mill's argument from analogy, and several attempts at modifying or amending it, as well as later theories within scientific psychology, such as Theory theory and Simulation theory. All provide in depth arguments for their various theories. But, Wittgenstein argues, none of these is satisfactory. But his point is not that they are misguided as attempts at solving the problem, but that the problem itself is formulated in a manner which already leads the philosopher's reasoning in a particular direction. Here, the question is already a search for explanation, where description should suffice. Once we stop trying to explain and start describing how things are in actual cases, the problem, in its traditional form, cannot be sustained as a genuine cause for trouble. 'Consciousness in another's face. Look into someone else's face, and see the consciousness in it, and a particular *shade* of consciousness. You see on it, in it, joy, indifference, interest, excitement, torpor and so on. […] Do you look into *yourself* in order to recognize the fury in *his* face?' [Z, 220] In reality, others are already a part of my life, and I accept this as being the case in all situations except when I am doing philosophy, at which point I often revert to explanations which only cause more confusion.[7] Wittgenstein says that this problem is 'never felt in ordinary life, but only when we philosophize.' [Wittgenstein 2006, p. 58] For therapeutic readers, 'reminding us of the most important facts' is Wittgenstein's central task and should be philosophy's central task if we wish to conduct it properly. 'The idea is that when the philosopher is faced with a seemingly insurmountable philosophical problem, that problem can often be traced to his being in the grip of a particular picture of how things must be. This picture's hold over the philosopher is unconscious or unacknowledged. The task for the philosophical therapist is to break the grip this picture has over her interlocutor, that is, to show him there are other ways of seeing things.' [Hutchinson 2007, p. 694] The role they attribute to Wittgenstein is not one of presenting us with any systematic world picture but only of ridding us of the desire for such a picture, which is the very thing which tricks us into making false assumptions and developing unsatisfactory philosophical theories. 'The idea of philosophical clarification in

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[7] This is not to say that intersubjectivity is altogether unproblematic. Cf. Chapter 4.

Wittgenstein's later thought is tied closely to his idea of how our thinking can be distorted by the conception of big essential philosophical problems, a conception which it is enormously difficult, in practice, to renounce.' [Diamond 2004, p. 207] Wittgenstein's task, then, according to this reading, is to guide the philosopher away from philosophical theories, and not the positive task of suggesting a theory which improves on the ones away from which he has been guided.

But this formulation of Wittgenstein's project can easily lead one to misunderstand what therapy is intended to be. The emphasis on rejecting the "positive" project of the elucidatory camp seems to entail that therapy, if executed properly, will lead to the end of philosophy. And indeed, two aspects of the therapeutic view tend toward this reading. On the one hand, most of the literature focuses on getting us to read Wittgenstein in a particular way, and to understand philosophy in a particular way: that is to say, most of the literature that deals with the therapeutic reading is metaphilosophical. Thus, there are few examples of a therapeutic treatment of a philosophical problem resulting in a positive account. Secondly, the focus of therapeutic readers being the rejection of the elucidatory distinction between the negative and the positive tasks of philosophy, therapy ends up assimilating to the negative side of things. Thus many of the words used by therapeutic readers can give this impression. They say that Wittgenstein's task is "only," "merely," "solely" the therapeutic task of "ridding" us of false pictures, "rejecting" theory, etc. For Hutchinson and Read for example, 'a reading of *PI*, which holds on to Wittgenstein doing more than practising therapy ultimately leaves "Wittgenstein" committed to the very commitments of which he was trying to relieve us (and himself).' [Hutchinson & Read 2008, p. 149] When reading this passage it is easy to get the impression that therapy does not allow anything positive to be said. Central to this is the term "more." Philosophy should not do "more" than therapy, lest it end up in the confusions it was initially trying to soothe. But this is not Hutchinson and Read's point. The word "more" here should be understood as "anything other than." Their point is not that saying anything positive will result in conceptual confusions, but rather, that we must keep in mind that whatever positive claims we do put forth are not universal claims, as the doctrinal and elucidatory readers suggest, and cannot be applied to all aspects of human life, and thus cannot form the kind of overarching

theories which we are tempted to put forward. Nevertheless a positive philosophical account can be given which does not tend towards this kind of systematisation. The rejection of theory, then, does not entail a rejection of "positive" philosophy. This will be shown by turning to phenomenology.

Thus, the aim of what follows is to show that a phenomenological understanding of therapy will avoid the risk of its being understood in purely negative terms, and will allow the therapist to put forth an account of e.g. subjectivity without falling into the kinds of systematic theories suggested by doctrinal and elucidatory readings. Wittgenstein's method, I will therefore suggest, can be usefully understood by comparing it to the phenomenological method. It must be made clear from the start that my aim here is not similar to that of Simon Glendinning in his 2008 article "What is Phenomenology?" I agree, on the one hand, with his starting point, i.e. the idea that 'we can and should make room for variations that greatly increase rather than decrease the diversity within [phenomenology's] development.' [Glendinning 2008, p. 31] On the other hand, the aim here is not to establish a set of "theses" which define phenomenology (the first of which, for Glendinning, is a resistance to theses), and which allow a *rapprochement* with philosophers which do not appear to belong to that tradition. The idea here is to give something closer to a family resemblance definition of phenomenology. I do not intend to bring forth a set of conditions for what it is to be a phenomenologist, with the goal of then showing that Wittgenstein satisfies these conditions. Rather, I will show how certain aspects of phenomenology can be usefully related to some of the more difficult aspects of Wittgenstein's later work. With this difference in mind, however, I will begin with Glendinning's title question: What is phenomenology? The literal definition is of no particular help here. As David Cerbone points out when introducing phenomenology, 'its meaning, the study or science of phenomena, only raises more questions.' [Cerbone 2006, p. 1] Herbert Spiegelberg gives the following definition, which is more useful as a starting point. '"Phenomenology" is, in the 20th century, mainly the name for a philosophical movement whose primary objective is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions.' [Spiegelberg 1975, p. 3] For Husserl, who is

considered to have founded the movement, phenomenology is seen as the study of things as experienced from the subject's point of view, and before the subject's mind is burdened with theory. The *epoché* and the transcendental-phenomenological reduction work to this end. According to Husserl, we must bracket questions as to e.g. the existence of the external world, in order to free ourselves from preconceptions and find ourselves at a presuppositionless starting point. Here, we 'suspend or neutralize a certain dogmatic *attitude* toward reality,' in order to find a starting point for our research which is not clouded by preconceived theories. [Zahavi 2003, p. 45] From this starting point, by simply describing what we find in experience, we rediscover the world, but this world now rests on the solid ground of pre-theoretical experience. [cf. Husserl 1983] For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology 'tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide.' [*PP*, p. vii/vii] Here, then, we are not looking for explanation, not trying to say *why* things are the way they are, but simply describing *how* they are.[8] The idea is that in saying why things are as they are, we lose sight of how they actually are and say that they *must* be of such-and-such a kind *because of* our explanation. We let explanation and theories tell us what the world is like rather than letting the world as experienced inform our theories. We must avoid being caught up in problems which do not directly relate to our experience. This, phenomenology assumes, is what much of western philosophy often does. Phenomenology can thus be seen as 'an attempt to bring philosophy back from abstract metaphysical speculation wrapped up in pseudo-problems, in order to come into contact […] with concrete living experience.' [Moran 2000, p. xiii] The mind-body problem may serve as an example. Here I will compare Fodor on the analytic side and Merleau-Ponty on the phenomenological side. Jerry Fodor, in an attempt to bridge the explanatory gap between the psychological and the physical, posits a third level of description which can link the two together, namely the functional level.

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[8] The claim I wish to make here is not that phenomenology is a purely descriptive method: the *epoché* and the transcendental reduction are only half the phenomenological method, the other half being the eidetic reduction. This latter reduction is aimed at essences, that is to say at the essential structures of experience. But even this is descriptive in a loose sense, i.e. in the sense that description is what is meant to help these structures show up. It is not explanatory: these essential structures are not hypotheses which explain why experience is the way it is. Thus while the phenomenological method may at times go beyond mere description, it is on the descriptive side of any explanatory/descriptive divide, in a way in which e.g. functionalism is clearly not.

This mirrors the workings of a computer, the physiological being compared to the hardware, out of which can emerge a purely syntactic language (the language of thought), out of which, in turn, arises a meaning when the user observes it. The language of thought (or mentalese) is thus presented as a purely syntactic language which can bridge the gap between the purely physiological workings of the brain and the seemingly psychological desires, beliefs, etc. [cf. Fodor 1975] What we can extract from this in terms of the methodology is: a) the goal, which is (causal) explanation; b) the presupposed physicalist framework, and the presupposition that there is an explanatory gap to be bridged; and c) the positing of an unobserved process (mentalese) as the best explanation available. As we have seen above, these are the three methodological steps which phenomenology rejects. If we look at a phenomenological discussion of the so-called mind-body "problem," we can see the drastic difference in the methods employed. First of all, the goal is not explanation, causal or other, but description. The aim is to give an accurate account of the structure of consciousness when it comes to embodiment. Secondly, there is no pre-existing framework which is left unexamined and taken for granted, and there is thus no "problem" as such before the investigation begins. Thirdly, as a consequence of the two points just made, no hypothetical unobserved entity is or need be posited, since the goal is simply to describe what we can observe and not to explain anything or solve any problem. The question for phenomenology, instead of being a problem such as: How can the physical and the mental possibly interrelate? becomes: What is the relationship between my mind and my body as they are presented to me in experience? We can therefore discuss the so-called mind-body problem by attending to our experience of embodiment. Fodor starts with physicalism as a presupposition: i.e. The mind must be physical, and so the questions he ends up asking are: How can this be? What needs to hold for this to be true and what follows from it? For Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, 'to be a consciousness […] is to hold inner communication with the world, the body and other people, to be with them instead of being beside them.' [*PP* p. 96/111] On this view, once we attend to the phenomenological experience we realise that there is no explanatory gap. We have gotten ourselves into a muddle by presupposing a mind-body dualism (or dualism of for-itself and in-itself in Merleau-Ponty's terms). For Merleau-Ponty, there is a third genus of being: the subject incarnate, which is apparent when we actually attend to

our experience of embodiment. The debate concerning the mind-body problem is of course hugely controversial and far beyond the scope of this introduction. But the difference in methodology is interesting, and the resemblance between the phenomenological and therapeutic approaches is striking.

What phenomenology and philosophical therapy have in common should be clear. First of all, both aim to avoid unexamined philosophical frameworks, and offer a simple description of the way things appear when we tend carefully to 'what lies open to view;' and secondly, both seem to be able to cause certain philosophical difficulties to disappear. But as we have seen, this often gives the impression that no positive account can be given which does not risk ending up in a similarly confused state. Of course, on both views, philosophy should not advance theories. But does this mean that there is no positive task for philosophy? Much of this, I will argue, hangs on what we understand by the word theory. Oswald Hanfling wrote a paper on this very topic entitled "The Use of "Theory" in Philosophy." Hanfling reminds us that there are several accepted usages for the term and that we must be careful to distinguish between them. 'The word "theory" is often used, in philosophy and elsewhere, in what I shall call a "diluted" sense. […] In philosophy and in other subjects too, it may mean no more than "view" or "opinion."' [Hanfling 2004, p. 186] There is, however, another use of the word "theory," or rather, there are several. The examples Hanfling gives have in common the notion that a theory is closely linked to the idea of a hypothesis, or in Wittgenstein's words, 'what is hidden.' The strictest sense of the term has theory meaning the positing of an unobserved entity. So in what sense does phenomenology reject theory? Whilst it is true that phenomenology, by virtue of its descriptive method, its rejection of presuppositions, and its refusal to posit that which is not in plain sight, cannot engage in any kind of *a priori* theorising in the strict sense of the term, it can and does present us with a "theory" in the diluted sense, meaning something like a picture: a point of view, a way of looking at a set of interrelated topics. This "theory" which the phenomenologist can offer is of a new kind, since it does not rely on a preconceived framework or on hypothetical postulates, but rests on the experienced world. Phenomenology 'asks us not to let preconceived theories form our experience, but to let our experience inform and guide our theories.' [Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 10]

So phenomenology tries to help things show up which have gone unnoticed, to draw our attention to the obvious, and this obvious is both positive and negative, it simultaneously dissolves problems and replaces them with a substantial picture. For this reason, it appears to avoid the problem of viewing philosophy as a purely negative enterprise. But phenomenology is not elucidatory, since the two tasks, positive and negative, can never quite be separated. The positive task of phenomenology is not to build systematic impermeable theories, but rather, to describe how things are in everyday experience. But this is not getting rid of the positive task completely. Rather, by describing what lies open to view, phenomenology reacquaints us with a world-picture which is echoed in our own experience. 'It is less a question of counting up quotations than of determining and expressing in concrete form this *phenomenology for ourselves* which has given a number of present-day readers the impression, on reading Husserl and Heidegger, not so much of encountering a new philosophy as of recognizing what they had been waiting for.' [*PP* p. viii/viii] Phenomenology, therefore, gives us a kind of therapy which proceeds by reacquainting the philosopher with the lived world, and by doing so, both steers the philosopher away from his unexamined framework and suggests a positive picture, by showing what the world looks like to us when we are involved in it. Is this the kind of thing that Wittgenstein is doing? Is this what we should consider philosophical therapy to be doing?

As I have said there is a diluted sense of the word "theory." In this sense of the word "theory" we may speak, for example, of Wittgenstein's theory of expression and it would seem strange to take seriously his remarks rejecting theorising in philosophy. By this we would merely mean his "account" of the various ways in which expression can function. But it may be argued that this is the sense in which Wittgenstein was using the word "theory," when he wrote, for instance, that 'we may not advance any kind of theory.' [*PI* 109] On this view, Wittgenstein is rejecting the idea that philosophy should be about presenting views or opinions, and that, when he seems to present language as analogous to crying, shouting and gesticulating, this is really only presenting as *another* picture designed to allow the others to show up as nonsensical. On the other hand, if we take the stricter sense of the term "theory," Wittgenstein's warnings against theory are to be taken to mean that we should not try

to explain what we observe by the use of unobserved hypotheses, and that description alone can give us a sufficient world-picture. Yet in the diluted sense of the word "theory," which means something more like a picture, Wittgenstein can put forward a positive "theory," whilst rejecting theory in the sense of an explanation by means of an unobserved process or entity. And there are passages which suggest this is perhaps a better reading. One of the most quoted section of the *Philosophical Investigations,* when it comes to discussions of Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy is Section 109, quoted earlier, which reads: 'And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. The problems are solved, not by reporting new experience, but by arranging what we have always known.' [*PI* 109] Here we can immediately observe a number of similarities between Wittgenstein's views and what I have said about phenomenology. First of all, the rejection of the advancement of theory in philosophy mirrors phenomenology. It may also be taken to support a purely negative view of philosophy, if we take the word "theory" in all its possible senses, including the diluted sense. The words "*any kind of*" theory seem to support this view. But, it seems clear enough that this is not what is meant by Wittgenstein, and that rather he means that we must reject theory in the strict sense of the word, meaning the positing of a hypothetical entity. Hence the following sentence: 'There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations.' Secondly, the rejection of explanation, to which description is preferred, certainly carries echoes of phenomenology. The descriptive method is key to Wittgenstein's philosophical method. 'Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us.' [*PI* 126] This also supports what I said above about the word "theory." It is not about positing anything hidden. The following passage from the *Manuscripts* which does not appear in the Investigations is helpful: 'We must know what we mean by *explanation*. There is a constant danger of wanting to use this word in logic in a sense which is taken over from physics.' [Wittgenstein 2006, p. 52] For philosophy, as Wittgenstein understands it, to *explain* something is to *describe* the way things are, not to posit anything hypothetical: the latter sense is the sense which it has take over from physics. So when Wittgenstein says we should not explain anything it is

because when we are told to explain something we immediately want to posit unknowns. Straight away, we understand the word *in that sense* and that's why he prefers the word description. Thirdly, the idea that we are not saying anything new, only drawing attention to what has always been before our eyes, is also the project of phenomenology. 'The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless *that* fact has at some time struck him. – And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful.' [*PI* 129] (Compare this with the quote by Merleau-Ponty above: philosophical views are recognised, not discovered.) The role of the philosopher, then, is to make us realise that upon which our confusion is based, but he must do so by showing us what is before our eyes, which is to say, a certain picture of the world which is not burdened by theory. This picture often escapes our gaze 'because [we] are making assumptions instead of just describing. If your head is haunted by explanations here, you are neglecting to remind yourself of the most important facts.' [*Z* 219] But against those who claim that there can be no positive or substantial philosophy if we understand Wittgenstein correctly, it is important to note that *there are* these 'most important facts' of which to be reminded. In reminding ourselves of these facts, we present ourselves with a world picture, or "theory" in the diluted sense.

The aim of what is above has been to address some difficulties in interpreting Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy. The importance of this will carry through into the rest of this dissertation, since I intend to use the method outlined above. Thus, in discussing Wittgenstein's view of subjectivity, I will indeed aim to give some kind of "substantial" or positive picture of what we consider subjectivity to be like. This "picture," far from being the unexamined framework which the word may bring to mind in phrases such as "in the grip of a picture," will be a set of reflections, observations, views and opinions about philosophical issues in particular contexts and situations. Together, these will form an "account" or a "theory" in the looser sense discussed above. This is to say, I will not consider Wittgenstein to be giving us a purely negative account. On the other hand, I have argued against the doctrinal interpretation, by which Wittgenstein is an analytic philosopher. I will not be giving

arguments for or against particular views, and will not be claiming that Wittgenstein does so. Rather, I will try to show how he relieves us of certain philosophical burdens, by showing us how things are if we simply describe them. This is *eo ipso* to present a positive picture, and thus the elucidatory "two-task" reading misrepresents the role of Wittgenstein's remarks. Far from destroying and rebuilding, Wittgenstein helps things to show up which both dissolve false pictures and form new ones, but the latter are of an inherently different kind: they are descriptions of our form of life. These descriptions urge us to rethink the ways in which we consider some important philosophical issues. It is in this respect that they are therapeutic. The philosopher, by stepping away from the unexamined framework in which he was previously functioning, and taking a fresh look at things as they are in the form of life, that is to say, in a variety of contexts and situations, is able to do away with the confusion which was 'haunting' him. [*Z* 220] This is not merely the combination of the negative task of reducing pre-existing positions to nonsense and the positive task of rebuilding a new picture which is more accurate. It is a positive description of events in particular contexts and situations, which guides the philosopher away from preconceptions and philosophical confusion. Thus, far from being a "two-task" elucidatory account, Wittgenstein's is a therapeutic endeavour. But, as has been said above, the therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein suffer from not having been put to work on particular philosophical problems. This will be the goal of the following dissertation. And this is where phenomenology can be helpful. The positive kind of therapy described above, as I have shown, resembles phenomenology, in its rejection of theory and its descriptive method, but also in presenting us with a positive picture of the world, which is the picture which we all have, in Merleau-Ponty's words, 'before any theoretical elaboration has taken place.' [*PP* p. 244/284] Thus, in what follows, I will indeed be trying to give a positive "theory" of subjectivity, by bringing together Wittgenstein's remarks on the question and various phenomenological accounts. But this, in my view, is because of the lack of application of therapy to particular philosophical issues which this dissertation aims to remedy, by turning to phenomenology. My method therefore differs from the work of previous advocates of the therapeutic approach and to that extent the result may not resemble what is generally thought of as Wittgenteinian therapy. The methodology of what follows could thus be called a therapeutic phenomenology of

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subjectivity. This account of Wittgenstein's views on subjectivity will be divided into five chapters.

Chapter Structure

Chapter 1 is concerned with the private language argument and Wittgenstein's rejection of the so-called Cartesian view. Far from designating one particular philosopher or set of philosophers, the Cartesian view will be considered as a kind of picture of the mind and the subject which permeates Western thought. On this view, the subject is seen as being primarily a thinker. The subject is the mind, and the mind is considered to be inner and private. The subject has an immediate access to his inner states through a kind of inner observation: introspection. Though this can be seen to stem from Descartes' methodological doubt of all external things and the realisation that the "I think" cannot be doubted, thus leading to the claim that I am, first and foremost, a thinking thing, it is not clear that Wittgenstein aimed his attack on this view at any philosopher in particular. I will, this being said, give a brief outline of two of his immediate influences, in order to show how this view does indeed seem to have a hold on the way philosophers think. Thus, William James and Bertrand Russell will be shown to share in the kind of Cartesian framework which is under attack here. I then move on to Wittgenstein's critique of the Cartesian view, in the form of the famous private language argument. I begin by discussing the key passages and ideas which are usually considered to form the argument. The problem of ostensive definitions will be raised, and the difficulties already present with outer ostention will be transferred to inner ostention, so as to show how an act of pointing inwards with my attention is misguided. The "S" diary will show how, once isolated from all contexts, I am unable to consistently name an inner sensation. The beetle-in-the-box analogy will show how even if I could name my hidden state, this name could not possibly have anything to do with the state, once it took its place within a shared linguistic practice, and thus, would no longer really be the name of the inner

state at all. I then move on to the various different interpretations of the private language argument. The amount of secondary literature being vast, I will find a path through which I believe to show the key debates which have taken place within the field of Wittgenstein interpretation. The debates surrounding rule-following will take centre stage here. To name a state is to name it consistently in accordance with a rule or set of rules. Therefore, many philosophers have taken the private language argument as determining what must hold in order for rule-following to be possible. The answer is thought to be something external to the subject himself and to therefore show how the mind is not something utterly private. Thus, as has been said, Saul Kripke's Wittgenstein will be discussed as giving a community view of the argument, by which what has to be in place in order for me to follow a rule is a community of fellow rule-followers. To this view, Norman Malcolm's community view will be preferred as closer to the text of the *Investigations*, since it avoids the questions of Humean scepticism raised by Kripke. However, Malcolm's view will come under heavy attack from Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker, who claim that, far from requiring a community of rule-followers, what the private linguist really requires is a consistency in his practical engagement with his environment: i.e. rule-following requires embeddedness in a practice. This practice happens to be social in most cases, but the possibility of a private practice is not excluded. All that is required is the possibility that *if* someone were to come along, they would recognise my practice as such and be able *in principle* to follow the rules I have been following. All this will be discussed in detail. What is particularly interesting is that it raises the debate as to what the status of these conditions is. For Malcolm, the community is a necessary condition for rule-following. For Baker and Hacker, the community is merely contingent, but the practice is necessary. Here I will turn to the phenomenological distinction between the ontological and the ontic. The former relates to Being, or the *fact* that things are, and the latter, to being, i.e. individual beings, or the *way* things are. I will suggest that both a practical engagement in the world and an involvement with other human beings are ontically necessary for subjectivity, which itself takes place against a background of ontological contingency. It is perfectly conceivable for human beings to be completely different to what they are, and thus to exclude the ontological possibility of rule-following in a completely isolated and private (private in principle) environment seems misguided.

Ontically, however, that is, given our concept of subjectivity, for instance, given what we take for true about human beings, we can indeed exclude such a private practice. But we can also exclude the possibility of an individual isolated from birth from any interaction with other subjects than himself. Thus, two aspects of subjectivity as we understand it emerge. It is these two aspects of subjectivity which are highlighted by Wittgenstein and his interpreters, i.e. practical engagement in a world and involvement with other subjects, which will form the basis of the discussions in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation, and will play a key role in developing a Wittgensteinian account of subjectivity. Both present stern challenges to the view of the mind as a private and inner theatre.

Chapter 2 deals with the other extreme. Given how strongly Wittgenstein appears to argue against the picture of an inner, private mind, it may seem like he endorses a third-personal picture, similar to one form or other of behaviourism. Within the reductionist project, which began with the logical positivists, of reducing all the fields of science to physics, there grew the idea that psychology could be seen as something purely physical. Mental states or psychological modifications are thought by behaviourists to be reducible to physical or behavioural modifications. The reason behind this reductionist program concerns the conditions of verifiability of a given proposition. For logical positivists, to understand what a proposition means is to understand what needs to be the case in order for this proposition to be verified: i.e. knowing its conditions of verifiability. Thus, to understand the statement that it is such-and-such a temperature in this room, I must understand how I might go about verifying this claim: placing a thermometer in the room and verifying that the temperature it indicates correlates with the temperature cited in the proposition. Thus, what is meant by the proposition "It is such-and-such a temperature in this room" is: "If one were to place a thermometer in this room, all other things being equal, it would indicate such-and-such a temperature." The two propositions, for logical positivists, are equivalent. This is then transferred over to psychological propositions. Carl Hempel illustrates this by using the example of toothache. For Hempel, to understand the proposition "Paul has toothache" is to know what needs to be the case in order for this proposition to be verified. These conditions are, on the one hand, behavioural modifications, such as weeps and groans, or the statement "I

have toothache," and, on the other hand, physiological modifications such as blood pressure, temperature, decay of the tooth, etc. Thus for logical behaviourists, all that is meant by saying that a person is in pain is that this person behaves in such a way and displays whatever physiological signs associated with a damaged body. This is one example of a purely third-personal account of subjectivity. The problem with this account, I will argue, is its lack of phenomenological accuracy. It does not account for the intuitive asymmetry between first- and third-personal experiences of pain. When I see someone else in pain, I see his pain behaviour. When I am in pain, I *feel* pain. For the logical behaviourist, this asymmetry does not exist. When I say "I am in pain" what I mean is that my body is modified in a certain way and that I am behaving accordingly. This, it seems fair to say, is highly counter-intuitive.

A seemingly improved third-personal account comes with radical interpretation. On this account, to be in pain is to be interpretable as being in pain. When looking at another person, we perceive raw, meaningless data, which we then interpret to give it meaning. We take up a certain stance towards other human beings and treat them as subjects because this is the best way to understand them. We interpret others as having mental states because it is the easiest way to make sense of their behavioural patterns. Though there are some similarities between Wittgenstein's view and radical interpretation, there are also many differences which will be discussed. But what is interesting about interpretation is that it allows, on Davidson's account, for a certain amount of asymmetry between first- and third-personal psychological statements. When someone says that he is in pain, we assume that he is not mistaken. And, indeed, Wittgenstein makes the same point. But for Davidson, this is simply a rule of interpretation. We must take it for granted that, most of the time, a person is not mistaken about his own mental states, otherwise we would not be able to find the consistency needed to interpret their words, and their words would therefore be meaningless. Since we can interpret other people and understand their words, it follows that they are not usually mistaken about their own mental states. This asymmetry, however, will be shown to be insufficient. It is an asymmetry between first and third persons, within a third-personal account, and does not address the issue of the way the world appears to the first person himself. After discussing a possible reading of Wittgenstein along the lines of a Davidsonian kind of

asymmetry, I reject this reading and make the claim that the lived asymmetry is a deeper asymmetry and that this must be accounted for and is accounted for by Wittgenstein. Thus, there are three aspects of subjectivity which have been brought to light in these first two chapters, and which need discussing. The first is the subject's practical engagement in the world, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. The second is the subject's involvement with other subjects, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The third is the inherent asymmetry between my experience of my own mental states and my experience of other people's. This will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the first of the two aspects of subjectivity uncovered in Chapter 1, namely that before we can think of the subject as an isolated thinking thing, it is necessary that we be engaged in a world, involved in a host of practical relations to things. In order to discuss this question, I look at Wittgenstein's final work, *On Certainty*. This collection of Wittgenstein's final notebooks is usually thought of as a discussion of the epistemological status of certain propositions. Here, I will argue that *On Certainty* has other implications, and particularly, that it shows a particular view of subjectivity as an engaged subjectivity rather than a knowing subjectivity. A parallel will be drawn with the phenomenological notion of being-in-the-world as the condition for any theoretical grasp on things. When read as a work on epistemology, one of the central claims of *On Certainty* is that, in order to be able to say that I know something, I must be able, in principle, to doubt it. This is a response to the debate between traditional epistemologists such as Descartes, on the one hand, for whom something is only known if it is logically beyond doubt, and Moore, on the other hand, who claims that there are other propositions which are beyond doubt without them being true *a priori*. The claim that I have two hands is one of Moore's examples. Wittgenstein agrees with Moore that these kinds of propositions, now known as hinge-propositions or Moore-type propositions, are indeed beyond doubt. But for Wittgenstein this does not entitle us to say that we know them, but rather shows that they occupy a special logical position relative to knowledge and doubt. To say that I know something, for Wittgenstein, implies that I can answer the question as to *how* I know, and in this case, I cannot. Any reason that I can give for my knowing that I have two hands will not be any more certain than

my having two hands: I cannot give a justification which is more certain than that for which it is a justification. Thus, I must take my having two hands as a brute fact, but this is not to say that I know it, but rather, that it must hold fast as the condition for knowledge. What is remarkable in the secondary literature on this topic is the extent to which the focus lies on what kind of propositions these hinge-propositions really are. Are they logical, empirical, or grammatical propositions? Are they known, believed, are we certain of them? What I will argue here is that Wittgenstein's point is that they are not normally propositions at all. Of course, many commentators have picked up on this, but most then continue to regard my relation to, e.g. the fact that I have two hands, as a non-propositional psychological state such as faith, etc. What I argue here, by careful examination of the text, is that Wittgenstein wanted to place the emphasis on action, on practical engagement with the world around us which takes my having two hands for granted. I do not know that I have two hands: I wash my hands, shake hands, type a paper, etc. These are all so many activities which use my hands without them ever coming into my consciousness in propositional terms. And it does not help to say that I have non-propositional faith that I have two hands. This faith cannot be fleshed out any further without using propositions. What I do is use my hands in countless practical cases. It is here that phenomenology comes in. I look at Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and the notion of being-in-the-world. Here we have the idea that I am always already engaged with things and that my primary relation to the world is a practical one, not a thetic one. I am always using things around me, involved through my body in a host of activities. What Heidegger calls the ready-to-hand, the world as a something-for-me in-order-to, is not apprehended theoretically. Only once I am thus engaged in the world can I pick out individual items and claim propositional knowledge of them, but this is done against the background of this pre-thetic involvement with the world. In this chapter, I argue that Wittgenstein wishes to show something similar. Thus, the subject, far from being a knowing subject, grasping the world in a purely propositional way, is primarily an engaged subject involved in the world which surrounds him. Only from this primordial involvement can we later abstract propositional knowledge. But this can never form the primary relation between subject and world.

Chapter 4 discusses the second of the two ideas put forth in the first chapter, namely that we are always already in a world with others. There are always other subjects surrounding me and I am involved with them before I can methodologically withdraw from my community in the Cartesian fashion. I begin by outlining the problem as traditionally conceived. In the grip of the Cartesian picture, philosophers have seen the mind as an inner, private theatre, with mental states available only to me. It then becomes doubtful, given that I have no access to them, whether or not other people have minds, that is to say, whether they are not mere automata. John Stuart Mill's argument from analogy claims that since I know from my own case that certain behaviour is caused by pain, I infer in the case of others that similar behaviour is caused by similar pain. Later, in the twentieth century, Theory theorists and Simulation theorists developed more subtle explanations. For Theory theory, thanks to my theory of the mind which I acquire in childhood, I posit mental states as unobserved entities which explain the behaviour which I do observe. This has the advantage of not relying on self-observation, be it inner or outer, in order to then compare the results with what I observe in the case of others. However, it seems counter-intuitive that, in my own case, my pain should be thought of as an unobserved entity which I posit. Simulation theory argues that when I see someone in pain I run a simulation in my own mind in order to apply the results to the other person. Just as when I want to study the movement of planets, I create a version more easily observed in my laboratory which allows me to predict certain movements, etc., I run a pain-simulation in my mind, and thus transfer this to the case of the other person, and this is how I understand that the other is suffering. What Wittgenstein argues, as do phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty and Scheler, is that this simply does not conform to the way in which we normally interact with others. We do not need analogies, theories or simulations to see that another person is in pain, we directly perceive it in their facial expressions, cries, groans, words, etc. The lived situation dispels any doubts that the philosopher may have, when sitting alone in his office, as to the existence of other minds. The other is always already given to me as another subject, as "a someone" not "a something," and someone capable of the wide range of emotions, sensations and thoughts of which I too am capable. Furthermore, I do not merely perceive these others, but I am engaged with them, involved with them. I do not observe other subjects but interact with them.

This presents, rather than a solution to the problem of other minds, the dissolution of the traditional problem, by turning to the phenomenology of intersubjectivity and simply describing human interactions. But, on the other hand, the Cartesian idea that I am in some way better acquainted to my own pain than that of others does not come from nowhere and is not simply a philosophical reverie. There is indeed an intuitive first-personal aspect of experience which seems irreducible to anything else. But this, I argue here, is not problematic in the way the Cartesian picture suggests it is. It presents the tension which is needed so that all our experiences do not merge into one big super-subject, in which the experience of one person or another become indistinguishable, which would then end relations between subjects. Intersubjectivity is dependent upon individual subjectivity, upon my experience being in some sense mine and mine alone. This is the topic of the final chapter.

Chapter 5, therefore, turns to Wittgenstein's views on individual subjectivity. Before discussing Wittgenstein, I consider one of the reasons why he is often considered to be a behaviourist. The idea is that the fact that experience is intrinsically first-personal is often conflated with the Cartesian picture of subjectivity. Thus, if one retains the first-personality of experience, one is deemed a Cartesian, and if one rejects Cartesianism, one is also deemed to reject the first person, and thus to give a third-personal account of some sort. This relationship of entailment between the first person and the private, inner theatre is a misconception, but one which is deeply embedded in our philosophical outlook. Here again, turning to the continental tradition will help. Kant, though he is of course not a phenomenologist, but is nevertheless considered as the forefather of the tradition, gives us an account of the first person which is not Cartesian: the transcendental unity of apperception. The condition for experience, according to Kant, is that there be a unity of consciousness, which is the minimal subject of all my representations. Thus, experience is indeed first-personal, but this does not entail anything like the Cartesian subject. Merleau-Ponty also rejects the Cartesian picture of the mind, while his philosophy remains anchored in first-personal experience. Being-in-the-world and being-with-others, for Merleau-Ponty, are always the being-in-the-world and with-others of an individual subject, they are always being-in-*my*-world and *my*-being-with-others. Thus, the first person is central to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, without this entailing anything like

the Cartesian inner theatre. These two philosophers show us a way out of the misconception described above, and begin to loosen the grip of the picture of entailment between first person and inner theatre. It is with this in mind that I will return to Wittgenstein.

I begin Wittgenstein's discussion of self-observation. For Wittgenstein, as shown in the first chapter, I am not in an inner-observational relation to myself. But it does not follow from this that I am in an outer-observational relation to myself. The desire to make the mind into an object of scientific study fails because observation distorts what it is that we are observing. We place ourselves in a particular inner or outer state of observation to our mental and behavioural states so as to get a better idea of what they are, and then we take the states, as observed, to be identical with the unobserved states. Thus, self-observation somehow becomes part of what it is to have a mind. This, for Wittgenstein, is highly confused. Furthermore, he argues that I am not in an epistemic relation to my own mind, for the same reason. When I say that I am in pain, I am not looking inward and claiming that, given what I have observed and described, I can confidently assert that I am in pain. Thus, I cannot say that I know that I have pain, because this, as seen in Chapter 3, would assume that I could say how I know it. It is, however, beyond doubt, and thus the question as to how I know lacks sense here. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, my pain lies outside of the realm of knowledge and doubt. Here, he makes an interesting opposition, when he says that I do not learn of my sensations but rather I *have* them. This seems to suggest a much closer relation to my own pains than self-observation can accommodate. There seems to be something quite particular about my own experience of pain: the asymmetry between first- and third-personal experiences of pain discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 resurfaces here. There is something about my experience of my pain which is intrinsically different from my experience of your pain. This needs investigating. There are several passages in Wittgenstein's later works where this issue is addressed more or less explicitly. One such passage is his discussion of the proposition "Sensations are private." For Wittgenstein, the proposition "Sensations are private" struggles to get a grip in meaning. If we take it to mean that I do not know when another person is in pain, then this is false. If I take it to mean that I know when I am in pain, then this is meaningless, because there is

no room for doubt in this case. But if we take it to mean that my sensations are indeed mine and not yours, then Wittgenstein's response is not to claim that it is false or meaningless, but to say "Yes, of course," before questioning whether this entails the kind of Cartesian inner object which he is attacking. The point, far from being the behaviourist point that there is no such thing as the first person, is that of course there is such a thing, but that it does not follow from this that I have a particularly good vantage point on some private and hidden object. Sensations are indeed "private" in the sense that only I can *feel* my pain, only saying so seems odd, and seems to mean all sorts of things other than the idea that I have a peculiar experience which is not yours. We immediately want to interpret this proposition as meaning that I am in a privileged observational position relative to a private object, rather than as the grammatical proposition which it is, i.e. as showing that the concept of subjectivity, the concepts of "you" and "I," "thought," "sensation," etc., all rest upon the notion that there is indeed something quite particular about first-personal experience. But to say that this is a grammatical point is not, as I will argue, to say that it is merely linguistic. Grammar, for Wittgenstein, is not a free floating system, which can be played around with at will. It is embedded in the form of life, which itself is basic. It is the form of life which holds certain aspects of our grammar in place, and all our concepts rest upon it. Thus, to say that something is a grammatical proposition, far from making it merely linguistic, makes it of crucial importance when investigating human existence, and in this case, subjectivity. But grammatical propositions are distinguished from propositions which make it seem, in this case, like the privacy of experience is a kind of inner observation. What is suggested here is a first-personal experience of the world which rejects behaviouristic views of subjectivity, while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls of Cartesianism by not entailing anything like a privileged view of a private object.

Chapter 1: The Rejection of the Inner

Introduction

Giving an account of Wittgenstein's "later theory of subjectivity" is by no means easy, and this, perhaps most importantly, because nowhere does he explicitly give one. What he gives us is a vast amount of food for thought, a number of examples and questions designed to make us think differently on the topic, to see things in new ways, and in so doing, to resist our temptation towards certain kinds of philosophical mistakes. These philosophical mistakes will be addressed throughout this dissertation, in an attempt to discover what becomes of the first person once Wittgenstein's philosophical clarifications have been applied. The reason this is so important is because the traditional account of the first person was so fiercely rejected by Wittgenstein that he is often thought of as not allowing any room for the first person whatsoever. His account is then thought of as third-personal. It is said to follow from Wittgenstein's attack on the inner that I have the same access to my own mind as I do to that of others, and thus my self-relation and my relation to others are symmetrical. Some allow for an asymmetry within a third-personal account. In the next chapter, I will address some of the difficulties in considering subjectivity from a purely third-personal point of view and make it clear that any asymmetry between myself and others that can be gained within a third-personal account is phenomenologically insufficient. But first it is important to understand where these pictures take root. Third-personal pictures of the subject begin with the collapse of the Cartesian mind, and it is therefore vital to consider why the Cartesian mind is unsatisfactory. What exactly constitutes Wittgenstein's attack on the inner?

As traditionally conceived, Wittgenstein's attack on the inner is an attack on the predominant assumption of most philosophy and psychology preceding behaviourism, namely that my mental states are inner, private and can be known

immediately only by me, the subject whose mental states they are. This view, though predominant in Western philosophy, has come to be known as the Cartesian view, because Descartes quite explicitly advocates that the mind has priority over the body and could survive should the body perish. (Descartes, in turn, was doubtlessly influenced in his thinking by Plato, on the one hand, whose theory of the Forms proclaimed immaterial essences of material things, and by the Christian church on the other, which promised life after death, through the disassociation of body and soul.) But it is important to realise that Wittgenstein was not arguing against Descartes properly speaking, although one may attempt to make this claim. Anthony Kenny, for example, has attempted to identify systematic parallels between Descartes and Wittgenstein's private linguist. He argued 'that the referents of the words of Wittgenstein's private language correspond to Descartes' *cogitationes*; and that the properties of these entities from which Wittgenstein sought to show the impossibility of a private language are properties from which an argument could also be drawn against Descartes' system of clear and distinct ideas.' [Kenny 1966, p. 361] But Kenny was well aware, in doing this, that Descartes was not the sole victim of the private language argument. Later, he wrote that 'it [was] entailed by several traditional and influential philosophical theories that a private language is possible.'[Kenny 1973, p. 179] The idea that the mind is inner, private and self-evident to the subject is indeed predominant throughout Western philosophy. According to Malcolm, 'it is contained in the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical British empiricism, as well as in recent and contemporary phenomenalism and sense datum theory.' [Malcolm 1963, p. 66] The assumption that there are mental states that are inner and private seems to underlie the entire post-Cartesian and pre-behaviourist tradition. This, according to Wittgenstein, is because there is something appealing about this way of looking at things. To realise this is to take in the full extent of Wittgenstein's rejection of it. 'In order to appreciate the depth and power of Wittgenstein's assault upon the idea you must partly be its captive. You must feel the strong grip of it.' [Malcolm 1963, p. 67] He is not simply rejecting a philosophical theory, or several philosophical theories, but an intuition which we all have, a flame to which we all are drawn, what Hacker calls a syndrome. 'The most complete, indeed classical, embodiment of this syndrome is the doctrine of solipsism, whether in its naive form, or in the more sophisticated

transcendentalist or methodological solipsist forms. Yet many apparently less invidious epistemological theories involve the same set of misconceptions. Idealism in most of its forms, and so too phenomenalism, are, Wittgenstein implies, no less incoherent in essentially the same way, and for essentially the same reasons, as solipsism. [...] Equally, epistemological realism, in the form in which it was espoused by philosophers such as Frege, errs in the same way.' [Hacker 1972, p. 216] But it is difficult, in giving a list of the theories damaged by Wittgenstein's private language argument to make the point that he is arguing not only against all these philosophers but also against himself, against his own temptation to follow in their footsteps. According to Fogelin, 'Wittgenstein recognizes a kind of primitive appeal in the notion of a private language.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 155] This notion, for many commentators, is more important, and indeed less misleading, than giving a list of philosophers whose theories are rejected by the private language argument, or drawing detailed textual parallels between the private linguist and historical philosophical figures. Thus, Baker, in his later interpretations of the private language argument, argues that this latter kind of analysis creates confusion. 'In taking the PLA as a decisive refutation of Cartesian dualism, commentators see Wittgenstein as taking up arms against an army of post-Cartesian philosophers and as succeeding single-handedly in vanquishing the lot. His glory is proportional to the total charisma of all the adversaries united against him.' [Baker 1998, p. 329] But to do this, he claims, that is, to see this as Wittgenstein's main aim, is likely to lead one astray. 'If one starts out with the conviction that the PLA has the criticism of Cartesian dualism as its overarching aim, one may fail to see what is apparent in the text and instead get lost in a labyrinth of arguments that are entirely one's own invention.' [Baker 1998, p. 330] This, however, is not to say that historical figures in philosophy have no relevance to the private language argument, but rather that their role is different from the one usually attributed to them by Wittgenstein interpreters. 'Descartes' importance for philosophy must be seen differently: he is to be investigated as an author who expressed, with exemplary force and elegance, ideas to which all of us are now strongly inclined when we turn to philosophical reflection.' [Baker 1998, p. 332] Thus, the private language argument should be seen as arguing against a temptation which we all have when doing philosophy, and not just individual philosophers.

Three "Cartesians"

It may seem strange that, immediately after warning against identifying the private linguist with any individual philosopher, I then give three examples of philosophers who fit the part. But this is not quite what I am doing. The aim of what follows is to show the grip that a certain way of thinking has on the philosophical tradition at large. I start with Descartes who is thought to have pioneered this way of thinking.[9] I then turn to two examples with which Wittgenstein was definitely familiar, namely William James, quoted several times in the *Investigations* and Russell, Wittgenstein's friend (at times) and colleague at Cambridge. This should be enough to show the kind of picture towards which Wittgenstein believes we are drawn, and which it is the role of the private language argument to help us avoid.

In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in order to start his new philosophy from grounds which are entirely certain, Descartes decides 'to abstain from the belief in things which are not entirely certain and indubitable no less carefully than from the belief in those which appear to [him] to be manifestly false' [Descartes 1975, p. 95] He first doubts what he has learned from human testimony, then what he has learned through his senses, and finally, logical, mathematical truths. But in the midst of this universal doubt, one proposition holds fast, namely that he, René Descartes, exists. Since in order to doubt, one must exist, it is impossible to doubt one's own existence. This is what is meant by the famous 'I think therefore I am'. Thought, therefore, takes pride of place in Descartes' philosophy, being the only thing (other than the existence of God, which he introduces later) of which I can be entirely certain. And since the fact that I exist depends on my thinking, to the question 'what [...] am I?' Descartes answers a 'thing that thinks. What is a thing that thinks? That is to say, a thing that doubts, perceives, affirms, denies, wills, does not will, that imagines also, and which feels.' [Descartes 1975, p. 106-7] All of these mental states

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[9] Baker & Morris argue that Descartes was not himself a Cartesian. The term Cartesian has expanded far beyond the scope of Descartes own thought, which has itself often been oversimplified or even distorted. [Baker & Morris 1996] Descartes remains, however, at the source of this tradition of seeing the subject primarily as a thinking thing. The passage of this chapter dealing with Descartes is simply intended to show in what way this is the case, while acknowledging that he may have been a Cartesian *malgrès lui*.

(as they have come to be called) are thus posited as independent of an external world, be it a physical environment, or a social environment.[10] For the Cartesian, then, there is an inner world, which is private, known immediately and with certainty, and which is self-sufficient, that is, does not depend on anything outside of it. This, then, is the Cartesian view, which influenced most of philosophy and psychology up until the rise of behaviourism, early in the twentieth century. To list and expand on any great number of views which may be called Cartesian is out of the scope of this dissertation. It will be interesting, however, to give a brief outline of two examples with which Wittgenstein was familiar, namely, on the one hand, American psychologist William James' thoughts on the introspective method and Bertrand Russell's notion of acquaintance.

For James, unlike Descartes, 'the mind which the psychologist studies is the mind of distinct individuals inhabiting definite portions of a real space and of a real time. With any other sort of mind, absolute Intelligence, Mind unattached to a particular body, or mind not subject to the course of time, the psychologist as such has nothing to do.' [James 1890, p. 183] The isolated mind which Descartes claims could survive independently of a body or world around it is dismissed by James, in his attempt to construe psychology as a natural science, in the same right as physics or chemistry. It is, however, this same desire which seems to commit him to what we have been calling the Cartesian view. Since psychology is a natural science, in the same right as physics and chemistry, mental states or events must be observable objects in the same right as those states and events studied by physics and chemistry. 'To the psychologist, then, the minds he studies are *objects,* in a world of other objects.' [James 1890, p. 183] The picture which James gives us here is already one in which we are in an observing relation to our mental states, the very picture I wish to deny in this dissertation. Like Descartes, James claims that 'the psychologist stands as much outside of the perception which he criticises as he does of the [object itself].' [James 1890, p. 183] Thus we have an inner theatre, in a receiving relation to the world, and we are in an observing relation to this inner theatre. And to the question: What form does this observation take? James answers that: '*Introspective observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always*. The word introspection need

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[10] Again this is the standard interpretation, although it has been brought under serious scrutiny by e.g. Baker and Morris [1993,1996]

hardly be defined – it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover.' [James 1890, p. 185] The method for considering mental states is therefore one of looking inward. Here, then, is another example of the grip the Cartesian picture has on the philosophical and psychological traditions.[11] My final example is Bertrand Russell.

For Russell, like for Descartes, there are mental states which are inner and only observable by the subject. 'I think that some of the things we observe cannot, even theoretically, be observed by anyone else.' [Russell 1921, p. 118] Of course, Russell's project in his *Analysis of Mind* is to break down some of the traditional distinctions between the physical and the mental. However, Russell retains the general framework by leaving the subject in an observational relation to his own mental states, and by claiming that he is the only possible observer of these mental states. He claims that 'when we pass on to bodily sensations—headache, toothache, hunger, thirst, the feeling of fatigue, and so on—we get quite away from publicity, into a region where other people can tell us what they feel, but we cannot directly observe their feeling.' [Russell 1921, p. 118] As we shall see, Wittgenstein will claim that, not only is it possible and quite normal for us to perceive each other's joy, pain, anger, etc., but it is also not the case that I am in an observing relation to my own mental states. For Russell, however, I cannot see the other's pain, but only guess it. 'The dentist does not observe your ache, but he can see the cavity which causes it, and could guess that you are suffering even if you did not tell him.' [Russell 1921, p. 118] What is crucial here is that Russell makes claims about privacy and inner observation which embody the very kind of misleading philosophical temptation which Wittgenstein resists in the private language argument.

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[11] James' work is vast, and I by no means intend to give a comprehensive account of it. For instance, there are passages in the abridged and slightly modified version of the above quoted work, *Psychology*, which not only shed confusion over James' view but seem to contradict it. Thus, in what seems to be a rejection of introspection in favour of a form of behaviourism, he writes: 'Whenever I try to become sensible of my thinking activity as such, what I catch is some bodily fact, an impression coming from my brow, or head, or throat, or nose. It seems as if consciousness as an inner activity were rather a *postulate* than a sensibly given fact.' [James 1895, p. 467] However it is clear in the *Principles of Psychology* that he is an advocate of introspection and it is also clear that this is how Wittgenstein read him.

In the paragraphs above, I hope to have made clear the kind of philosophical picture which the private language argument rejects. The central claims regard mental states as inner states, the privacy of my mental states, my privileged access to those states through introspection, my observational relation to those states, and their merely contingent/causal relation to my bodily states. Of course, I do not believe to have summed up the huge works of the above three philosophers in a few paragraphs, nor was this my aim. But I hope to have shown in what way the picture of the mind as inner and private seems present in all of them, and seems to permeate our thinking. This appears to be the case historically, but Wittgenstein seemed to feel that this picture is one towards which we are all inclined when doing philosophy and against which we must be careful to guard. This being the case, I shall now turn to the private language argument in order to show how Wittgenstein rejects this Cartesian picture.

The Private Language Argument: Introductory Outline

The private language argument is a central part of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, and the most crucial element in his rejection of the inner, private Cartesian mind outlined above. The argument is widely considered to be one of the most important passages of Wittgenstein's work. According to David Pears, 'the private language argument is the centre-piece of *Philosophical Investigations*.' [Pears 1988, p. 361] But given Wittgenstein's peculiar writing style, the many switches between interlocutors and a great number of rhetorical questions, the private language argument is very difficult to understand. As a result, it has been the subject of a great amount of secondary literature, much of which is exegetical in nature. This secondary literature was already considered to be 'enormous' by Robert Fogelin in 1976, that is, almost forty years ago, and, as one can expect, it has grown quite considerably since then. For Fogelin, this is problematic. 'There has, of course, been

an enormous literature on this subject and this presents a special problem (beyond that of trying to wade through it.) A tradition has grown up concerning the central features of this argument and the discussion is often carried out quite independently of the original Wittgenstein text.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 153] The issue then, when 'wading through' the secondary literature on the subject is to distinguish what is Wittgensteinian and what is not. This became even more of a problem following Saul Kripke's private language argument, which, to his own admission, was not necessarily in accord with Wittgenstein's view. [cf. Kripke 1982] The situation was further complicated in the nineteen-nineties when Wittgenstein interpretation shifted from substantial philosophy to metaphilosophy. Gordon Baker is one representative of this shift in thought. Having argued with Hacker for a "traditional" interpretation of the private language argument, he turned his attention to the metaphilosophical underpinnings of the argument. Thus, Wittgenstein is no longer seen as arguing that the Cartesian picture of the mind is false, but that the very question as to how mental states are set up is misleading. Wittgenstein does not offer us any philosophical arguments or theories but instead gives us reminders of what we already knew before we got caught up in philosophical theorising.[12] For all of the above reasons, to give a complete and comprehensive literature review on this topic would be, if not impossible, at least far beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, a clear idea of Wittgenstein's reasons for rejecting the Cartesian view is essential. To this end, I will limit myself to two disagreements which I consider to be central to Wittgenstein interpretation and which will help highlight the essential aspects of Wittgenstein's thought which are of interest in this dissertation. Before disagreements in interpretation can be discussed, however, some introductory remarks are required.

A central part of the private language argument is Wittgenstein's discussion of the solitary diarist. The argument is that if mental states were private in the way the Cartesian picture suggests, one would be able to name them in private, without any need for anything outer. Kenny writes that 'Wittgenstein considered that the notion of a private language rested on two fundamental mistakes, one about the nature of

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[12] This interest in a metaphilosophical reading of Wittgenstein recently culminated in Crary & Read 2000, Baker 2004, Ammereller & Fischer 2004, Fischer 2010, Horwich 2012, as well as a host of articles. This has been discussed more fully in the introduction to this dissertation.

experience, and one about the nature of language. The mistake about experience was the belief that experience was private; the mistake about language was the belief that words can acquire meaning by bare ostensive definition.' [Kenny 1973, p. 180] Here, I contend that Wittgenstein uses the latter mistake to point out the former. That is to say that if experience was private, I would be able to name it privately. This is not possible by using the words of our ordinary language because this language is a shared one, according to Wittgenstein, and so he turns to inner ostention. Might we name a sensation privately by an act of inner pointing? The argument then shows that ostensive definition requires surrounding practices and stage setting. These being absent from the disembodied Cartesian mind, experience cannot be private in the way the Cartesian sets it up to be. Thus when Kenny claims that the Cartesian has made a mistake about experience and a mistake about language, it would be more appropriate to say that he has made a mistake about experience, and thus has set up language in a correspondingly mistaken way. The argument, as I understand it, is an argument about experience, which uses language to highlight a flawed picture. So why can I not name my pains in private? I can of course, with little difficulty, speak of my pains in our ordinary language, but what Wittgenstein has in mind is a logically private language, one referring only to that which the Cartesian claims only I can have access to. 'The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.' [*PI* 243] Can I create such a language for, say, a sharp pain in my knee? This is the goal for the solitary diarist. For each day in which he feels the sensation S (a pain in his knee, for instance), he will write the sign "S" in his calendar. How might he define the sign "S"? As I understand Wittgenstein, his point is that such a definition cannot be given, for there is nothing of which it can consist. 'But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition,' replies the Cartesian, pointing inwardly towards the sensation (i.e. giving it my full attention). [*PI* 258] Why is this not possible?

The main claim is that in order for the act of pointing, even pointing outwardly, to make sense, it is necessary for there to be a practice in which I can understand what is being pointed to. 'The meaning of a name is not the thing we point to when we give an ostensive definition of the name.' [*PG* 27] For a child, unacquainted with

language, it would be very difficult to establish the connection correctly between the word "desk" and a desk, simply on the model of object and designation. Pointing to a desk and saying "desk," will do nothing to teach the child how the word is used. Until he has learnt that in school he sits at a desk, that Daddy has a desk in his office, that we work at desks, that we eat at a kitchen table which is not a desk, etc…, that is, until he has engaged in the variety of practices surrounding our use of the word "desk," no connection whatsoever can be established. He may start calling tables "desks," though this presupposes that he understands that both are elevated surfaces upon which people perform certain tasks, something that the act of pointing would not teach him. He may call anything wooden a desk, anything, that is, from a tree to a wooden spoon to a wardrobe. The mere act of pointing does not present any criteria for the correct use of a word. Wittgenstein shows this when he is discussing how one learns what the king is in chess. 'When one shews someone the king in chess and says: "This is the king", this does not tell him the use of this piece – unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point: the shape of the king.' [*PI* 31] Similarly, with all our language, one must be engaged in a whole set of practices before one can appreciate the usefulness of ostensive definition. Pointing, like anything else, is a practice which is learnt and which fits within a system of other practices and beliefs.

What then of the solitary diarist? Is it possible to write the sign "S" in my diary every day on which a sensation occurs, if it is true that sensations are logically private? Here, on my reading, Wittgenstein wishes to point out that there is a vast amount of surrounding practices which are missing in order for this to be possible. As Kenny correctly argues, the 'stage-setting […] is possible in a public language, but not in a private language.' [Kenny 1973, p. 183] All definitions are embedded in a practice, or in a form of life, and it is therefore impossible to give a definition to a word which refers to something which cannot be embedded in a practice. It is fairly obvious that we could not define it using the words of our everyday language, since this language is an essentially public one. 'What reason have we for calling "S" the sign for a *sensation*? For "sensation" is a word of our common language, not of one intelligible to me alone. So the use of this word is in need of a justification which everybody understands.' [*PI* 261] Wittgenstein goes so far as to say that even '[an

inarticulate sound] is an expression only as it occurs in a particular language-game.' [*PI* 261] To set up sensations as private therefore robs me of the ability to use sensation-language in a way which would be meaningful even to me. The above discussion regarding ostensive definitions has shown that pointing and naming is problematic even in the case of public objects. The reason we can, and do, use this method of teaching language, even giving new names to objects, is that the act of pointing is a shared and understood practice, and we can generally make out what it is towards which one is pointing. The use of words has been taught to me through training. But Wittgenstein shows that 'in the case of the private ostensive definition there *cannot* be any analogue of the background which is necessary if the public ostensive definition is to convey meaning. [Kenny 1973, p. 181] In the case of inner ostention, there is no such training, no practice which can guide us towards an understanding of what it is exactly that I am "pointing" at. Pointing can only establish the relation between a word and the object it refers to if this word fits in with an already acquired world-picture. In the private case, it is impossible to establish a set of criteria for the correct use of the sign "S," because I am forbidden for this purpose from using, not only language, but any kind of practice which is in any way dependent on the external world. Wittgenstein's discussions of rule-following support this claim by arguing that to follow a rule, such as the rule for the use of a word, requires a set of criteria for its correct application, and no such set can be given privately. For something to be a name we must be able to distinguish between its correct and incorrect usage, and here, there is no practice within which such a distinction could get off the ground. One cannot, therefore, follow a rule in private, and there can be no such thing as a private language. (I will return to the discussion of rule-following shortly, as there is a large debate on this topic.)

But could the "S" diary be verified if there was an external correlate? Wittgenstein gives the example of using a manometer in order to make correlations between my sensation S and something external. This is a concession to the Cartesian which is aimed at showing that even if there were such a correlation, it would not show that I had identified S correctly. The example goes as follows. Every time I feel the sensation S, and write "S" in my diary, I then go and check, thanks to the manometer, whether or not my blood pressure has risen. We can imagine that I place

a tick next to the cases where there is a correlation. Imagine there is always such a correlation and every use I make of "S" is "approved" by the manometer. What has been established here is not a correlation between my sensation S and the word "S," or even between my sensation S and my blood pressure reading. The sensation seems irrelevant because what is important is that I can keep a regularity between the word "S" and my manometer readings. In Wittgenstein's words, 'now it seems quite indifferent whether I have recognized the sensation *right* or not.' [*PI* 270] If I make a mistake in identifying my sensation, and write down "S," and there happens to be a rise in my blood pressure, then I have used "S" correctly. In this example, then, the sensation is of no relevance.

The beetle-in-the-box analogy goes further by saying that even if we could name a sensation in private, the name we invented could have no use in the language-game. In Section 293 of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein sets out the following example. We are each to imagine that we have a box, perhaps a matchbox, in which we have something called a "beetle." 'No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says that he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* box.'[*PI* 293] This is an admission, for the sake of argument, that it would be possible for each person to know what a beetle is from their own case alone. The question which is then raised is: What role could this word play in the language-game? Wittgenstein's answer is that if it could have any role whatsoever, if it did have a role, it would not be as a sign for the object inside the box, for we have no way of knowing what is in the other's box. As Marie McGinn points out 'the language-game that is played with the word "beetle" can be taught, learnt and participated in independently of what the speaker discovers when he opens his box.' [McGinn 1997, p. 162] The word "beetle" could only refer to the box itself, since this is what is constant and publicly observable. His box may contain matches as written on the box, another's may hold a pencil sharpener, while a third might even be empty. Mine may indeed contain a beetle, but beetle is a word which is shared and can only be understood because the practice surrounding its use is also shared. If I had the only beetle in the world and only I could see it, the word beetle would mean nothing, in the same way as "an imaginary friend" would mean nothing if there were no such thing as non-imaginary

friends. The word cannot refer to this thing which is only known to me. 'The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all.' [*PI* 293]

Even if we postulate that the object in the box is a something, this is also wrong for it may be empty. 'If you admit that you haven't any notion what kind of thing it might be that he has before him – then what leads you into saying, in spite of that, that he has something before him? Isn't it as if I were to say of someone: "He *has* something. But I don't know whether it is money, or debts, or an empty till."' [*PI* 294] The word "beetle," then, cannot possibly refer to an object in the box, since, not only is it possible that it be a different object in each person's box, but it is also possible that there be nothing in anyone's box. I cannot even say that it is an object before the word "object" is anchored in a language which is public, and this public word cannot possibly refer back to a private object: this is the hypothesis with which we started.

It would do no good either to claim that we could describe the object and would soon realise that each of us had something different, since the Cartesian premise which Wittgenstein is trying to elucidate is that the private object is in essence incommunicable. Any description of it would have to be in terms which only I can understand. If it were discovered that we were not speaking of the same thing, each object would soon be renamed: matches, pencil sharpener, beetle, nothing; and this second act of naming would not be a private one. That is to say, to give the picture of each person naming his sensations privately is to deny the sensation any kind of communicability, and thus to deny it any kind of role in a language-game, and since the word "pain" clearly does have a role in many of our language-games, this cannot be how the expression of sensation functions. The conclusion of this section, once Wittgenstein applies it to sensations, is that 'if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of "object and designation" the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant'. [*PI* 293]

Here, I have given an outline of what I consider to be the central points of the private language argument. As I have said, there are many disputes surrounding the correct interpretation of this argument, and it is not clear where one should start in trying to account for them. I consider there to be two central disagreements which arise in the

secondary literature which are particularly useful here. The first disagreement concerns what is missing from a private language that makes it impossible. On the one hand, some argue that what is needed for a language to be established is an actual community of language-users (the community view). On the other hand, others have argued that all that is needed is a certain regularity in the environment which allows regularity in one's practice. This would allow a community of language-users to share a language, but is enough without this community to allow a single person to create his own language. The possibility of another person understanding his language is a condition for it counting as a language, because, it is assumed, the newcomer will be able to identify the regularity of this linguistic practice (the regularity view). The second debate I will discuss, which stems from the first, is the question as to whether these conditions for the possibility of a private language are necessary or contingent. Some argue that we cannot even conceive of a private linguist, while others claim that we can conceive of such a being, but that it does not happen to be the kind of being that we are.

Kripke's Community View

One debate concerns the question as to what is missing in the private language hypothesis that makes it implausible. Much of this debate has to do with the question of rule-following. For Wittgenstein, 'to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule "privately": otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.' [*PI* 202] This is what Wittgenstein states as the conclusion of his discussion about what it is to follow a rule. How exactly are we to understand this term "private," which Wittgenstein so cautiously puts between quotation marks? What exactly is it that is missing in this "private" case which is present in the normal case? As David Pears puts it, 'first we must ask what resources are needed to preserve the regularity of our uses of words when we record the world around us; and then we must ask which of those resources

would be lacking when we move on to the deceptively similar-looking task of recording the world within our mind after its contents have been isolated from the world around us. [Pears 2006, p. 41] Or as he phrased it eighteen years earlier: 'if sensation-language is completely detached from the external world, what exactly is the crucial loss that it suffers? Is it the loss of any chance to check one's own impressions by asking other people for theirs? Or is it the loss of any chance to check them on standard material objects which might be assumed to provide the same stimulation on every occasion of perception?' [Pears 1988, p. 333] What is to be understood, then, is what essential element is being withdrawn when I try to follow a rule in private. There are, broadly speaking, two camps with two conflicting views: the community view and the regularity view. Defending the community view are Saul Kripke and Normal Malcolm (albeit in very different ways), and defending the regularity view are Colin McGinn and a number of co-authored papers and books by Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker. I shall begin with Kripke's view.

Kripke's account draws an analogy between Wittgenstein on rule-following and Hume on causality. For Hume, 'there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion.' [Hume 1988, p. 64] For Kripke's Wittgenstein, neither is there any necessary connection between a rule and its correct application. If we take the rule for addition, for instance, Kripke claims that there is nothing in the rule which can help me differentiate between the plus function, and another, similar but different, which he calls the quus function. Like in Hume, this is not simply an epistemological argument: it is not that we cannot know of any necessary connection in this case, but that there is none. 'The sceptic does not argue that our own limitations of access to the facts prevent us from knowing something hidden. He claims that an omniscient being, with access to *all* available facts, still would not find any fact that differentiates between the plus and the quus hypotheses.' [Kripke 1982, p. 39] Thus the correct application of a rule takes on the form of a scepticism since there is no necessary link between the rule and its application. The solution, for Kripke, again like Hume, is a sceptical solution. That the problem cannot be solved is accepted, and a way of side-stepping the problem is brought to light. To follow a rule is to be accepted by others as following a rule, that is, to be a part of a community of rule-

followers, for whom your actions make sense, and cohere with an agreed-upon practice. If the community deems that you are not following the rule, there is nothing in the rule itself which can prove them wrong. Rather, only a different community who agreed with your practices would justify your claim that you were following a rule. 'The set of responses we agree, and the way they interweave with our activities, is our *form of life.* Beings who agreed in consistently giving bizarre quus-like responses would share in another form of life.' [Kripke 1982, p. 96] The notion of agreement is key, since for Kripke, to follow a rule is always to agree in practice with a community of rule-followers. Here the question as to why we act as we do is meaningless. There is no further justification for the way in which we act when following the rule for addition: this is simply how we add. Kripke again makes the analogy with Hume: 'The Humean alleges that any such use of causal powers to explain the regularity is meaningless. Rather we play a language game that allows us to attribute such a causal power to the fire as long as the regularity holds up. The regularity must be taken as a brute fact.' [Kripke 1982, p. 97-8] Similarly for Wittgenstein, according to Kripke, our practice must be taken as a brute fact, which cannot be justified. On this point, Kripke quotes Wittgenstein: 'the given […] is forms of life.' [*PI* p. 226/192] But forms of life, according to Kripke, are not sets of practices in which a single individual may participate, but sets of practices which are held in place by the communities which engage in them. It is actual community agreement that justifies my saying I am adding rather than "quadding." It is the community which distinguishes between my correct and incorrect use of addition. Here I am adding, because *this* is how *we* add.

The Regularity View

It has often been argued against Kripke's interpretation that to set up the problem as a paradox is not in accord with Wittgenstein's words. Colin McGinn has criticised Kripke for failing to see that, although Wittgenstein does state this paradox, he

'makes it immediately clear that the stated paradox arises from a "misunderstanding".' [McGinn, C. 1984, p. 68] What Wittgenstein is really saying, on this view, is *if* we construe every action of following a rule as an interpretation, *then* we find ourselves with the Kripkean paradox. Similarly, Baker and Hacker write: 'Far from §201 accepting a paradox and by-passing it by means of a "sceptical solution", Wittgenstein shows that here, as elsewhere, a paradox is a paradox only in a defective surrounding.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 19] The passage of Wittgenstein's *Investigations* in question is worth quoting in full here:

Kripke quotes the first sentence:

'This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule.'

The rest of §201 reads:

'The answer was: if *any* action can be made to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases.' [*PI* 201]

This rather long quote is central to the debate between Kripke, on the one hand, and Baker and Hacker, as well as McGinn, on the other. Kripke is accused of deliberately leaving out most of this section to argue for his own view, not Wittgenstein's. What Baker and Hacker pick up on in this quote is the notion of what goes on 'in actual cases' being the essential criterion for determining what it is to follow a rule. It is the ways in which I act, in which I engage in a practice, as opposed to merely trying to grasp a rule theoretically, which give me my understanding. 'Understanding is mastery of a technique, and how one understands a rule is manifest in the exercise of that technique in practice, in what one does in various cases.' [Baker & Hacker 1984,

p. 19] The notion of a practice is key here, not the notion of a community. 'The contrast here is not between an aria and a chorus, but between looking at a score and singing. The term "practice" is used here in a similar sense to that in the phrase "in theory and in practice". The point is *not* to establish that language necessarily involves a community […], but that "words are deeds".' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 20] I do not learn words in a purely theoretical manner, with a community of language-users verifying my usage of them. 'Rather, to say of a person that he understands a word is to characterize him as having, at a particular time, a capacity, a mastery of a technique. Understanding is akin to an ability.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 18] The emphasis has shifted: Kripke constantly stresses the fact that to follow a rule requires a community of rule-followers. For Baker and Hacker, what is required is a practice, to act in such-and-such a manner, as opposed to thinking in such a way, as a theorising observer. What is important is a certain regularity. 'We are taught that acting *thus* in response to such-and-such is correct, and anything else incorrect. We explain and justify *this*, but not another thing, by reference to the rule; and so on. To follow a rule is a custom; it involves a regular use of the expression of rules in training, teaching, explaining, and in giving reasons.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 13] Of course, this is usually taught by someone other than me, I normally grow up with a family and teachers and a community at large who teach me certain ways of acting which are called following a rule. But what is crucial, according to Baker and Hacker, is that the regularity itself is what allows me to go on, not community agreement. 'What is here crucial for Wittgenstein's account of the concept of following a rule is recurrent action in appropriate contexts, action which *counts as* following the rule.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 20] This is not to say that a community of rule-followers is not involved in rule-following, but that there is a further purpose of Wittgenstein's argument which aims at showing rule-following as something practical, not theoretical. 'Of course, with us social creatures rule-following is generally a social practice. But the point of the argument was not to establish this (obvious) fact, but rather to show that rule-following, and hence a language, is a kind of customary behaviour, a form of *action*, not of thought. The "foundations" of language are not in private experience, the "given" indefinables, but in normative regularities of conduct.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 21]

Here, Baker and Hacker give their interpretation of Wittgenstein's word "private" mentioned earlier. For Kripke, this word is opposed to "public," i.e. I can follow a word publicly but not privately. Baker and Hacker, however, argue that 'it does not mean "not in public" (since we can and do follow rules in privacy), but rather means "follow rules that it is logically impossible that anyone else should follow".' [Hacker 2001, p. 283][13] The private language argument, therefore, is not concerned with showing that community agreement takes priority over individual action. 'It is concerned with establishing the non-primacy of the mental, the "inner", the subjective.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 23] That is to say, it is because the subject is cut off from the external world and unable to rely on anything in his environment that he is unable to follow a rule, not because he is isolated from his peers. The Cartesian is cut off from everything external to him and thus there is no objective regularity for him to set himself against because everything is subjective (in the weak sense of subject-dependent). This difficulty is not entailed by mere social isolation. 'In the first place, it is quite wrong to suppose that distinctions between appearance and reality are inapplicable to an individual in isolation, and are ones that that individual cannot employ. In the particular case of rule-following, there is no reason why Crusoe should not follow a pattern or paradigm, making occasional mistakes perhaps, and occasionally (but maybe not always) noticing his mistakes.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 39] For Rush Rhees, this is because Crusoe was brought up in an English speaking community, and therefore can apply the rules he learned there to his new isolation. '*I* can invent names for my sensations. But that is because I speak a language in which the name of a sensation is. Inventing a name or giving it a name is something that belongs to the language as we speak it.' [Rhees 1954, p. 275] But Baker and Hacker are happy to extend their claim to a Crusoe-from-birth. It is the regularity in his behaviour which allows him to be following a rule, and to be conscious that he is doing so. 'Of course, he is *not* merely following his "inclinations", but rather following the rule. And it is his behaviour, including his corrective behaviour, that shows both that he is following the rule, and *what counts*

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[13] This is one of the few passages of Baker & Hacker 1984 that was modified when reprinted in Hacker 2001. The original reads: 'For Wittgenstein has not yet explained what following a rule "privately" means.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 21] The reprinted version clarifies this point by continuing: '– that is, that it does not mean "not in public" (since we can and do follow rules in privacy), but rather means "follow rules that it is logically impossible that anyone else should follow".' [Baker & Hacker, in Hacker 2001, p. 283]

as following the rule.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 39] He may, for example, put a mark on a rock and then another at a certain distance. When placing a third mark, he can check that the distance is the same as between the first two. His conduct and the regularity of his environment allow him to do so, despite his complete isolation. For *us*, that is, new-comers on his island, to understand him and to be said to be following the same rules as he is, we must act in ways similar to him, and we must therefore agree in practice. But this community agreement comes after his successful rule-following and is not therefore the condition for it. 'Of course, to understand him we must grasp his rules. Whether we are succeeding in doing so is something we shall see from the extent to which *our* attempts to follow *his* rules are in agreement with his behaviour. But whether he is following a rule is independent of whether anyone else is actually doing so too.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 40] So according to Baker and Hacker, the regularity of Crusoe's conduct will allow a new-comer to understand him and act in accordance with his rule. Thus the *possibility* of community agreement is the minimal condition for him to be following a rule. But this possibility may never realise itself, and therefore, one cannot say that it is *actual* community agreement that makes a rule a rule. 'If anyone had observed him, he could have learnt this language. For the meanings of the words of this (contingently) private language are shown in Robinson's *behaviour*.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 41] The conclusion drawn by Baker and Hacker is the following: Wittgenstein's 'claim does not involve insistence on community aid for solitary rule-followers, but on *regularities* of action of sufficient *complexity* to yield normativity. The criteria for whether Crusoe is following a rule do indeed lie in his behaviour, but not in his behaviour agreeing with independent hypothetical or counterfactual behaviour of ours.' [Baker & Hacker 1984, p. 42] The claim is quite clear. What is being withdrawn when we consider the subject in complete isolation is, not only the community of rule-followers which surrounds him (for this would be a bearable loss), but more importantly the regularity in the environment which allows the subject to behave in a systematic way towards it. Thus the private language argument shows that the minimal requirement for one to be said to follow a rule is a certain regularity in behaviour. This regularity could be detected and copied by others should they discover it, but does not require them to do so. What it does require, however, is an environment which is stable enough for the subject to be capable of

engaging in a regular practice. This is the crucial element which the Cartesian subject is missing, according to Baker and Hacker.

Malcolm's Community View

There have, however, been objections to this view which do not rely, as Kripke's does, on the private language argument being a sceptical one. Norman Malcolm's 1989 paper "Wittgenstein on Language and Rules" puts forth a community view which appears much closer to the Wittgensteinian text than does Kripke's. He begins by stating that 'there is a sharp disagreement in the interpretation of his thinking about the concept of following a rule.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 5] On one view – his own – the concept of rule-following requires actual agreement as to what constitutes rule-following among a community of rule-followers. On the other view, 'when Wittgenstein says that following a rule is "a practice" he does not mean a social practice, he does not invoke a community of rule-followers, but instead he emphasizes that following a rule presupposes a regularity, a repeated or recurring way of acting, which might be exemplified in the life of a solitary person. [Malcolm 1989, p. 5] This is the regularity view espoused by Baker and Hacker, as has just been outlined. Malcolm praises many aspects of Baker and Hacker's work before announcing that he is 'dissatisfied, however, with the lack of importance they assign to the presence of a community of people who act in accordance with rules, as a necessary condition for there being any rule-following at all.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 6] His paper is an attempt to rectify this misconception.

Malcolm accuses Baker and Hacker of failing to correct the view of a rule which fixes its continuation all by itself, and claims that Wittgenstein, on the contrary, wished to avoid this misconception. 'The picture of the interpreted rule as determining a series like an infallible conveyor belt, is replaced by a picture of what is down to earth, and human: i.e., the picture of a person who, having been given a certain training, then goes on to determine, without reflection, that the rule requires

this step, a step that others (having had the same training) will agree to be what the rule demands.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 10] Thus, according to Malcolm, it is agreement that fixes the correct next step, and thus, makes the rule a rule. Without this agreement, people may follow rules in completely different manners and thus the concept of a rule would fall apart. It is only in community agreement that there can be a sufficient uniformity in behaviours such that we can be said to be rule-followers. 'It would seem that different people, with similar training and equal intelligence, *could* form *different* extensions in accordance with the same general expression. They could go on differently. Indeed, that *could* happen—and sometimes does happen. But if such divergence became frequent, then the understanding of what rules are, and what following a rule is, would have disappeared. The fact that almost everyone does go on in the same way, is a great example of a "form of life", and also an example of something that is normally hidden from us because of its "simplicity and familiarity".' [Malcolm 1989, p. 11] This is how Malcolm interprets Wittgenstein's claim that the given is forms of life. Community agreement in what it is to follow a rule is the unspoken and unseen ground upon which our practices of rule-following take place. This is shown, on this view, by the fact that agreement is to be found in all aspects of human existence which seem to involve rule-following. Even in cases such as determining the colour of such-and-such an object, though we may seem to be doing this on our own, nevertheless we are in agreement. 'For the most part, each one of us does apply colour-words unhesitatingly, *on his own*—yet we *agree*! Nothing could be more astonishing! But if it were not for this astonishing fact, our "colour-words" would *not be* colour words.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 14] Malcolm's point here is that agreement is the very condition for our outcries to be words at all. Pointing to something red and saying "red" only counts as identifying a colour if others agree that this is what we do. The same goes in mathematics. If we have learned how to multiply, then we are seemingly able to follow the rule for multiplication without any community consensus. Yet if we disagreed, then how could we determine what was correct? Disagreement would seem to cast doubt on the whole practice of multiplication. 'The point is clear. If there were widespread and irremovable differences in the results obtained by different persons, then what they were doing would no longer be called 'multiplication'. Multiplication requires *consensus.'* [Malcolm 1989, p. 14] Of course, Baker and Hacker would agree that

multiplication would no longer count as multiplication if there were insurmountable disagreements in our basic results. But this is because multiplication happens to be a shared practice. 'According to them, not language games, techniques of calculating, rules, *simpliciter,* are founded on agreement, but only "shared" ones.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 16] But for Malcolm this is a mistake, since this distinction cannot be meaningfully cashed out. All practices are shared practices. Thus when he asks the questions: 'Could there be a Crusoe who (unlike Defoe's Crusoe) was never a member of a human society, yet invented a language that he employed in his daily activities? And does Wittgenstein concede such a possibility?' his answer is a resounding: No!' [Malcolm 1989, p. 17] There is an exegetical debate here over whether Wittgenstein allowed such a possibility. There are several references in Wittgenstein to people who speak only in monologue. But according to Malcolm, 'it is easy to supply a background which does not imply that those people had spoken only in monologue for their entire lives. For example, after a normal upbringing, they might have become members of a monastic order that forbade its members to speak to one another.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 18-9] More importantly, on this view, we must supply this background if the notion of a practice is to make sense. Without the community mentioned above, of teachers, parents and others, there can be no form of life in which following a rule can be anchored. 'If you conceive of an individual who has been in solitude his whole life long, then you have cut away the background of instruction, correction, acceptance—in short, the circumstances in which a rule is given, enforced, and followed.' [Malcolm 1989, p. 19-20] That is to say that without a community to teach a person the correct way of going on, to correct his mistakes, to encourage his correct usage, etc., there can be no such thing as following a rule for the subject in question. This, according to Malcolm, is the crucial loss suffered by the Cartesian subject.

The Community's Contingency and the Regularity View Once More

For Robert Fogelin, however, the results that the private language argument yields are only contingent results. He clearly reads the private language argument as showing how in order to speak a language, I must be engaged in a community which agrees or disagrees as to whether or not I am speaking it correctly. 'When we are taught to go by a sign, we are taught to react in a conventional or instituted way. That is, the kind of training that interests us here is that which introduces us into a practice (custom, institution, form of life), for using a language belongs in this category.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 154] That is to say that he considered that what makes a rule a rule is that it is considered to be so by communal agreement, and that it is communal agreement that allows us to differentiate between the correct and the incorrect application of a rule. 'To follow a rule is to conform to a practice, that is, to act in the *generally* acknowledge way.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 154] Thus, the private language argument is, according to Fogelin, aimed at showing that there cannot be an isolated language-user without a community of language-users surrounding him. So far, he is in agreement with Malcolm. But he points out that this is the case only contingently, i.e. because we are the kind of beings that we are. 'This brings us to the decisive point: as we trace out various ways in which a private language might be developed, we do not encounter insuperable conceptual difficulties. What we do encounter is certain general facts about human nature. We can imagine creatures much like ourselves who somehow command a language without being introduced to this language by others who already command it. Such linguistic self-starters might also construct a private language in the strong sense of §243. In fact, however, human beings are not like this; there are no linguistic self-starters. We thus arrive at the factual conclusion that a necessarily private language is contingently impossible. [Fogelin 1976, p. 154] This is an interesting break away from the community reading, because for people like Malcolm the community of language-users is necessary for the use of language, since without it there can be no distinguishing between the correct and incorrect use of a word. Fogelin claims that this is true, but only for creatures like us, whereas Malcolm would hold that we cannot imagine a being for which this is not the case. Fogelin writes however: 'I realize that many

followers of Wittgenstein find a stronger argument in the text, but this, it seems to me, is the strongest conclusion that Wittgenstein's reasons will support. The rest, I think, is puffing.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 165] It is the fact that only for human beings such as ourselves do the conclusions of the private language argument apply which is useful here. 'Here the main idea is that it is only from others who possess a language that human beings, as we know them, can acquire a language.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 165] The claim, then, is that the private language argument yields no necessary conclusions but only contingent ones. His argument for this claim has three stages. The first stage is that the form of life in which we partake, as Wittgenstein says, is what is given. 'To become a participant in a practice is to enter a form of life and there is no recourse beyond forms of life.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 165] Then he claims that, this being the case, and the form of life being a communal one, then communal agreement guarantees that everyone cannot be mistaken, otherwise there could be no such thing as a mistake. 'So in a general form, the argument goes as follows: we cannot ask whether *everyone* involved in a practice might, on the whole, be mistaken in what he does, for such an assumption would undercut the practice itself, thereby depriving the concepts employed in this practice of their sense, and undercutting the very notion of a mistake.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 169] This claim is then brought back to the solitary rule-follower and Fogelin asks what difference it makes whether this "everyone" is one person or several. If I am the only person participating in my form of life, and I think that I am correct, then I am correct. 'The reasoning begins: "We cannot ask whether *everyone* involved in a practice might, on the whole, be mistaken..." It doesn't seem to change anything in the argument if the *everyone* is reduced to the limiting case of just one person pursuing his private practice.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 168-9] But this is exactly the point of the private language argument. If whatever seems right to me is right then the concept of right breaks down. Thus, according to Fogelin, either we have, in the claim that whatever seems right is right, an attack on public language as well as private language, or we have, in the claim that not everybody can be mistaken, a defence of private language as well as public language. 'If these general sceptical arguments show the impossibility of all language, then their specific application to a private language is incongruous. It is essential, therefore, to find a defense against these sceptical arguments that protects a public language without at the same time

being serviceable for the protection of a private language. It does not seem that this demand has been met, for when we construct what seems to be Wittgenstein's defense against a sceptical attack upon a public language, it yields a defense of a private language as a special case.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 169] This shows that, if we take the view of the private language argument as expressing the necessity of a community, i.e. the strict impossibility of a private language, then we either fail to justify this claim, or we cast doubt on language as a whole, not only private language. Thus, according to Fogelin, we can retreat to saying that there cannot be a private language for the kinds of creatures that we are. 'We thus arrive at the result that an essentially private language is not open to human beings as we know them. This claim is put forward as a contingency, but this seems to be the strongest claim that can be established in this area.' [Fogelin 1976, p. 171] Thus, Fogelin's claim is that the results of the private language argument, which he believes to be the dependence of inner life on a community of language-users, only holds for human beings such as ourselves, and it is perfectly possible for us to conceive of beings for whom it would be otherwise. For Baker and Hacker, the dependence of rule-following on a community is indeed contingent, but they believe they can find a deeper condition which they consider to be necessary.

Baker and Hacker responded to Malcolm's objections in 1990, in a paper entitled "Malcolm on Language and Rules." They begin by listing ten points on which they agree with Malcolm. They all agree, against Kripke, that Wittgenstein is neither developing a sceptical paradox, nor a sceptical solution to this paradox. Other than this, the most important agreement for my purposes is the claim that for both parties, community agreement has a role to play. 'Agreement is part of the framework, background, or presuppositions of *our* (shared) language-games. (Malcolm, however, would insist on the stronger thesis that agreement is a presupposition of *all* language games, not merely of shared ones.)' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 167-8] This is the crucial distinction between the community view and the regularity view. Baker and Hacker do not deny that agreement plays a role in our language, but our language, they claim, is a shared practice. This does not rule out, as Malcolm claims it does, the possibility of a solitary practice. For Baker and Hacker, 'agreement in judgments and in definitions is indeed necessary for a shared language. But [they

deny] that the concept of a language is so tightly interwoven with the concept of a community of speakers (and hence with *actual* agreement) as to preclude its applicability to someone whose use of signs is not shared by others.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 167] Their claim, rather, is that one can behave on one's own in such a way that one's behaviour counts as following a rule. And this does indeed involve the possibility that another person could observe the solitary rule-follower, decipher his rule and come to predict his actions or act in the same way as he does. 'To concede that the concept of a rule is tied to the concepts of justification and evaluation, teaching, correcting mistakes, etc. certainly demands that it make sense to say that someone is following a given rule only if it *makes sense* also to say that another should be taught this rule, that another should justify or criticize an agent's performance by reference to the rule, etc. Hence it must make sense for the rule-follower *to come to agreement* with others about what accords with or contravenes the given rule. We summarized this reasoning in the claim that the concept of a rule is tied to the *possibility* of agreement (not to *actual* agreement).' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 168] Thus, the regularity view requires the possibility of a community of rule-followers who all follow the same rule and agree in its correct application. But it does not involve there actually being such a community. Only if a second person were to come along, he could, once he had understood the rule, predict the next move of the solitary rule-follower and even correct him if he went wrong. Of course, Baker and Hacker do not want to deny that there can be no rules unless they are embedded in a practice. 'It *is* true that unless there is a *practice* of using a sign (chart, signpost) as a standard of correctness, unless there is a technique of projection from the sign (chart, or signpost) which is manifest in a practice, then there are no rules (nor charts or signposts).' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 170] It is the nature of this practice which is central to the disagreement between the community view and the regularity view. 'The disagreement between Malcolm and us turns not on whether the rule and nothing but the rule determines what is correct, but on whether the practice which constitutes the framework or presupposition of the existence of the rule must be a shared, community practice, or whether it may be an unshared (but shareable) one.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 170] Baker and Hacker place the emphasis on the practice surrounding the rule, not on the community surrounding the rule, which for them, is only a contingent aspect of the practice. A rule is only a rule

if it is followed, that is to say, if there is a practice which constitutes following it. But this practice need not be a shared one. 'A sign is only the expression of a rule if it is taken together with its method of projection. For it is only an expression of a rule if it is *used* as a standard of correctness against which to measure performance. That is manifest only in *a practice* of application. […] The deeper disagreement between Malcolm and us, again, is over whether the practice in question must be shared or only shareable.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 171] What is important, then, is the regularity of action, for with that regularity comes corrigibility. But correction can be self-correction. There is no reason why a solitary person could not act in a regular manner, know that he is doing so, and be capable, at times, to correct his mistake when he makes one. 'But concept-possession, following a rule, mastery of a language presuppose not that these are shared with other people, but rather that they *can be shared,* that it must *make sense* for others to understand, agree on what counts as doing the same relative to a rule, follow the rule in the same way. A practice is indeed presupposed, a *normative* practice involving recognition of mistakes, and the use of a standard of correctness by reference to which action is evaluated as correct or incorrect. But we denied that a *social* practice is logically requisite.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 171]

Baker and Hacker make the distinction between language and *our* language. The claim is that of course *our* language is a shared practice. We happen to be gregarious people, our language is often a tool for communicating and this requires a common practice, and thus community agreement. But it does not follow from this that there cannot be *any* language which a man could invent and speak in isolation, however basic. 'However, Malcolm disregards the contexts of Wittgenstein's remarks, which are never to demonstrate that concepts, rules, and language presuppose community agreement, but rather that *our* concepts and *our* language does so.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 171] And indeed it may be the case that there exists no solitary language-users, and that all language is shared and involves agreement. But this does not rule out the *possibility* of a solitary language-user, so long as it has not been demonstrated that the concept of language falls apart without community agreement. 'Indeed, one may concede that the *phenomenon* of language is a phenomenon of shared practices. For no one is arguing that *as a matter of fact* there are language-

using wolf-children, or that some beings are *actually* born with an innate mastery of a language. The question is whether the *concept* of a language presupposes a community of speakers and shared practices.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 172] There is no reason to believe that an individual cannot engage in acting regularly, knowing that he is doing so and striving to continue to do so, unless he is surrounded by a community of rule-followers who are doing the same. Baker and Hacker argue that 'following a rule in general presupposes a regularity. [They] further [hold] that a regularity is not enough—following a rule is manifest in a regularity which presupposes *recognition of a uniformity*. This too is not enough, for what is needed is an array of circumambient normative practices or activities, e.g. of correcting mistakes, of checking what one has done for correctness against a standard, and—*if asked*—of explaining what one has done, justifying what one has done by reference to this rule, and teaching the rule and what counts as accord with it to others.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 176] But these practices do not require the presence of a second person. To claim that it does, not only means that an individual isolated from birth could not learn to act in a regular way and knowingly try to continue doing so, but also that anyone who is isolated long enough would lose the ability to do so. 'Robinson Crusoe will continue speaking English whether or not there are still English speakers elsewhere. If the English speaking peoples are wiped out by a catastrophe, Crusoe's utterances do not thereby become gibberish. Chingachgook did not cease to know Mohican simply in virtue of the fact that no one else could speak or understand it. But, Malcolm will reply, these *were* social practices, and were learnt from others. That is true, but it only constitutes an objection in so far as it presupposes the dubious principle that the genesis of an ability is relevant to the determination or identification of the current ability.' [Baker & Hacker 1990, p. 177-8] Thus even if it is granted that actual agreement is the condition for the subject to become able to speak, it does not follow that speaking must be governed by community agreement. Speaking does, however, suppose a regularity in speech-behaviour, regularity which *would* be detected *if* another person were to come along and observe the solitary speaker. This, according to Baker and Hacker, is a necessary condition for rule-following and thus for the possibility of inner life of the kind the Cartesian puts forth. Anything more than this, e.g. actual embeddedness in a community of language-users, is, as Fogelin also points out, merely contingent, and

only applies to human beings as they happen to be. In the closing paragraphs of this chapter, I aim to show that the distinction between necessary conditions for and contingent aspects of mental life is not one that Wittgenstein would have wished to make so sharply.

Necessity or Contingency?

To begin with, the claim that Wittgenstein is trying to isolate absolutely necessary conditions for rule-following seems to go against the textual evidence. His claim that he wants 'to bring words back from their metaphysical use to their everyday use' is a good example of this. [*PI* 116] Wittgenstein is not searching for metaphysical truths which hold regardless of the context in which they are uttered, but rather, he believes that it is precisely the contexts in which language is used, its everyday use, 'its original home,' which can be revealing. [*PI* 116] There are also several passages where he claims that our concept of pain, for example, is only applicable to human beings or what resembles them: 'only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious.' [*PI* 281] The discussion here is usually treated as part of the debate between Cartesianism and behaviourism, and, of course, it has its place there. But it further shows that when Wittgenstein is discussing the concepts of consciousness, sensations, etc., he has actual human beings in mind. His subject seems to be living human beings as they are, not as they could or could not be. 'I do not transfer my idea to stones, plants, etc.' [*PI* 283] When considering the concept of pain we do not think that this concept will then be applicable to stones. Of course we can construct the sentence: "This stone is in pain." But our language is not an ideal language isolated from reality but one which is grounded in our form of life. What this means is that, to imagine a stone in pain, we would have to imagine a form of life in which stones behaved in ways similar to human beings, at least to the extent that they display pain behaviour which is similar enough to our own to be

recognisable as such. Wittgenstein is not denying that stones might one day start doing this. This is not merely an empirical rejection of the possibility of stones behaving in such-and-such a way. 'But a machine surely cannot think itself! – Is that an empirical statement? No. We only say of a human being and what is like one that it thinks. We also say it of dolls and no doubt of spirits too. Look at the word "to think" as a tool.' [*PI* 360] What is at stake here is the concept of pain. But the statement that stones do not feel pain is not an *a priori* proposition either. There is no absolute necessity that this be the way it is. Rather, for Wittgenstein, it is a grammatical proposition. But as I have said, this does not mean, as is sometimes claimed, that it merely belongs to the domain of language and to the definitions we choose to give to words. Rather, language is embedded in a form of life. This means that when we imagine stones having pain we need not merely to change the concept of pain so that it can accommodate stones, but the form of life in which this concept has its place. As Wittgenstein says, 'to imagine a language means to imagine a life-form.' [*PI* 19] Grammatical propositions are not *a priori*, there is no absolute necessity that they be true. As Phil Hutchinson and Rupert Read point out, 'one should keep in mind that our language is *our* language, and not separable from our openended lives' [Hutchinson & Read 2008, p. 147] The view of language as expressing universal truths was the view of the *Tractatus* of which Wittgenstein reminds us here. 'Thought is surrounded by a halo. – Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world: that is, the order of *possibilities*, which must be common to both world and thought.' [*PI* 97] But for the later Wittgenstein, words must be restored to their "humble" use, to their actual use. 'Whereas, of course, if the words "language", "experience", "world", have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words "table", "lamp", "door".' [*PI* 97] To say that stones cannot feel pain is to comment on the way in which we use language, and says something about the concept of pain to someone who is not acquainted with this use. It is not necessarily true, but neither is it merely contingent. It is determined by the form of life, but this form of life may shift. The form of life is the given, a brute fact, not something which must necessarily be the way it is. Thus it would appear that grammatical propositions are necessary in a sense and contingent in another. It must be the case that a stone cannot feel pain, given the form of life. But the form of

life itself could have been otherwise, and is not fixed the way it is. Here it may be useful to turn to phenomenology to get a clearer idea of what this means.

The phenomenological concept of being-in-the-world, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, breaks the distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* and between the necessary and the contingent. For Merleau-Ponty, embedding all knowledge in a practical engagement in the world 'amounts to giving a new definition of the *a priori*.' [*PP*, p. 221/256] There can be no question of distinguishing what must necessarily be and what in fact is, because everything which we may conceive, we can only conceive 'against the background of this world.' [*PP*, p. 220/256] Thus, what must necessarily be is what in fact is, because all knowledge must be grounded in the world, and the world is not a necessity but a brute fact. 'From the moment that experience – that is, the opening on to our *de facto* world – is recognized as the beginning of knowledge, there is no longer any way of distinguishing a level of *a priori* truths and one of factual ones, what the world must necessarily be and what it actually is.' [*PP*, p. 221/256] What this means is that any claims that such-and-such is a necessary condition for something can only mean that it is relatively necessary, given the way the world is. Any necessity is dependent upon 'a fundamental contingency: the fact that we are in the world.' [*PP*, p. 221/256] The world, together with the fact that we are in it, is understood here as utterly contingent, and as that which allows necessity within its bounds or against its background. In another passage, Merleau-Ponty draws on the Heideggerian distinction between the ontological and the ontic. The ontological, for Heidegger, is what relates to Being (German: *Sein,* French: *Etre*), whereas the ontic relates to individual beings (German: *Seienden*, French: *étants*, often translated as "entities.") The former addresses the fact that things are, whereas the latter is concerned with the being of individual things. Here, Merleau-Ponty discusses the contingency of the world and explains that it is not merely ontic. 'Finally, the contingency of the world must not be understood as a deficiency in being, a break in the stuff of necessary being, a threat to rationality, nor as a problem to be solved as soon as possible by the discovery of some deeper-laid necessity. That is ontic contingency, contingency within the bounds of the world.' [*PP*, p. 398/463] This ontic contingency can be contrasted to ontic necessity which may come and 'solve' the problem of

contingency. But this is only possible if there is a world within which this can happen. And this world is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as the fundamental contingency: the ontological contingency. 'Ontological contingency, the contingency of the world itself, being radical, is, on the other hand, what forms the basis once and for all of our ideas of truth. The world is that reality of which the necessary and the possible are merely provinces.' [*PP*, p. 398/463-4] Thus, we can only speak of necessity given the ontologically contingent world. The fact that the world is the way it is is ontologically contingent. But within this world, i.e. given this world as a brute fact, some things must follow. Thus we find ontic necessity within ontological contingency.

This should help get a grasp on the kind of things Wittgenstein is trying to uncover here. When Wittgenstein says that a practice and a community are necessary for the possibility of rule-following, this should, I believe, be understood as meaning ontically necessary. It is not that he is isolating a 'core trait' of what subjectivity must be like in any possible world. Indeed 'a phenomenon need not have such a core trait at all.' [Bax 2010, p. 72] Nowhere do we see Wittgenstein considering the ontological possibility of an inner mind without a practice or a community. The request that we consider wanting to keep a diary for our sensations or that everyone has a box the content of which they call "beetle" do not seem to concern their absolute possibility, "in any world," as it were. It seems clear elsewhere that Wittgenstein does not want to deny this possibility in this absolute sense. 'The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thought may shift.' [*OC* 96] He is perfectly willing to accept this. What he is denying is that these examples fit in with our form of life. The claim is that if we imagine these examples making sense, if we consider them as genuine possibilities, then we have to imagine a whole host of other things also making sense: we cannot imagine the possibility of a disembodied rule-follower unless we imagine a form of life in which it is possible to follow a rule without a body. But nowhere does he appear to reject the possibility of such a form of life. He merely notes that 'their life *would simply look quite different from ours.*' [*LWII* p. 40] Wittgenstein brings the problem of imagining things being different to the forefront in several passages of the later works. What seems to come out of these discussions is that anything is imaginable if we imagine

the right context for it, if we imagine the circumstances in which it would make sense. 'An infinitely long row of marbles, and infinitely long rod. Imagine these coming in in some kind of fairy tale. What application – even though a fictitious one – might be made of this concept? Let us ask now, not "Can there be such a thing?" but "What do we imagine?" So give free rein to your imagination. You can have things now just as you choose. You only need to *say* how you want them. So (just) make a verbal picture, illustrate it as you choose – by drawing, comparisons, etc.! Thus you can – as it were – prepare a blueprint. – And now there remains the question how to work from it.' [*Z* 275] How to work from the blueprint of imagination is just the question here. How can the infinitely long row of marble fit in with the form of life in which it belongs? How might this concept be used? The answer is that in our form of life we cannot make sense of this, because it not does fit in with the host of other activities which we perform. We may even struggle to imagine the practical consequences it should have in another form of life or what this other form of life would be like, because our imagination is limited by the form of life that we do have. But this is not to deny – ontologically – the possibility of such another form of life. Merely, it does not correspond to our own, does not fit in with it. Wittgenstein's rejection of the possibility of an isolated rule-follower seems to hang very much on the notion that it does not make sense in our form of life. It does not seem to deny the possibility of a form of life in which it is possible. '"Here I cannot…." – Well, where *can* I? In another game. (Here – that is in tennis – I cannot shoot the ball into goal.)' [*RPPI* 567] Thus, when saying that it is conceivable, for instance, for a Crusoe-from-birth to follow a rule, it must be understood what is meant by the term conceivable: do we mean ontologically conceivable (i.e. we can conceive of a world in which this is the case) or ontically conceivable (i.e. we can imagine it fitting in with this form of life)? The problem is that if we mean the former then we struggle to find anything which is not conceivable. 'I say, for instance: There isn't a book here, but there could be one; on the other hand it's nonsensical to say that the colours green and red could be in a single place at the same time. But if what gives a proposition sense is its agreement with grammatical rules then let's make just this rule, to permit the sentence "red and green are both at this point at the same time". Very well; but that doesn't fix the grammar of the expression. Further stipulations have yet to be made about how such a sentence is to

be used...' [*PG* 82] We may very well imagine a language in which something can be both red and green. The problem comes when we try to cash this out in practical terms. We soon understand that if we make *that* the case, then we have no grasp on our ordinary concepts and the way they are used, and we struggle to understand what else needs to change in order to accommodate this change. Wittgenstein's point is that if these words are to retain their meaning, the change cannot simply be a linguistic change but must have an impact on the underlying form of life. Other things must be in place for these concepts to make sense. It may of course be possible to imagine a world in which these words can have some kind of meaning. But our own form of life cannot accommodate the idea of something being both red and green at the same place and time, and it is on our form of life that philosophy must concentrate. 'That would presumably mean: If you imagine certain facts otherwise, describe them otherwise, than the way they are, then you can no longer imagine the application of certain concepts, because the rules for their application have no analogue in the new circumstances. – So what I am saying comes to *this*: A law is given for human beings, and a jurisprudence may well be capable of drawing consequences for any case that ordinarily comes his way; thus the law evidently has its use, makes sense. Nevertheless its validity presupposes all sorts of things, and if the being that he is to judge is quite deviant from ordinary human beings, then e.g. the decision whether he has done a deed with evil intent will become not difficult but (simply) impossible.' [*Z* 350] Here it is quite clear that what is important to Wittgenstein is the human life-form and that outside of this we cannot say anything. So while he is not denying the possibility of other forms of life, he clearly believes that everything we know takes place within this one. The form of life is the ontologically contingent ground of all inquiry and thus must be taken for granted. 'What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*.' [*PI* p. 226/192] It is only within a given form of life that we can make sense of the concepts of necessity and contingency, understood here as ontic. When we encounter forms of life which are radically different from ours, we will not be able to understand them until we have found a form of life which we share. 'The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language.' [*PI* 206] The discussions of individual concepts must start with a common ground, and this common ground is not a set of *a priori* principles, but the

contingent practical activities of human beings. '"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" – It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.' [*PI* 241]

So what is the relevance of this? Let us recapitulate. Malcolm has argued that in order for someone to follow a rule, there must be an actual community of rule-followers whose behaviour determines what is a correct application and what is an incorrect application of this rule. The community view, as it is called, therefore holds that an actual community of language-users is a necessary condition for subjectivity. Fogelin has claimed that this argument is stronger than what can be found in Wittgenstein. While embracing the community aspect of Malcolm's argument, he argued that this community is not a necessary condition for subjectivity: rather it happens to be the case that for subjectivity as we know it, there is a community of language-users which upholds our inner life. Baker and Hacker then argued that the community is indeed a merely contingent aspect of subjectivity which happens to play a role in subjectivity, but that at a deeper level, some kind of regularity in the interaction with our environment is necessary for the possibility of any kind of subjectivity. How does what has been said above relate to this debate? Above I have distinguished, with the help of Merleau-Ponty, between ontological contingency and necessity, on the one hand, and ontic contingency and necessity, on the other. Baker and Hacker's argument rests on the idea that the practice is necessary and the community merely contingent. In which of these two senses are we to understand this? If we take it in the former sense, it is clear that the community is indeed ontologically contingent. But it is not clear that a practice is an ontologically necessary condition for subjectivity of any kind. We could imagine, it seems, a disembodied spirit with a purely non-bodily stream of consciousness. Wittgenstein's point is not that this is to be excluded *a priori*, rather that this is not what we call a human being in our form of life. Our ordinary use of the word "pain" is not the pain of a disembodied subject, but rather, functions within a practical involvement with things. But this is simply the way the form of life works and thus must be accepted as the ontologically contingent 'given.' Thus, if we take Baker and Hacker to be talking about ontological necessity and contingency, it is not clear why the rejection

of the community is not also a rejection of the practice, for the latter too is ontologically contingent. On the other hand, it does seem that ontically speaking the practical involvement with the environment is necessary. Given the world we live in, and the form of life that is in place, some things seem to follow. It is difficult to imagine a disembodied subject, given that what we call subjects in our everyday dealings with them are exclusively embodied. To attribute our concept of pain to a non-corporeal being may be possible, but a great number of things must change in order to do this, to the extent that it is not clear that we would end up with the same concept of pain once we had done so. This is the point of the "S" diary and beetle-in-the-box examples. Thus, there is an ontic necessity of the practice. But if it is in this sense that Baker and Hacker mean it, then it is not clear why the community should not be considered ontically necessary too. If we are talking about human beings as we know them, then the possibility of a Crusoe-from-birth surviving a day or two presents question marks, let alone him becoming able to follow rules. The Baker and Hacker argument is that there is no reason why a Crusoe-from-birth could not follow a rule. If we understand it ontologically, then of course we can imagine such a being, who, isolated from birth managed to e.g. make markings in a regular pattern on a piece of wood. But ontically speaking, that is, taking actual human beings as we know them, it is clear that such an isolation from other people from birth is no more possible than an isolation from one's environment or one's body (by which I mean any environment: one could of course lock a child in a laboratory but this would become his new environment.) But I take it that Baker and Hacker would be happy to concede this latter point. They say that human beings happen to be gregarious, thus indicating that given the kind of beings that human beings are, a separation from birth does not seem to make sense. But it is, they claim, possible (ontologically, I take it) that a subject who has grown up in total isolation from other subjects should learn to follow rules, whereas this is inconceivable (again ontologically) if they are isolated from any kind of practical engagement with an environment. My claim is that in both cases it appears to be ontologically conceivable. But this is not the level at which Wittgenstein is working; rather, he is concerned with human beings as they happen to be. But the Baker and Hacker distinction cannot be saved by shifting the debate to this level, because it is not clear that for human beings as they actually are it would be any more possible to isolate someone from other people than it would be

from his environment. Both the practice and the community, therefore, are ontically necessary aspects of subjectivity. Thus, given our ontologically contingent human life-form, we can isolate two ontically necessary aspects of subjectivity: some kind of practice, and some kind of engagement with other subjects. It is these two ontologically contingent and ontically necessary aspects of subjectivity, as well as a third to be uncovered in Chapter 2, which will be discussed in turn in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Conclusion

In what is above, I have shown how Wittgenstein rejects the notions of a subject completely cut off from the external world. I have outlined the debate between the community view and the regularity view, which I consider to be one of two central debates in the interpretation of the private language argument. On the one hand, some argue that an actual community of language-users is required in order for any action to count as following a rule. On the other hand, the regularity view focuses on behaviour of a certain kind, namely regular behaviour in a regular environment, such that the subject can know he is behaving regularly and strive to continue to do so. On this view, the regularity could be picked up by a second person and form the basis of community agreement, but is not constituted by it. Community agreement is therefore a contingent addition because we happen to be the type of beings that we are. Here I argued that if we make the community contingent, then the practice must also be contingent. If we make one necessary, the other must be so also. I claimed that both are ontologically contingent, since the form of life itself could have been otherwise, but ontically necessary, meaning that given the form of life, both the community and the practice seem inescapable. Indeed, Wittgenstein does not seem concerned with ontological possibilities, but rather, with living human beings. For such beings, both the community and the practice appear to play a crucial role. First, a regular environment and a regular engagement with it are therefore required for me

to be a subject. I will return to this later when exploring the phenomenological notion of being-in-the-world and parallels will be drawn. Secondly, we can see the importance of intersubjectivity in the formation of the self. This too will be explored in detail later on, when discussing the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity. Subjectivity is being-in-the-world and being-in-the-world is always already being-with-others. This may be merely contingently so (ontologically), but it is not clear how this takes anything away from such insights. We can perhaps paraphrase Wittgenstein by saying: If we are talking about human beings as we know them – and what else are we supposed to be talking about – then other people are required for them to be subjects. This, of course, is merely a sketch of what is to come, but what is important is that Wittgenstein has shown, whatever reading we take, the shortcomings of viewing the subject as an isolated private being. The result of this, however, was that, as he was writing in the age of behaviourism, many commentators saw him as a kind of behaviourist, albeit a rather peculiar and sophisticated one. Thus, before turning to the notions of being-in-the-world and intersubjectivity, it is important to show the shortcomings of third-personal accounts of subjectivity.

Chapter 2: The Objective Subject

Introduction

The difficulties regarding Wittgenstein's account of the mind and how the private language argument is to be interpreted have now reached a crucial point. It should be clear by now that Wittgenstein's picture of the subject stands in sharp contrast to the so-called Cartesian view. If the subject is considered as an inner and private mind cut off from its environment, the patterns and regularities which structure our consciousness fail to get off the ground. Consciousness cannot, *ex hypothesi,* "get a grip" on anything outside itself, on anything objective. Thus, the subject collapses upon itself because the distinction between being right and seeming right no longer exists. The outward criteria required for a sentence to have a meaning are lacking. Thus, a purely first-personal account of the subject has failed. In this chapter, I will therefore turn to purely third-personal accounts. I will argue that, although some such accounts avoid some of the problems of an introspectionist account, they nevertheless fail to give a satisfactory theory of subjectivity. I will further argue that Wittgenstein did not espouse these views and that critics who claim that Wittgenstein's account of subjectivity is third-personal are mistaken. There are a number of interpreters who consider Wittgenstein to espouse some kind of third-personal account of the subject. Stephen Priest, for example, classes Wittgenstein as a behaviourist along with Hempel and Ryle. [cf. Priest 1991, pp. 56-64] Fodor and Chihara attack Wittgenstein more explicitly and in more detail, claiming that he is an elaborate kind of logical behaviourist. [cf. Chihara & Fodor 1966] Mundle claims that Wittgenstein espouses a theory which 'can fairly be labelled Linguistic Behaviourism.' [Mundle 1966, p. 35] George Pitcher is another example. [Pitcher 1964] More recently, John Cook, one of the most prolific advocates of a third-personal Wittgenstein, has contended that Wittgenstein's remarks support a form of 'neutral monism, the elimination of the self or ego.' [Cook 2010, p. 273; cf. 1994,

2000, 2004] I do not intend to take issue with any of these interpretations in particular. Rather, in this chapter, I will show how any view which does not account for the intuitive asymmetry between first and third persons is unsatisfactory. I will further show, in this chapter and in Chapter 5, that Wittgenstein does account for this asymmetry, and thus, that he does not put forth a third-personal account of the mind. I begin, though, by outlining some such theories.

Logical Behaviourism

Among the first to reject the idea that the mind was a private, inner theatre were the logical positivists. In their effort to establish the unity of science and the primacy of physics, the Cartesian mind struck them as an absurdity to be removed as soon as possible. Among the early attempts to do this, two stand out: on the one hand, Rudolf Carnap's article "Psychology in Physical Language," which applies some of his earlier considerations on the philosophy of science to the specific case of psychology; on the other hand, Carl Hempel's "The Logical Analysis of Psychology," which is a clear and concise statement of logical positivism as applied to mental states. An analysis of these two papers should give a good account of logical behaviourism. It is clear that the status of mental states was regarded as a pressing question. 'One of the most important and most discussed problems of contemporary philosophy is that of determining how psychology should be characterized in the theory of science.' [Hempel 1997, p. 164] There are many different views on the question of mental states, but most of them share a common outlook. Here, Hempel points to what may be seen as the Cartesian view which, as shown in the previous chapter, rather than being a theory expressed by one individual, is a certain outlook which permeates most of western philosophy. Hempel's description of this outlook goes as follows.

> 'Apart from certain aspects clearly related to physiology, psychology is
> radically different, both in subject matter and in method, from physics in

the broad sense of the term. In particular, it is impossible to deal adequately with the subject matter of psychology by means of physical methods. The subject matter of physics includes such concepts as mass, wave length, temperature, field intensity, etc. In dealing with these, physics employs its distinctive method which makes a combined use of description and causal explanation. Psychology, on the other hand, has for its subject matter notions which are in a broad sense, mental. They are *toto genere* different from the concepts of physics, and the appropriate method for dealing with them scientifically is that of empathic insight, called "introspection," a method which is peculiar to psychology.' [Hempel 1997, p. 165]

This is the picture which positivists wish to reject. The goal motivating Hempel, therefore, is the rejection of the so-called Cartesian view. Carnap had a similar goal in his article "Psychology in Physical Language:" 'In what follows, we intend to explain and to establish the thesis that *every sentence of psychology may be formulated in physical language*.' [Carnap 1959, p. 165] The fatal flaw from which Cartesianism suffers is, on this view, that mental states cannot be brought under the realm of physics. 'Take, for example, the case of a man who speaks. Within the framework of physics, this process is considered to be completely explained once the movements which make up the utterance have been traced to their causes, that is to say, to certain physiological processes in the organism, and, in particular, in the central nervous system. But, it is said, this does not even broach the psychological problem. The latter begins with understanding the sense of what is said, and proceeds to integrate it into a wider context of meaning.' [Hempel 1997, p. 165] A positivist psychology would suffer from no such flaw. Logical positivists claim that for every psychological statement there is a corresponding physical statement which gives the former its meaning. 'Our thesis thus states that a definition may be constructed for every psychological concept (i.e. expression) which directly or indirectly derives that concept from physical concepts.' [Carnap 1959, p. 167] For Cartesianism, there is a gulf between physics and psychology, which cannot be bridged. For both Carnap and Hempel, the mental is nothing more than the physical. In order to show this, Hempel turns to the structure of language. 'The theoretical content of a science is to be found in statements. It is necessary, therefore, to

determine whether there is a fundamental difference between the statements of psychology and those of physics.' [Hempel 1997, p. 166] The goal, here, is to determine what constitutes the meaning of a physical statement, and what constitutes the meaning of a psychological statement. In showing that they both gain meaning in the same way, i.e. from a physical basis, Hempel intends to show that there is nothing to psychology beyond what can be said about it in physical terms.

For Hempel, indeed for the logical positivists, for a sentence to have meaning is for it to specify its verification-conditions. That is to say that a sentence is meaningful if it specifies a number of conditions which must obtain in order for it to be verified. 'When, for example, do we know the meaning of the following statement: "Today at one o'clock, the temperature of such and such a place in the physics laboratory was 23.4° centigrade"? Clearly when, and only when, we know under what conditions we would call the statement true, and under what circumstances we would call it false.' [Hempel 1997, p. 166] So when I say I understand a statement, I am saying that I know what has to be the case in order for that statement to be true. 'Thus, we understand the meaning of the above statement since we know that it is true when a tube of a certain kind filled with mercury (in short, a thermometer with a centigrade scale), placed at the indicated time at the location in question, exhibits a coincidence between the level of mercury and the mark of the scale numbered 23.4.' [Hempel 1997, p. 166] Any given sentence can therefore be translated into a series of other sentences, which Hempel calls test sentences, which, if they obtain, allow the verification of the sentence. 'The statement itself clearly affirms nothing other than this: all these physical test sentences obtain.' [Hempel 1997, p. 166] The generalisation of the results of this example is as follows. 'As a matter of fact, the preceding considerations show – and let us set it down as another result – that *the meaning of a statement is established by the conditions of its verification.'* [Hempel 1997, p. 167] Finally, one further conclusion is that if a statement does not specify its verification-conditions, then the statement is meaningless. If the statement cannot be translated into a set of test sentences or if one of the test sentences escapes verifiability, then we are unable in principle to verify this statement. And thus it is meaningless. Hempel phrases this as follows: 'a statement for which one can indicate absolutely no conditions which would verify it, which is in principle incapable of

confrontation with test conditions, is wholly devoid of content and without meaning.' [Hempel 1997, p. 166] This is what logical positivists term a pseudo-statement.

These general considerations are then applied to a psychological case. The example is that of toothache. The statement "Paul has toothache," according to Hempel, can be translated, without loss of content, into the following test sentences.

'Paul weeps and makes gestures of such and such kinds.

At the question "What is the matter?" Paul utters the words "I have toothache."

Closer examination reveals a decayed tooth with exposed pulp.

Paul's blood pressure, digestive processes, the speed of his reactions, show such and such changes.

Such and such processes occur in Paul's central nervous system.' [Hempel 1997, p. 167]

Thus, in order to understand the sentence "Paul has toothache," I must know that it holds if and only if these test sentences (Hempel specifies that there may be others) obtain. This is what is meant by the sentence in question. Hempel goes on to point out that 'all the circumstances which verify this psychological statement are expressed by physical test sentences.' [Hempel 1997, p. 167] The initial statement regarding psychology has been retranslated into a series of test sentences regarding physics. 'The statement in question, which is about someone's "pain," is therefore, just like that concerning temperature, simply an abbreviated expression of the fact that all its test sentences are verified.' [Hempel 1997, p. 167] This, according to Hempel, shows that there are no sentences regarding mental states which are not reducible to physical test sentences. Such irreducible sentences would be nothing but pseudo-sentences. For Carnap, both the psychological statement "Paul has toothache" (P_1) and the physical test sentences (P_2) must themselves be testable by protocols p_1 or p_2. 'There is no other possibility of testing P_1 except by means of protocol sentences like p_1 or like p_2. If, now, the content of P_1 goes beyond that of

P_2, the component not shared by the two sentences is not testable, and is therefore meaningless. If one rejects the interpretation of P_1 in terms of P_2, P_1 becomes a metaphysical pseudo-sentence.' [Carnap 1959, p. 174] The statement "Paul has toothache" can only escape being a pseudo-statement by its translatability into physical language. It is meaningful, only insofar as 'it can be retranslated without loss of content into a statement which no longer contains the term "pain," but only physical concepts. Our analysis has consequently established that a certain statement belonging to psychology has the same content as a statement belonging to physics; a result which is in direct contradiction to the thesis that there is an impassable gulf between the statements of psychology and those of physics.' [Hempel 1997, p. 167] In other words, as Carnap says, '*a singular sentence about other minds always has the same content as some specific physical sentence*'. [Carnap 1959, p. 175]

Here, Hempel does not address the question of the first person, and whether a statement like "I have toothache" functions in the same way as above. Interestingly, however, Carnap does. He writes that 'if A utters a singular psychological sentence such as "Yesterday morning B was happy," the epistemological situation differs according as A and B are or are not the same person.' [Carnap 1959, p. 170] Carnap is pointing to the fact that there is a fundamental difference between first and third person psychological statements. "I was happy" and "He was happy" differ in their epistemological status, according to Carnap. Furthermore, "I am happy," in the present tense, differs yet again. And yet, despite pointing out all these distinctions, and structuring his article so as to separate statements about other minds and statements about my mind, Carnap does not appear to analyse them differently. Despite them being treated separately, Carnap states that what has been said about other minds also goes for one's own mind. 'Our argument has shown that a sentence about other minds refers to physical processes in the body of the person in question. On any other interpretation the sentence becomes untestable in principle, and thus meaningless. The situation is the same with sentences about one's own mind, though here the emotional obstacles to a physical interpretation are considerably greater.' [Carnap 1959, p. 191] Thus, for Carnap, what I am really saying when I say "I have toothache" is the above list of test sentences given by Hempel. Or in Carnap's example, to say "I am now excited" is in fact equivalent to saying "'My body is now

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in that condition which, both under my own observation and that of others, exhibits such and such characteristics of excitement.'" [Carnap 1959, p. 191] Carnap admits that this may seem counter-intuitive, but this is merely our emotional response, says he. He goes further by saying that he fully expects resistance because he is "dethroning an Idol." According to Carnap we associate 'grandeur' and 'dignity' with our notion that the mind is something beyond physics, which has been 'robed in majesty.' [Carnap 1959, p. 168] We must rid ourselves of such emotional reservations and consider things rationally. And, according to Carnap, the only way I can mean anything by saying "I am in pain," for example, is if this sentence is an abbreviation of the more complete and scientific list of test sentences regarding my body.

Such is the account of the mind given by logical behaviourists. The central claims are that for a sentence to be meaningful, it must be, at least in principle, verifiable. Psychological statements are only verifiable if they are reducible to physical statements. Therefore, psychology is merely one domain of physics. To make this claim has the effect, as we have seen, of placing the subject's access to himself on the same level as to physical objects, and also on the same level as to other subjects. I merely read my pain off my own body, in the same way I read the other's off his, and in the same way I see the colour grey in a stone. There is no difference in principle, merely differences in the degree. Of course, it is more difficult to see that another person is thinking about e.g. the methodological validity of the *elenchus*, than it is to see that a stone is grey. But this is merely a difference in difficulty of access, not an insurmountable difference in principle. My access to myself and my access to others is thus symmetrical, since we are both reduced to objects. We are both *res extensae* among others. Thus, although Carnap appears to treat the question of the first person differently, he in fact ends up treating it just the same. He does not, nor does he try to, account for the intuitive asymmetry that exists between the other and myself. This is merely dismissed as metaphysical nonsense to which we have an emotional attachment similar to a child's attachment to the existence of Father Christmas and his magic reindeers. Yet the lack of phenomenological accuracy here is astounding. Of course, it is possible that sometimes we be mistaken about things, and that irrational attachments to some concepts may blind us to better

ways of seeing things. Indeed this is Wittgenstein's own view when he claims that philosophy ought to free us from the fly-bottle, cure our diseases of the understanding. But Wittgenstein is generally talking about removing a theory which does not sit with our actual experience, once we look at the way things appear to us. Here, on the other hand, Carnap seems to be removing the experience which does not sit with his theory, and this is exactly the kind of move which Wittgenstein does not allow. Rather than trying to fit our experience into our theories, we must rebuild our theories, at times from scratch, so that they fit in with our experience.[14] Thus it is important to account for the intuitive idea that when I say "I am in pain" I am not saying anything about the way my body appears to me in its physical, observational manifestation. This is why there is an asymmetry between the other and myself. I may well *see* his pain, but I *feel* mine. In developing a theory of subjectivity, indeed in any discussion about the mental, this asymmetry must be accounted for. Let us turn, then, to another third-personal theory which does try to build this asymmetry into its account of the mind: interpretation.[15]

Interpretation

In his book entitled *Wittgenstein on Language and Thought*, Tim Thornton draws an analogy between Wittgenstein's view and Davidson's theory of radical interpretation. For Davidson, 'what a fully informed interpreter could learn about what a speaker means is all there is to learn; the same goes for what the speaker believes.' [Davidson 1986, p. 315] Thus the theory of radical interpretation claims that to have mental states is to be interpretable as having mental states. Like

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[14] This, as we have seen, is Wittgenstein's view, as well as being the methodological cornerstone of phenomenology. Cf. Introduction.

[15] Of course, there are many forms of behaviourism. The project of reducing psychological sentences to physical test sentences is not endorsed by all behaviourists. [cf. Ryle 1963] This, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter, the central issue here being the phenomenological accuracy of their treatment of the first person, which is lacking whether or not one allows psychological terms into these descriptions. I do not come to realise that I am happy by noticing my happy face any more than by noticing certain muscular contortions in my face. For further discussions of Wittgenstein and behaviourism, cf. Ter Hark 2000, and Overgaard 2004

behaviourism, this is an entirely third-personal account of subjectivity and there are some striking similarities between the two. The most obvious similarity is that Davidson, like Hempel, makes the claim that what we perceive when we look at somebody's face is raw, meaningless data, in a purely physical form. As it reaches me, I interpret it and thus psychological terms are extracted from it and attributable to the person through this act of interpretation. It is I who give his facial expressions, for instance, psychological meaning. There cannot be anything hidden behind what is manifest to the interpreter, since it must be possible for the interpretation to be 'supported or verified by evidence plausibly available to the interpreter.' [Davidson 1984b, p. 128] Daniel Dennett formulates a very similar theory to Davidson and expresses it in terms of the different stances one can take towards another person, animal, or even, for Dennett, computer. He discusses three stances we may take towards a given system. He asks us to 'consider the case of a chess-playing computer, and the different strategies or stances one might adopt as its opponent in trying to predict its moves.' [Dennett 1971, p. 87] He claims that we can take up a physical stance towards it, i.e. consider the various interactions of the components of its hardware amongst themselves. But since most of us have no knowledge of these things, this is not our first choice. We may take up the design stance, by which we will consider how its various components are designed to function; but again this is something most of us know little about. Finally, we may take up the intentional stance, which Dennett claims is the most efficient in predicting its behaviour: i.e. we attribute to it a certain rationality, in the form of a goal, checkmate, and beliefs about the most rational way of reaching this goal. This, for Dennett, is how we interact with the chess playing computer, and it allows him to break down the barrier between human and non-human intentional systems. When we look at a human and try to predict his actions, we generally do so by assuming a degree of rationality. We try to discover his goals in terms of his desires, and his beliefs as to what the best way to reach those goals is. In playing chess, there is very little difference between playing against a human or a computer. For Dennett, 'we use folk psychology – interpretations of each other as believers, wanters, intenders, and the like – to predict what people will do next.' [Dennett 1991, p. 29] My attitude towards the chess playing computer is thus the same, varying only in degrees of complexity, according to Dennett, as my attitude towards another human being. Interpretation is therefore

the theory by which to have psychological states is nothing more than to be interpreted as having psychological states by a third party.

Here, we can see the apparent similarities between Wittgenstein's view and the theory of interpretation. First, both are a stern rejection of the type of inner mental object which the Cartesian posits. If all that it is to be in a given mental state is to be interpretable as such, the mind cannot be the kind of private and hidden mind which is the cornerstone of Cartesian philosophy, since your mind could play no role in my interpretation of your behaviour if it were completely hidden from me. Similarly for Wittgenstein, if the mind were an inner theatre, unavailable to others, it would be impossible to attribute mental states to anyone, not even myself, as we have seen. Secondly, interpretation and Wittgenstein place a great amount of importance on behaviour. For Dennett, the intentional stance is the best way to predict another person's actions because we can observe, in their behaviour, certain patterns of rationality which it is useful to consider intentional. For Wittgenstein also, it would never come about that we attribute mental states to anyone who did not, in some way, display them in his behaviour, and when it comes to considering another person's mental states, behaviour is all we have to rely on.

However, two major differences must be pointed out at this stage, namely that interpretation, on a Wittgensteinian account, misconstrues my relation to others, on the one hand, and to myself, on the other. The latter will take up the remainder of this chapter. The former, however, is also worthy of note, since the issue will resurface in later chapters (cf. Chapters 3 and 4). According to interpretation, when considering another person, I detect patterns in their behaviour which are best understood as intentional. I am in an observing relation to the other, trying to predict his actions and I make use of his behaviour to do so. This, according to Wittgenstein, is to misunderstand what goes on when I am confronted with another human being. 'Suppose I said: "It is not enough to perceive the threatening face, I have to interpret it." – Someone whips out a knife at me and I say "I conceive that as a threat."' [Z 218] Wittgenstein's point here is in sharp distinction to that offered by Dennett and Davidson: to use the words "interpret," "conceive," etc., is to gravely misunderstand my relation to others. In the case where someone flashes a knife, I am not a detached observer trying to figure out what it means. I am involved with the other, engaged in

a situation. This gesture is a threat, we fear it, it is immediately given as something to be avoided. It requires a certain response: I might flee or scream, I might launch a pre-emptive attack, I might try to soothe my assailant. All these reactions are part of a web of interactions which presenting me as an interpreter of the other person dismisses. When confronted with this situation, I do not form an opinion, I act. My relation to others is not primarily something epistemic, as is the case for the theory of interpretation. This point is made quite clearly by Wittgenstein in his famous remark in Part II of the *Investigations*. 'My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.' [*PI,* p. 152] It is not a matter of forming opinions and theories about others, not a matter of conceiving or interpreting their behaviour; on the contrary, it is a question of interacting, engaging, being involved with others. As has been mentioned, this will be the topic of the next two chapters. Chapter 3 shows how my relation to the world is not primarily epistemic and Chapter 4 discusses this in relation to other subjects. But this constitutes an important difference between Wittgenstein's view and the theory of interpretation and was thus worth introducing at this stage. The main issue I wish to discuss, however, in relation to interpretation, is the issue of the first person. While Dennett does not address this issue, Davidson dedicated two important papers to the subject. Thus I return to the question asked above as to whether an objective account of subjectivity, such as the theory of interpretation, can account for the intuitive asymmetry between the first and third persons. To suggest an answer to this question, I will give a detailed analysis of Davidson's two articles on the question, namely "First Person Authority" and "Knowing One's Own Mind."

Davidson on the First Person

For Davidson, there is an asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological utterances to the following extent. 'When a speaker avers that he has a belief, hope, desire or intention, there is a presumption that he is not mistaken, a presumption that

does not attach to his ascriptions of similar mental states to others.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 101] His task in his two well-known papers on the subject is to explain this asymmetry. 'Why should there be this asymmetry between attributions of attitudes to our present selves and attributions of the same attitudes to other selves?' [Davidson 1984a, p. 101] There is an asymmetry, according to Davidson, because in the case of the other, I must interpret the behaviour which I observe in order to know what he believes, whereas in my case, such observation, if it is possible, is, more often than not, superfluous.

> 'It is seldom the case that I need to or appeal to evidence or observation in order to find out what I believe; normally I know what I think before I speak or act. Even when I have evidence, I seldom make use of it. I can be wrong about my own thoughts, and so the appeal to what can be publicly determined is not irrelevant. But the possibility that one may be mistaken about one's own thoughts cannot defeat the overriding presumption that a person knows what he or she believes; in general, the belief that one has a thought is enough to justify that belief.' [Davidson 1987, p. 553]

Thus, the situation to be understood is that when I believe that, for example, I am thinking about such-and-such, then this belief, most of the time, is self-justifying. When another believes that I am thinking about such-and-such, he will have evidence to justify this belief of the kind I only have in particular situations and under particular circumstances. Normally, when I say that I am thinking about e.g. the concept of justice, people do not ask me why I believe this is what I am thinking. In such cases, the notion of giving evidence seems out of place. In Davidson's words, 'the self-attributer does not normally base his claims on evidence or observation, nor does it normally make sense to ask the self-attributer why he believes he has the beliefs, desires or intentions he claims to have.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 103] It follows from this that there is a kind of authority about first-person psychological sentences which is lacking elsewhere. This is not to say that I cannot be mistaken about what I am thinking or feeling, but, in most cases, I am not. And even when it seems like I may be mistaken, nevertheless, I seem to have more authority than another to say that I was mistaken. 'Even in the exceptional cases, however, first person authority persists; even when a self-attribution is in doubt, or a

challenge is proper, the person with the attitude speaks about it with special weight.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 103] I can be mistaken, but I am not normally mistaken, and if my mistake is pointed out to me, I am the only one who can confirm it. I think I feel a pain in my chest and I say so. The doctor then tells me that the problem is coming from my back and that often these two sensations are similar. Nevertheless, if I insist that the pain really is in my chest, this merits an extra investigation of his behalf. Thus, first-person psychological utterances have a particular place in language. 'Sincere first person present-tense claims about thoughts, while neither infallible nor incorrigible, have an authority no second or third person claim, or first person other-tense claim, can have.' [Davidson 1987, p. 554]

Davidson remarks that contemporary philosophers have often ignored the problem of first/third-person asymmetry. Behaviourism's attempt to rid us of the problem of other minds by reducing the mental to the physical seems to leave us with the problem of first-person authority, without addressing it whatsoever. 'At one time behaviorism was invoked to show how it was possible for one person to know what was in another's mind; behaviorism was then rejected in part because it could not explain one of the most obvious aspects of mental states: the fact that they are in general known to the person who has them without appeal to behavioristic evidence.' [Davidson 1987, p. 559-60] Thus, as Davidson argues, third-personal accounts of the subject seem to explain away the problem of the first person by making the subject just like any object, observable in the same way as objects and other minds, by anyone who cares to look. But this does not, as we have seen, sit well with our experience of the mental. It is quite different to feel pain and say so than to see someone else in pain and say so. There simply is an asymmetry. This is Davidson's reproach to his third-person-account colleagues. 'Since I think it is obvious that the asymmetry exists, I believe it is a mistake to argue from the absence of a special way of knowing or a special mode or kind of knowledge to the absence of special authority; instead, we should look for another source of the asymmetry.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 104] Others content themselves with acknowledging that there is such an asymmetry between first and third person, without investigating it further. 'Contemporary philosophers who have discussed first person authority have made little attempt to answer the question why self-ascriptions are privileged.' [Davidson

1984a, p. 103] This is what Davidson attempts to rectify here. In order to do so, he believes that a shift away from knowledge and towards language is useful. Instead of concentrating on how the first person knows what he thinks, or why he has authority over what he thinks, we must, according to Davidson, consider why first-person psychological utterance have the role they do in our language.

> 'No satisfactory explanation of the asymmetry between first and other person attributions of attitudes has yet emerged. Still, focusing on sentences and utterances rather than propositions or meanings is a step in a promising direction. The reason for this is relatively simple. As long as we pose the problem in terms of the kind of warrant or authority someone has with respect to claims about an agent's attitude to a proposition (or a sentence with a given interpretation), we seem constrained to account for differences by simply postulating different kinds or sources of information. Alternatively, we may postulate different criteria of application for the key concepts or words ('believes that,' 'intends to,' 'wishes that,' etc.). But these moves do no more than restate the problem, as we have seen, and thereby invite skepticism about knowledge of the minds of others (or of our own mind). But if we pose the problem in terms of relations between agents and utterances, we can avoid the impasse.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 108-9]

How, then, is the asymmetry to be understood according to Davidson? He says that we must pose it in terms of the relations between agents and utterances. Thus, the problem which is to be analysed is that there is an asymmetry between, on the one hand, my relation to my utterances about my own mental states, and, on the other hand, your relation to those same utterances. From your point of view, there is always the possibility that you are gravely mistaken and thus you are always relying on an interpretation. 'To put the matter in its simplest form: there can be no general guarantee that a hearer is correctly interpreting a speaker; however easily, automatically, unreflectively and successfully a hearer understands a speaker, he is liable to general and serious error. In this special sense, he may always be regarded as interpreting a speaker. The speaker cannot, in the same way, interpret his own words.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 110] You may wonder what I mean by certain words,

whether I have understood a word correctly, whether I am using it consistently in the wrong context, etc. If you believe that I am mistaken you may try to interpret what I really mean from what I am saying, although I am not saying what I mean. But this is not the case for me. I cannot seriously doubt whether, most of the time, I mean what I am saying or not. 'A hearer interprets (normally without thought or pause) on the basis of many clues: the actions and other words of the speaker, what he assumes about the education, birthplace, wit, and profession of the speaker, the relation of the speaker to objects near and far, and so forth. The speaker, though he must bear many of these things in mind when he speaks, since it is up to him to try to be understood, cannot wonder whether he generally means what he says.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 110] Of course, I may on occasion be mistaken about the meaning of my own words and I may seek to correct myself by discovering what others understand when I say such-and-such a word. This, according to Davidson, is because, when communicating, I must always be aware that what I am saying is being interpreted and I must make sure that it is being interpreted as I wished it to be. If it is not, then my use of certain words was mistaken. 'The speaker can be wrong about what his own words mean. This is one of the reasons first person authority is not completely authoritarian.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 110] But this is not to say that I am a self-interpreter. It does not place the first and third person in the same relation to the former's mental states. It simply means that, if my words are to mean anything at all, there must be an assumption on the part of the interpreter that I am intending to communicate and thus applying my words consistently. 'The best way to appreciate the situation is by imagining a situation in which two people who speak unrelated languages, and are ignorant of each other's languages, are left alone to learn to communicate.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 111] In this case, according to Davidson, all I can do is use my words in a consistent way so as to be interpretable by the other person. 'The best the speaker can do is to be *interpretable*, that is, to use a finite supply of distinguishable sounds applied consistently to objects and situations he believes are apparent to his hearer.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 111] In this situation, given Davidson's view about interpretation, it makes no sense to think that the speaker is generally mistaken about how he uses his words. He may simply fail to use them in any consistent manner. But in that case, he is not mistaken but simply not interpretable. He may misuse a word on occasion. In this case, the interpreter will see the speaker has done so once

his mistake has been placed in a context of otherwise consistent use. If not, then there is nothing to interpret.

> 'Obviously the speaker may fail in this project from time to time; in that case we can say if we please that he does not know what his words mean. But it is equally obvious that the interpreter has nothing to go on but the pattern of sounds the speaker exhibits in conjunction with further events (including, of course, further actions on the part of both speaker and interpreter). It makes no sense in this situation to wonder whether the speaker is generally getting things wrong. His behavior may simply not be interpretable. But if it is, then what his words mean is (generally) what he intends them to mean. Since the 'language' he is speaking has no other hearers, the idea of the speaker misusing his language has no application.'
> [Davidson 1984a, p. 111]

The speaker cannot continually misuse his language, if he is to be interpretable at all, and thus, one must generally assume, when interpreting someone, that he is not mistaken in what he means. What the speaker says he means, believes or feels must therefore be considered, generally speaking, to conform to what he actually does mean, believe or feel. 'There is a presumption - an unavoidable presumption built into the nature of interpretation - that the speaker usually knows what he means. So there is a presumption that if he knows that he holds a sentence true, he knows what he believes.' [Davidson 1984a, p. 111] If this were not the case, the speaker would not be interpretable at all, and his words would have no meaning. 'To put the matter another way, nothing could count as someone regularly misapplying her own words.' [Davidson 1987, p. 571] This is not to say, a point which Davidson continually stresses, that the speaker is infallible. Mistakes can be made. But mistakes cannot be the norm. We do not have a Cartesian self-intimating mind, with a special kind of access to its own mental states. We have a logical claim that if there is to be interpretation, there must be first-person authority. 'Of course, in any particular case, she may be wrong in what she believes about the world; what is impossible is that is that she should be wrong most of the time. The reason is apparent: unless there is a presumption that the speaker knows what she means, i.e., is getting her own language right, there would be nothing for an interpreter to interpret.' [Davidson

1987, p. 571] Therefore, first-person authority is not only a rule of interpretation, but a necessary condition for interpretation. Thus, if one is to be interpretable as having certain kinds of mental states, one must have some kind of (albeit fallible) authority over one's psychological statements. And since, for Davidson, to have a mind is simply to be interpretable as having a mind, then to have a mind is to have first-person authority.

Wittgenstein and Linguistic Asymmetry

According to Davidson, as we have seen, first- and third-person psychological utterances must play a different role in language. This is not only a rule to obey if we want the best possible interpretation, but a necessary condition for interpretation to be possible. Thus, built into our language is an asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological utterances. Many Wittgenstein interpreters have seen this as a crucial feature of Wittgenstein's later work, and Davidson himself acknowledges this debt. [cf. Davidson 1984, p. 103] Davidson credits Wittgenstein with the insight that first-person psychological sentences are not usually based on some piece of observed evidence, whereas third-person psychological sentences often are. It is this asymmetry which Davidson develops as outlined above. But the question I would like to ask here is whether the asymmetry is a merely linguistic and epistemological one, or whether there is a deeper asymmetry concerned with the very nature of subjectivity. To claim the former is to side with third-personal accounts of subjectivity, like the ones outlined above. This is the view which will be rejected here, on the grounds that it does not sufficiently account for first-personal experience. A third-personal account of the first person is not an account of the first person. Here I wish to show how Wittgenstein's account can be interpreted, in a similar vein to Davidson, as allowing a merely linguistic asymmetry, before showing why this is unsatisfactory.

For many Wittgenstein interpreters there is a linguistic asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological sentences. A third-person psychological sentence is, like many other sentences, based on observation. It is a sentence about behaviour or bodily processes. On the other hand, a first-person psychological sentence is not based on observation. For people like Alan Donagan, 'the most striking difference between sensations and bodily processes is not in their criteria of identity, but in how they are reported.' [Donagan 1966, p. 333] To claim that the 'most striking difference' lies in the way that they are reported suggests that what is really important is the way in which first-person sensation-language functions, as opposed to the rest of language. This appears to be the view taken by Norman Malcolm. In Malcolm, the emphasis is placed upon the different ways in which language can function. Malcolm correctly acknowledges that construing sensation-language as an expression rather than a report of a sensation sets up an asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological sentences. On the one hand, first-person utterances 'are meaningful sentences of everyday language which are "expressive", *in the sense* in which a gesture, an outcry, a frown or a laugh, can express, not a *thought*, but indifference, or fear, or displeasure or amusement.' [Malcolm 1986, p. 133] Third-person psychological sentences, on the other hand, are reports based on observation, and it makes sense for them to be verified for their correct use. It makes sense, in the case of third-person psychological statements, to ask oneself "Is he really in pain?" where it makes no sense in the case of the first person to ask "Am I really in pain?" Thus the two statements "I am in pain" and "He is in pain" are not used analogously. 'One cannot "verify" that one feels hot, or hungry, or wants to sit down.' [Malcolm 1986, p. 136] But one can attempt to verify that somebody else feels hot, etc. Wittgenstein's target, according to Malcolm, is 'the philosophical urge to insist that first-person psychological sentences *must* be descriptions (or reports) of inner mental states – and therefore must be justified, confirmed, verified, by the speaker's observation of himself.' [Malcolm 1986, p. 141] This is not how we normally think of our sensations outside of philosophy. I do not look at myself, be it inwardly or outwardly, before I say I am in pain. I simply cry out, or complain to my friend, or explain to someone why I am incapable of doing such-and-such. "I cannot mow the lawn, my back hurts." But I do not introspect before reporting what I feel. I simply express the pain in my back. Nor do I use a complicated system of mirrors to find

out whether or not my back is in pain, and only then utter the sentence. It is an immediate avowal of the pain which I feel. On occasion, I may report, like I do to the doctor, for instance, that I am in pain, on the basis of some kind of observation. But this is not my default self-relation.

These discussions regarding expression and the distinction between first-person avowals, on the one hand, which are thought to be expressive, and third-person sentences, on the other, which are thought to function as reports or descriptions, serve to establish a certain degree of asymmetry between the first and the third person. Third-person psychological sentence are often do function on the model of object and designation, in the sense that we observe a grimace, a cry, a broken leg and pronounce "This man is in pain!" My observation of his behaviour determines the legitimacy of my outcry. In the case of the first person, however, the cry "I am in pain!" need not be legitimised by self-observation, indeed, more often than not, cannot be legitimised by such observation. For Malcolm, this sets up an asymmetry between first and third persons with 'the perception that the first-person and third-person psychological sentences are employed differently.' [Malcolm 1986, p. 148] In another book, Malcolm again stresses the importance of the fact that first-person utterances are not based on observation.

> 'Another way to put the point is to say that those reports and utterances are *not based on observations*. The error of introspectionism is to suppose that they are based on observations of inner mental events. The error of behaviorism is to suppose that they are based on observations of outward events or of physical events inside the speaker's skin. These two philosophies of psychology share a false assumption, namely, that a first-person psychological statement is a report of something the speaker has, or thinks he has, observed.' [Malcolm 1977, p. 98]

The claim is clear. Language is not a uniform system of descriptions, which all function in the same way. First-person utterances have a peculiar role in our various language-games, precisely because they do not function on the model of object and designation. They do not normally serve to describe anything. It is these first-person psychological sentences which are of particular interest to Malcolm. 'Within the

whole body of language the category of first-person psychological sentences has peculiar importance.' [Malcolm 1977, p. 102] But the question is whether Wittgenstein's remarks about the various language-games which surround sensations are merely meant to be remarks about language, or whether they are meant to enlighten us as to the status of the subject of experience. In order to answer this, let us turn to some of the remarks in question.

It is evident that there is a linguistic line of thought in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, and that it does in fact set up an asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological sentences. But this asymmetry is part of a larger project to deny the idea that language always functions in the same way, as a labelling tool. Rather, language is embedded in our form of life and is as varied as our activities. 'There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten.' [*PI* 23] Of these countless forms of expression and ways in which language functions, Wittgenstein gives the following list, which, though fairly long, is by no means exhaustive:

'Giving orders, and obeying them –

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements –

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) –

Reporting an event –

Speculating about the event –

Forming and testing a hypothesis –

Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams –

Making up a story; and reading it –

Play-acting –

Singing catches –

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Guessing riddles –

Making a joke; telling it –

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic –

Translating from one language into another –

Requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.' [*PI* 23]

The insight here is that there are many cases in which we use language without reporting anything, describing anything, naming or labelling anything. Why, then, should we construe words like "pain" as doing so, especially given the apparently elusive nature of what they are supposed to name, label or describe? Wittgenstein goes on to show that first-person psychological statements do not function in this way at all. I am not in an observing relation to my pains of the kind which would allow them to be named. To name a sensation by introspection or observation seems to require that it be placed before me in some fashion. For Wittgenstein, however, I am not in this kind of relation to my own pains. I do not learn of them, or detect them.[16] For Wittgenstein, my relation to my pains is much closer, much more immediate. 'I cannot be said to learn of [my sensations]. I *have* them.' [*PI* 246] Of course, there are cases when I may be in this observing relation to myself. Wittgenstein is not claiming that this is impossible. But he is saying that it is not our default self-relation. Or rather, that normally, we are not in any kind of self-relation. He asks: 'Does it make sense to ask "How do you know that you believe?" – and is the answer: "I know it by introspection"?' [*PI* 587] And to this his answer is: 'In *some* cases it will be possible to say some such thing, in most not.' [*PI* 587] One example of this is given in Part II of the *Investigations*: 'My grief is no longer the same; a memory which was still unbearable to me a year ago is now no longer so. That is a result of observation.' [*PI* p. 187/160] I may at times introspect, wonder whether or not I am truly in love, try to remember whether my childhood was a happier time and therefore try to observe my degree of happiness, both now and then. But these are particular cases of self-observation, which some of us are more

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[16] It is in this sense of "detect" that David Finkelstein coins the term "detectivist," as applying to a philosophy which embraces this kind of first-person self-observation. [Finkelstein 2003, especially pp. 9-27]

drawn towards than others and which can at times consume much of someone's mental life, but which is never the default setting, so to speak. If this were the case it would render the practicalities of life impossible. Since the mind is not a kind of self-observation, language is not a kind of self-description. When I say "I," I do not point to myself as if I were any other person. The first-person pronoun has a different role than this.[17] According to Wittgenstein, it is more akin to a cry or a groan. 'For the main point is: I did not say that such-and-such a person was in pain, but "I am....." Now in saying this I don't name any person. Just as I don't name anyone when I *groan* with pain. Though someone else sees who is in pain from the groaning.' [*PI* 404] It is notions such as groaning, crying, gesturing, etc. which form what Wittgenstein calls primitive expressions, and upon which philosophers such as Malcolm depend to say that sensation-language is expressive. 'Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour.' [*PI* 244] What is important here is that the primary role of language is not one of reporting. It may do so at times, as I have said. There is no claim that language cannot function in this way on occasion. Furthermore, there is no claim that reporting and expressing are mutually exclusive. Wittgenstein gives the example of finally seeing someone across a crowd and saying to the person next to me: "There he is!" 'The very expression which is also a report of what is seen, is here a cry of recognition.' [*PI* p. 198/169] On the one hand, I am reporting to the person next to me that I see my friend. On the other, I am crying out as I am pleased to see him. Various functions of language are interwoven, and the roles played by words can be simultaneous. One does not exclude the other. But sensation-language cannot function solely on the basis of self-observation and naming. '"I" is not the name of a person, nor "here" of a place, and "this" is not a name.' [*PI* 410] What is crucial here, and what Malcolm seems to miss, is that it is not only language which gives us the asymmetry. Of course, on the one hand, 'my own relation to my words is wholly different from other people's.' [*PI* p. 192/163] This, for Wittgenstein, is the case because I do not observe myself. This has consequences beyond language,

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[17] Cf. Anscombe's famous argument that, for Wittgenstein, the first-person pronoun is non-referential and D. S. Clark's defense of this argument. [Anscombe 1975; Clark 1978]

for the development of a picture of subjectivity. What is missed by people like Davidson, who claim that the asymmetry should be understood merely as the condition for interpretation, is the phenomenology of the first person. First-personal experience is not self-observation, be it inner or outer. Neither can it be reduced to a merely linguistic phenomenon. As I have said, language, for Wittgenstein, is not a free-floating system, unrelated to anything around it. It is deeply embedded in the human form of life. The point of discussing an asymmetry between first- and third-person psychological sentences is not to reveal something about the way language functions, or rather, it does that too, but this is not its sole purpose. The study of language reveals aspects of human life which are hidden by the misuse of language. But clarifying language is not the final goal, but a means to help certain aspects of life show up which had hitherto gone unnoticed. In this case, the particular status of first-personal psychological sentences seems to reveal something about subjectivity. Not only do I not speak of my sensations in the way I speak of others, I do not *feel* them in the same way, or rather, I do not *feel* the other's at all. This will be the third aspect of subjectivity which must be discussed in this dissertation (in Chapter 5). There is something unique, not only about the first person's use of psychological sentences, but about first-personal experience as a whole. No matter how much third-personal accounts address the question of a linguistic asymmetry between the first and third persons, they cannot account for the lived asymmetry. Here, I have pointed out a few cases where Wittgenstein hints at this lived asymmetry, but the fifth chapter of this dissertation will do so in much more detail, showing how deeply unsatisfactory third-personal accounts of subjectivity are, both as theories of subjectivity and as interpretations of Wittgenstein.

Conclusion

The task of this chapter has been to give a critical account of some third-personal views concerning subjectivity. First, an analysis of logical behaviourism showed in what way purely third-personal accounts fail to accord with the intuitive notion that my access to my own mind is different from my access to other minds. Radical interpretation, though it resembles behaviourism in many respects, improves upon it by accounting for some kind of asymmetry, namely a linguistic asymmetry which is required for interpretation, and thus for subjectivity. But again, this seems to dismiss first-personal experience, and simply to state that all that it is to be a subject is for one's words to have a peculiar role in language. This, it was shown, may seem to resemble Wittgenstein's claim that "I am in pain" is not a report of a sensation, whereas there are other language-games which do function on this model. What it is important to notice, however, is that Wittgenstein's chief insight is that I am not in an observing relation to my mind. This is taken into consideration by Davidson who acknowledges that first-person utterances are not based on observational utterances, but he does not address the question as to why this is the case. For Wittgenstein, however, it would appear that the linguistic asymmetry is tied in and intermingled with a deeper asymmetry. Beyond the claim that "I am in pain" does not function on the model of reporting what is observed, there is the deeper claim that sensations are not observed, that there is something about subjectivity which is inherently different from objects and other subjects in the sense that it is not placed before me for me to look at or engage with. A crucial aspect of subjectivity has thus been uncovered, namely that there is something unique about subjectivity. I do not observe my sensations, I *have* them. Furthermore, I have them and others do not. There is an aspect of experience with is inherently my own, and it is this intrinsically first-personal aspect of experience which cannot be accounted for in a third-personal theory of subjectivity. The goal of this dissertation, therefore, and particularly Chapter 5, will be to avoid the pitfalls of the Cartesian subject, while at the same time accounting for this uniquely first-personal aspect of experience.

Chapter 3: Wittgenstein and Being-in-the-World

Introduction

When studying the work of the later Wittgenstein, one thing is clear. The *Philosophical Investigations* and the writings subsequently produced do not belong to the detached realm of abstract thought that a number of philosophers before him contributed to develop. Here we have philosophy brought down to earth. Its concern is human life, and it is always alive with examples from our daily experience of the world. The same can be said, I believe, of Wittgenstein's views on subjectivity. Wittgenstein is not concerned, as we have seen, with the subject as an inner and private mind, isolated from anything that may or may not exist outside of it. Nor is he concerned with the subject as an object, a mere material thing in causal relations to other material things. This, as we have seen, denies our intuitive experience of the first person. Rather, he claims that viewing the mind as such, be it in the Cartesian or behaviouristic vein, can only be second to a kind of engagement in the world, a practical concern with things. Only once we have a picture of the world which we gain by acting in it, can we begin to theorise about such things. Thus, for Wittgenstein, the primordial subject is not the knowing subject, but the acting subject. This is the focus of this chapter, and it will be shown by turning mostly to Wittgenstein's final work: *On Certainty*. In this short compilation of Wittgenstein's writings on the topic of certainty, he argues, I will show, that our theoretical grasp of the world is dependent on a prior practical engagement with this world in which the subject does not stop to think about the world, but simply acts. In the first chapter, I outlined Wittgenstein's private language argument and argued that, when it was applied to actual human beings as we know them, it showed how the inner life which the Cartesian depicts depends both on a practical engagement in the world, and on our relations with other. By showing how explicit thought depends on unreflective

action as its starting place, this chapter discusses the former or these two points. The latter will be discussed in the chapter that follows.

Since its publication in 1969, Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* has been the source of much interest and is thought to be of great significance for epistemology. Its central argument is most often thought to be one concerning the nature of knowledge, a response to G. E. Moore's discussions on the same topic, the crucial claim of which is that, where there is no logical room for doubt, the notion of knowledge lacks sense. Thus, 'a thing can only be said to be certain if it also has sense to say that it is not certain.' [Wittgenstein 1980, p. 109] There is no doubt that this is a perfectly accurate reading of *On Certainty*. In this chapter, however, I aim to give a different reading, which, without denying the one mentioned above, will claim that its consequences concerning the nature of our being and our relation to the world are also expressed in *On Certainty*, and are very similar to some themes developed in continental philosophy, in particular, the notion of being-in-the-world. Thus, as well as being considered as a study in epistemology, *On Certainty* will be seen as containing an ontological line of thought regarding our being-in-the-world, namely that our primary contact with things is not an epistemological one, but one of non-thetic engagement in the world. This, as John Shotter points out, gives 'individualistic, scientistic and mechanistically inclined theorists – obsessed with static, objective, systems of knowledge and factual information – something radically different.' [Shotter 1996b, p. 293] The emphasis for Wittgenstein and for phenomenology is placed on the practical engagement of the subject with the world, not on a disengaged knowing subject. I shall start off by giving a preliminary sketch of the epistemological concerns of *On Certainty*, in order to ground the discussions which follow. I shall then briefly discuss some selected commentaries which I believe to typify the secondary literature and show how they leave out a major concern of Wittgenstein's, namely the primacy of practical engagement. I shall then discuss Heidegger's claim that what we encounter primarily in our relation to the world is the ready-to-hand, that with which we engage practically, and that cognition is conditional upon this engagement. Here, I introduce the notion of being-in-the-world. I also discuss the dependence of thought on being-in-the-world in relation to Merleau-Ponty. Finally, I shall give a phenomenological reading of Wittgenstein's

On Certainty, in order to show that he too considered knowledge and enquiry to be dependent on a pre-cognitive being-in-the-world.

Background

The remarks of *On Certainty*, as traditionally conceived, are a rejection of both traditional epistemology (Descartes' for example) and G. E. Moore's common-sense approach to knowledge. Descartes' methodological doubt leaves him with one proposition which he holds to be true, and claims he can know for certain: I am, I exist. He reaches this proposition by the following piece of reasoning:

P_1: If I were to doubt that I exist, I would be thinking.

P_2: In order to think, I must exist.

C: Therefore, I cannot doubt that I exist.

This way of excluding from the domain of knowledge everything which can be doubted through a process of reasoning is what I will call traditional epistemology.[18]

In the early twentieth century, G. E. Moore provided a common-sense rejection of this manner of establishing knowledge: it was, for him, too exclusive. Moore's claim is that I may very well ordinarily claim that I know that I have a body, which was small when it was born and has grown since; that since it was born it has been in contact with, or very close to, the surface of the Earth; that other bodies, living and non-living, have also existed at various distances or in contact with it; that the Earth had existed for many years before I was born and that many bodies have lived and

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[18] For Descartes' something is certain once it has been perceived with such clarity and distinctness that it 'cannot be other than as [he] conceive[s] [it].' [Descartes 1975, p. 115] In such cases, doubt is excluded to the extent that it has become unreasonable to doubt. This certainty is reached in the case of the *cogito*, at the end of which he declared that the proposition '*I am, I exist*, is necessarily true.' [Descartes 1975, p. 103] It is this method of systematically showing beyond reasonable doubt that such and such is true which many have followed and which will be considered here as traditional epistemology.

died on it; that I have had and still have a number of experiences and thoughts; and that, as well as me knowing these things, very many others know them too. [Moore 1925, p. 33-4] These propositions are, so to speak, self-evident and in need of no further justification. To utter the words "Here is a hand; here is another" whilst waving them in front of me, is sufficient justification for the claim that I know I have two hands. [cf. Moore 1939]

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein rejects both the above views. In characteristic fashion, he identifies what these apparently opposing theories have in common, before killing both with one stone. For Wittgenstein, Moore and Descartes share the same definition of knowledge, i.e. what I know is what I cannot possibly doubt. For Descartes, this only consists of logical truths; for Moore, it includes what appear to be basic empirical truths. Wittgenstein claims that Moore's "empirical" facts are not empirical at all, since they play a logical role in our language-games. He then agrees with Moore that these propositions, together with Descartes' logical truths, are beyond any doubt. The central claim of *On Certainty*, as a work of epistemology, is then, that that which is logically exempt from doubt cannot be said to be known. 'If "I know etc." is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the "I" cannot be important. And it properly means "There is no such thing as doubt in this case" or "The expression "I do not know" makes no sense in this case". And of course it follows from this that "I *know*" makes no sense either.' [*OC* 58] Wittgenstein's claim here is that to say that I know must mean that I have excluded doubt. If there can be absolutely no question of doubt in the first place, then how can I exclude it? In order for me to make a knowledge claim, it is necessary that I have excluded doubt through a process of deliberation, by collecting evidence, by a process of reasoning, etc. I must be able to justify my knowledge by explaining *how* I know. In the case of the claim that I have two hands, what sort of justification can I give? Moore's propositions are, as Moore himself claims, simple and in no need of any further justification, but this is precisely what excludes them from the possibility of being known, according to Wittgenstein. This, then, is the central epistemological claim of *On Certainty*: I may claim to know something if I have sought evidence for it, and, as a matter of fact, excluded doubt; I may not claim to know something if doubt is logically excluded. 'It makes no sense to say "I know that I see" if it makes no sense

to say "I don't know that I see".' [*PO* p. 300] The possibility of doubt is a condition for knowledge. '"I know…" may mean "I do not doubt…" but does not mean that the words "I doubt…" are *senseless*, that doubt is logically excluded.' [*PI* p. 221/188] My preliminary outline of *On Certainty* will therefore discuss the following steps in the argument. To say that I know something is to say that I can give a reason for knowing it, that there is an application for the question "How do you know?" For this question to be applicable there must be at least the possibility of doubt. If it is not possible for me to doubt something, what possible reason can I have for knowing it? Knowledge, therefore, depends on the possibility of doubt. But in some cases, doubt does not come into play. I cannot, therefore, claim to know certain propositions, despite the fact, or rather, because of the fact, that I cannot doubt them. These propositions belong to the foundations of many of our language-games, and constitute the background against which we may know and doubt. I first discuss the applicability of the question "How do you know?," then I discuss those propositions which are exempt from doubt, and finally I will discuss the nature of what have come to be called hinge-propositions: those propositions which are like the hinges around which the door of knowledge turns.

"How Do You Know?"

One of the central claims made by Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* is that where there is knowledge, there must be a certain applicability of the question "How do you know?" This is to say that if I know something, I must be able to back up my claim with reasons or evidence. '"I know" often means: I have the proper grounds for my statement. So if the other person is acquainted with the language-game, he would admit that I know. The other, if he is acquainted with the language-game, must be able to imagine *how* one may know something of the kind.' [*OC* 18] The concept of knowledge, according to Wittgenstein, includes the concept of evidence, of grounds for ones knowledge. 'Whether *I know* something depends on whether the evidence

backs me up or contradicts me.' [*OC* 504] Wittgenstein's point here is that in the cases which Moore describes as cases for genuine and basic knowledge, the notion of giving evidence has no real place. He takes the example of knowing that I have two hands as the Moore-type proposition *par excellence* and shows how in this case, at least under most circumstances, the notion of giving grounds for this belief is absurd, and it can thus not qualify as knowledge. It is not something I have arrived at through a process of deliberation: I simply have not reached it 'in that way.' 'Upon "I know that here is my hand" there may follow the question "How do you know?" and the answer to that presupposes that *this* can be known in *that* way.' [OC *40*] Knowledge, according to Wittgenstein, is the result of some sort of investigation. Thus, I tell you that I know something because I have sought out evidence to back this up, and I am therefore in a better position than you are to make this claim. Moore, however, chooses propositions which, if he knows, everyone knows. 'Moore says he *knows* that the earth existed long before his birth. [...] I believe e.g. that I know as much about this matter (the existence of the earth) as Moore does, and if he knows that it is as he says, then *I* know it too.' [*OC* 84] It is difficult under these circumstances to imagine what evidence which is not readily available to everybody could be given to support this claim. 'The truths which Moore says he knows, are such as, roughly speaking, all of us know, if he knows them.' [*OC* 100] That is to say, not only must I be able to give evidence in the sense of simply citing reasons which support my claim, but these reasons must be such that they genuinely count as evidence for this claim. This means that my reasons must, so to speak, have a higher degree of certainty that the knowledge claim I am making. But there are cases when such reasons are simply out of place. 'That I am a man and not a woman can be verified, but if I were to say I was a woman, and then tried to explain the error by saying that I hadn't checked the statement, the explanation would not be accepted.' [*OC* 79] What Wittgenstein is saying in this example is that to claim that I know I am a man, in ordinary contexts, is bizarre, because I cannot fathom reasons for my knowing so which genuinely are such reasons: i.e. it is out of place to say "I know I am a man because I have checked and can check at any time." If I do, as I indeed do, function on a day-to-day basis with the uncompromising belief that I am a man, or that I have two hands, this belief is not grounded in its verifiability. 'Under ordinary circumstance I do not satisfy myself that I have two hands by seeing how it looks.'

[*OC* 133] But furthermore, when asked, for example, to check a box on a form specifying my gender, not only do I not make sure before checking the box, it is not clear what this making sure would achieve. If I do not trust that I am a man, observation of my anatomical construction will not satisfy me that I am. The same goes for my having two hands. 'If a blind man were to ask me "Have you got two hands?" I should not make sure by looking. If I were to have any doubt of it, then I don't know why I should trust my eyes. For why shouldn't I test my *eyes* by looking to find out whether I see my two hands? *What* is to be tested by *what*?' [*OC* 125] Thus, in this situation, whatever evidence I give for my belief will be no more certain that the belief itself. And this, according to Wittgenstein, means that I cannot make a knowledge claim. 'If what [Moore] believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes.' [*OC* 243] The knowledge claim fails because I cannot be said to be more certain of the evidence I give in support of it than of the claim itself. 'My having two hands is, in normal circumstances, as certain as anything that I could produce in evidence for it. That is why I am not in a position to take the sight of my hand as evidence for it.' [*OC* 250] Propositions such as "I have two hands," are simply not arrived at in this way. I do not have good reasons or grounds for my beliefs that the table is still there when I leave the room, or that cats do not grow on trees, or that I have five toes on each foot, whether I am able to see them or not. [*OC* 119; 282; 429] Verifying these things will do nothing to reassure me that they are true, just like, as Wittgenstein points out, it will not make be more certain that 12x12= 144 if I check my calculations twenty times instead of twice. 'Perhaps I shall do a multiplication twice to make sure, or perhaps get someone else to work it over. But shall I work it over again twenty times, or get twenty people to go over it? And is this some sort of negligence? Would the certainty really be any greater for being checked twenty times?' [*OC* 77] I do not need to go over the calculation a hundred times on a hundred different calculators from a hundred different manufacturers to make absolutely sure that I am right. And similarly I do not check that I have five toes on each foot before asserting it (in the odd situations in which I might assert it, e.g. when I am writing philosophy) just to make sure that it is really the case. This is not negligence on my part: it is simply the nature of those kinds of facts. 'We don't, for example, arrive at any of them as a result of investigation.' [*OC* 138] What

Wittgenstein is pointing to here is that these propositions do not function in the same way as others do. The fact that we cannot give evidence for such beliefs does not show that we do not know them, in the sense that they are doubtful, but that we do not *know* them, in the sense that they do not belong to our system of knowledge and doubt at all. They have a 'peculiar logical role,' says Wittgenstein. [*OC* 136] They do not require evidence and evidence cannot be given in their support because, as a matter of fact, we do not doubt them. This brings us to the second of the claims which I will discuss in this preliminary sketch: the claim that some propositions are beyond doubt.

Beyond Doubt

There are, says Wittgenstein, certain things which I do not doubt, things which are beyond doubt. 'Now do I, in the course of my life, make sure I know that here is a hand – my own hand, that is?' [*OC* 9] On this, he agrees with Moore. When he denies Moore the right to claim that he knows that he has two hands, this is not because he believes that this is doubtful, but, on the contrary, because he agrees with Moore that it is beyond doubt. But since there can be no knowledge without the possibility of doubt, these propositions are not known. They simply are not doubted in normal circumstances. 'For months I have lived at address A, I have read the name of the street and the number of the house countless times, have received countless letters here and given countless people the address.' [*OC* 70] It is difficult, under normal circumstances, to imagine what it would be like to doubt where one lived. One can of course describe situations in which this may be understandable. I have just moved to a new address and am not sure of my postcode, for example. I have to check on a piece of paper where it is written down. When people see me doing this, I explain that I have just moved. When I go towards my new house, I am not sure whether to take the second or the third turn, etc. There are of course these kinds of situations where I may be said to doubt where I live, and in turn, once I have

learned my postcode or memorised my route home, I may say that I know where I live. But when I have lived at the same address for months or years, this information passes beyond knowledge and doubt. If I were to doubt this, what would I not doubt? 'I should like to say: "If I am wrong about *this*, I have no guarantee that anything I say is true."' [*OC* 69] These kinds of propositions, i.e. "I live at such-and-such," or "I have a hand," are simply not doubted in my ordinary intercourse with the world. 'There cannot be any doubt about it for me as a reasonable person. – That's it. –' [*OC* 219] Certain things are beyond doubt, do not come into consideration as items of knowledge or doubt. 'The reasonable man does *not have* certain doubts.' [*OC* 220]

These propositions are beyond doubt but not because they approximate very closely to certainty and are far removed from questioning. They are propositions of a different kind to those which are known and doubted: here, doubt no longer makes sense. 'This situation is thus not the same for a proposition like "At this distance from the sun there is a planet" and "Here is a hand" (namely my own hand). The second can't be called a hypothesis. But there isn't a sharp boundary line between them.' [*OC* 52] This is to say that although they appear to be similar propositions, they in fact belong to different realms. But the boundary is not sharp because it is moveable. There are cases where I may doubt that I have two hands. But under normal circumstances I do not. Under normal circumstances, doubt here is inconceivable. 'For it is not true that a mistake merely gets more and more improbable as we pass from the planet to my own hand. No: at some point it has ceased to be conceivable.' [*OC* 54] It does not make sense for the normal subject to doubt whether he has a hand. This is not a question of it being very probable. 'Or are we to say that *certainty* is merely a constructed point to which some things approximate more, some less closely? No. Doubt gradually loses its sense.' [*OC* 56] A central point here for Wittgenstein is that doubt requires certain things to be beyond doubt. We must hold certain things to be true before we can begin to doubt certain other things. Otherwise, 'grounds for *doubt* are lacking!' [*OC* 4] One can only doubt individual things. There are certain things that cannot be doubted, because after a certain point, the word doubt ceases to be adequate. Wittgenstein uses the example of a person who genuinely appeared to doubt that he had two

hands, and kept checking to see that they were there, and not false hands but real ones, etc. Wittgenstein's claim is that we could at best describe this as "doubt-like behaviour," because our concept of doubt cannot get to grips with this situation. 'If someone said that he doubted the existence of his hands, kept looking at them from all sides, tried to make sure it wasn't "all done by mirrors", etc., we should not be sure whether we ought to call that doubting. We might describe his way of behaving as like the behaviour of doubt, but his game would not be ours.' [*OC* 255] Like I have said, at some point, doubt becomes impossible and therefore the concept becomes inappropriate for behaviour of that kind. 'If my friend were to imagine one day that he had been living for a long time past in such and such a place, etc. etc., I should not call this a *mistake*, but rather a mental disturbance, perhaps a transient one.' [*OC* 71] That is to say, our concept of a mistake cannot get a grip on these cases. We cannot imagine what a mistake would be like here. 'In certain circumstances a man cannot make a *mistake*.' [*OC* 155; cf. 17, 72] Certain propositions, then, do not fit into our concept of doubt. If someone is not sure that he has two hands, we do not call him thorough or cautious but insane. 'If Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain, we should not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented.' [*OC* 155]

The fact that there are certain things which I cannot doubt is further shown by the fact that doubt only works within a system. 'A person can doubt only if he has learnt certain things; as he can miscalculate only if he has learned to calculate.' [*Z* 410] If a person is unsure about something which we consider to be integral to our system of belief and knowledge, we cannot say that he doubts it, for we would have no idea how to remove that doubt. As mentioned above, we could not give evidence to support our claims. 'If someone doubted whether the earth had existed a hundred years ago, I should not understand, for *this* reason: I would not know what such a person would still allow to be counted as evidence and what not.' [*OC* 231] In order for a doubt to be intelligible as such, it must be fitted into a system of belief. 'I.e., roughly: when someone makes a mistake, this can be fitted into what he knows aright.' [*OC* 74] Propositions like "I have two hands" are seen to be beyond doubt for Wittgenstein because without them, there is no system in which doubt can make sense. 'What would it be like to doubt now whether I have two hands? Why can't I

imagine it at all? What would I believe if I didn't believe that? So far I have no system at all within which this doubt might exist.' [*OC* 247] A general all encompassing doubt, for Wittgenstein, is similar to being wrong about all our calculations, or to claiming that a game had always been played wrong. 'So is the *hypothesis* possible, that all the things around us don't exist? Would that not be like the hypothesis of our having miscalculated in all our calculations?' [*OC* 55, cf. 496] The concept of a calculation error requires a certain degree of certainty, and so does the concept of mistakes and doubt. 'If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty.' [*OC* 115] In order to make an error of calculation, I must know how to calculate; just like playing a game wrong requires that there be a right way to play it. 'In order to make a mistake, a man must already judge in conformity with mankind.' [*OC* 156] If, for example, I constantly went about my life saying that I did not have two hands, one would not say that I doubted it. 'A doubt that doubted everything would not be a doubt.' [*OC* 450] Rather I would be regarded as "demented." If, however, I was a child or a foreigner just learning the language, I may be taken to have misunderstood the meaning of my words. 'The *truth* of my statements is the test of my *understanding* of these statements.' [*OC* 80] Thus, if I constantly repeat a false statement regarding a proposition of the kind Moore claims to know, then my very understanding of this statement is compromised. 'That is to say: if I make certain false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them.' [*OC* 81] At this level, doubt becomes misunderstanding. 'If you are not certain of any fact, you cannot be certain of the meaning of your words either.' [*OC* 114] Doubt in order to qualify as doubt, relies on these propositions being acquired. 'Doubt itself rests only on what is beyond doubt.' [*OC* 519, cf. 625] These propositions are those of which Moore speaks, and many others, which, following Wittgenstein, are often called hinge-propositions. 'That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.' [*OC* 341]

The 'Hinges on which those Turn'

These hinge-propositions which are, as has been said, beyond doubt, are not beyond doubt because we can give reasons for their being certain. For Wittgenstein, the assumption that that which is beyond doubt must be grounded in reason is misleading. 'Now someone says: you must surely have a reason to assume that, otherwise the assumption is unsupported and worthless. – (Remember that we stand on the earth, but the earth doesn't stand on anything else; children think it'll have to fall if it's not supported.)' [*PG* 68] There comes a point when giving reasons and justification comes to an end, and we are left with certain propositions which are beyond doubt, and which simply have to be accepted as such. 'Doesn't testing come to an end?' [*OC* 164] Wittgenstein's claim is that testing does come to an end and at the end lies what cannot be tested, and what cannot be doubted. This can only be described as a brute fact. 'At some point one has to pass from explanation to mere description.' [*OC* 189] At some point we must cease to ask for explanation, for reasons, because they cannot be given. Furthermore, if someone were to doubt these hinge-propositions, I could not convince him by giving reasons, because, as I have said, it is not clear what we can count as evidence for them if they are not themselves beyond doubt. Someone of the opinion that these propositions were false could not be convinced through argument, only persuaded. 'This would happen through a kind of *persuasion*.' [*OC* 262] The gap between two people, one who believes he has hands and the other who does not, would be so great that reconciliation would seem unlikely. 'Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and heretic.' [*OC* 611] Any attempt at conversion must come through a kind of battle, not through rational argumentation. 'I said I would "combat" the other man, – but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*.' [*OC* 612] We must persuade the other by showing him our way of seeing things rather than trying to convince him through a kind of explanation. This is because these hinge-propositions are such that they hold our entire language-game in place. They are, as Wittgenstein puts it, 'fused into the foundations of our language-game.' [*OC* 558]

To say that they are fused into the foundations, however, is not to say that they themselves are founded, quite the opposite. 'At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded.' [*OC* 253] It is to this extent that the word "know" seems to be inapplicable here. I do not *know* that I have two hands, because the fact that I have two hands belongs to the very foundations of my concepts of knowledge and doubt, and as such is not itself founded. 'To say of man, in Moore's sense, that he *knows* something; that what he says is therefore unconditionally the truth, seems wrong to me. – It is the truth only inasmuch as it is an unmoving foundation of his language-games.' [*OC* 403] The fact that I have two hands is to be taken as a brute fact. This simply is the way things are for me. It 'gives our way of looking at things, and our research, their form' and 'for unthinkable ages, it has belonged to the *scaffolding* of our thoughts.' [*OC* 211] The exact nature of these propositions is what will be investigated throughout this chapter, but the vocabulary employed by Wittgenstein here is of great interest. His talk of foundations and scaffolding shows the extent to which hinge-propositions are to be considered as distinct from the edifice of knowledge. The fact that I have two hands must be taken as a given. *'This* is how we think. *This* is how we act. *This* is how we talk about it.' [*Z* 309] These propositions are considered to be that upon which our knowledge rests. 'These are the fixed rails along which all our thinking runs...' [*Z* 375] As such they must be there if we are to talk of knowledge and doubt at all. At some point, some things have to be taken for granted. This is what Wittgenstein elsewhere calls the form of life. 'What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*.' [*PI* p. 226/192] The form of life in which we engage takes certain propositions for granted. And these propositions lie outside of what we call knowledge and doubt.

We have a world-picture, a form of life, and this goes unnoticed, unmentioned because it is the very background against which we function. 'He has got hold of a definite world-picture – not of course one that he invented: he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such also goes unmentioned.' [*OC* 167] This world picture must stand fast for us, must be regarded with absolute certainty, because it is what allows us to know and doubt other things. 'I should like to say: Moore does not *know* what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as

absolutely solid is part of our *method* of doubt and enquiry.' [*OC* 151] Propositions of the kind put forth by Moore are rarely uttered, and if they are uttered, are considered to be absolutely indubitable. 'It may be for example that *all enquiry of our part* is set so as to exempt certain propositions from doubt, if they are ever formulated. They lie apart from the route travelled by enquiry.' [*OC* 88] They are considered to be indubitable, not because we have solid arguments which prove their truth, but because they form our world-picture, our form of life. 'But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.' [*OC* 94] This is the nature of propositions such as "I have two hands." They lie outside of our consideration, we do not think about them, or speak about them, and when we do they seem to be obviously true. We have not considered what support they have, and when we do, it appears as if they have very little or none, but it is not negligence on our part to consider them to be true. If we were to doubt these propositions then our entire world-picture would have to be doubted and then this is no longer doubt, but insanity. 'And now if I were to say "It is my unshakeable conviction that etc.", this means in the present case too that I have not consciously arrived at the conviction by following a particular line of thought, but that it is anchored in all my *questions and answers*, so anchored that I cannot touch it.' [*OC* 103]

Secondary Literature

Before moving on to the discussion of how exactly one is to understand Wittgenstein's claims that we just do not doubt certain things, it will be interesting to briefly discuss the various different interpreters of *On Certainty* and their views regarding hinge-propositions. For Avrum Stroll, for example, Wittgenstein is thought to be developing a kind of foundationalism, albeit 'a highly original form of foundationalism.' [Stroll 1994, p. 138] There is very little discussion in Stroll as to

what supports this reading. What he is interested in is what kind of foundationalism Wittgenstein develops, and not whether or not Wittgenstein develops a foundationalism of any kind. 'The textual evidence that Wittgenstein is a foundationalist seems to me conclusive.' [Stroll 2005, p. 35] What is interesting in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty,* says Stroll, is that his foundationalism is grounded in foundations which lie outside of our system of knowledge and doubt. This goes against what we normally think of as foundationalism, for example, Descartes' *cogito.* 'According to Descartes, the cogito is both true and foundational for the epistemological mansion it supports. In this passage, Wittgenstein disagrees with Descartes. He denies that the ground is either true or false.' [Stroll 2005, p. 35] For Descartes I know that I exist, and thus, the proposition "I exist" is considered to be true. For Wittgenstein, however, propositions such as "I exist" or "I have two hands" which are to form the foundations of our thought (on this reading), are not known, and are not considered to be true. They are of a radically different kind. 'The foundations of the language game stand *outside of* and yet *support* the language game.' [Stroll 1994, p. 138] The various language-game which are played with knowledge and doubt are upheld by foundations which do not belong to them. 'For Wittgenstein, since the notions of truth and justification are inapplicable, what is foundational has an entirely different status.' [Stroll 2005, p. 35] A distinction is drawn here, by Stroll, between knowledge and certainty, or certitude. On the one hand, knowledge is what can be discovered as the result of an investigation and what can be justified or at least supported by giving evidence or reasons. What lies beneath this, and what forms the very foundations of this enterprise is to be called certitude. The two are not of the same kind whatsoever. 'The inference to be drawn from his analysis is that knowledge and certitude are radically different from one another.' [Stroll 1994, p. 139] Knowledge can only be challenged within an existing system, a system which has to be taken for granted. Certitude, however, is what belongs to the very foundations of this system, and this is what Wittgenstein considers impossible to challenge through the same kind of demand for justification as required for knowledge. 'For him scepticism is *less a challenge to the existence of knowledge than to the existence of certitude*. This is why students of this text should understand that, as the title indicates, *On Certainty* is essentially about certainty and only tangentially about knowledge. Its demonstration that certainty exists as a

foundation to the language game is what makes it such an important contribution to philosophy.' [Stroll 2005, p. 41]

Another attempt to look at Wittgenstein as a kind of foundationalist is found in the work of Danièle Moyal-Sharrock. Here too, the distinction between knowledge and certainty is systematised. On the one hand, knowledge is a kind of attitude towards propositions which considers them to be truthful, and on the other hand, certainty is a kind of non-cognitive, atheoretical belief. A proper account of *On Certainty* should investigate this certainty. 'But epistemology is only just beginning to mine the plethora of riches in *On Certainty*: we need to delve further into the nature of its foundationalism, and that requires more probing into its depiction of the non-cognitive, pragmatic nature of basic beliefs.' [Moyal-Sharrock & Brenner 2005, p. 3] There are things which we know and things of which we are certain. 'We do not *know* that "Here is a hand", "I have a body", "There exist people other than myself", "I speak French"; we are *certain* of these things – *objectively certain*.' [Moyal-Sharrock 2007, p. 181] But this certainty is not a theoretical attitude but a practical attitude. 'By this, Wittgenstein means that our foundational certainty is a *practical* certainty (not a theoretical or propositional or presuppositional certainty) which manifests itself *as* a way of acting but also that it can *only* manifest itself thus – that is, in action, and not in *words; not* in our *saying it*.' [Moyal-Sharrock 2005, p. 89] Moyal-Sharrock thinks it significant that Wittgenstein speaks of certainty as a kind of belief, faith or trust. 'All psychological terms, worries Wittgenstein, seem to lead us away from the kind of assurance in question here. And yet, he does not give up talk of belief.' [Moyal-Sharrock 2007, p. 181] What is important here is that this vocabulary is seen to take us away from the theoretical, reason giving nature of knowledge, towards a non-cognitive, practical kind of certainty. 'Wittgenstein, then, explicitly depicts objective certainty as a kind of groundless, unreasoned, unreflective, nonpropositional, grammatical, unhesitating, unswerving and foundational *trust*.' [Moyal-Sharrock 2007, p. 195]

What Stroll and Moyal-Sharrock are trying to get at here, is the fact that upholding our entire system of knowledge and doubt, there is something else, which lies outside of this system, and is thus not something theoretical, or epistemological. The long list of adjectives given by Moyal-Sharrock above is a testament to this. It is

unclear, however, that the distinction between knowledge and certainty does the job they require of it. Wittgenstein's main concern with the propositions Moore enumerates as something he knows is the fact that it sounds odd to speak them. To this extent it is not clear that changing "I know I have two hands" to "I am certain that I have two hands" does the job that Stroll and Moyal-Sharrock demand of it. Neither does changing it to "I believe that I have two hands" or "I trust that I have two hands." It is difficult to find normal situations in which we would use these kinds of phrases. No doubt such situations can be thought up and formulated and may, occasionally, occur in our lives, but they do not belong to the normal attitude which we have towards our hands. Moyal-Sharrock acknowledges in the above quote that all psychological terms seem to lead us astray from what Wittgenstein is getting at, but points out in defence of this distinction that it is one which Wittgenstein makes, and that Wittgenstein does not give up talk of certainty, belief, trust, etc. And of course, this is true. But this distinction is only made in order to try to get clear that having two hands is not something which is known, under normal circumstances. Wittgenstein will then says that it is not *known* but we are certain of it, believe it, trust, hold it fast, etc. But in truth none of these does the trick. Any attempt to systematise the distinction which Wittgenstein is making here runs the risk of leaving us with propositions such as "I am certain that I have two hands," which fly directly in the face of what Wittgenstein is trying to do here. It should also be noted that while Wittgenstein wants to turn us away from the use of "I know" in these circumstances, he seems aware that this too may appear unnatural in some situations, and he does so only in order to guide us away from thinking of my having two hands in cognitive terms. 'For when Moore says "I know that that's…" I want to reply "you don't *know* anything!" – and yet I would not say that to anyone who was speaking without philosophical intention. That is, I feel (rightly?) that these two mean to say something different.' [*OC* 407] This is to say that when a philosopher uses the words "I know," he brings with them a host of implications, most notably for Wittgenstein, the idea that I have some kind of reason or evidence to support what I claim to know. Here, Wittgenstein wishes to steer us away from this kind of thinking when it comes to my having two hands and the like, but this does not mean we must systematically give up the use of "I know" and replace it with "I am certain." Knowledge and certainty cannot be systematically defined and thus cannot

be systematically opposed. Alice Ambrose reports Wittgenstein's rejection of the idea that knowledge can be considered as a homogeneous concept. 'In the *Theaetetus* Socrates fails to produce a definition of "knowledge" because there is no definition giving what is common to all instances of knowledge. Because the word "knowledge" is used in all sorts of ways, any definition given will fail to apply to some cases.' [Wittgenstein 1986, p. 96] This is just the point which Wittgenstein would make in response to the systematic rejection of the use of "I know" and its replacement with "I am certain." Neither with satisfy all the cases which we may try to give as instances of knowledge or certainty. It is rather a case of trying to determine where the use of one as opposed to the other seems more naturally in its place. The opposition between the two terms, and the long list of other verbs such as believe, trust, hold fast, be unshakeably convinced, etc., is simply designed to reject the idea that my having two hands is thought of under normal circumstances in epistemic or cognitive terms. Any systematic replacement with any of the above terms will fail in exactly the same way that "I know" does.

Thomas Morawetz has an interesting reply to this problem. He draws the distinction between having knowledge and being in a position to claim that one has knowledge.

> 'One of the most seductive traps for the novice philosopher is to draw the following inference. She will note correctly that perennial philosophical questions, such as the concept of knowledge, may be usefully addressed by examining speech acts, such as claims to know. From that methodological insight, she may infer that there is a one-to-one relationship between having knowledge and being in a position to claim, "I know…" She may assume that whenever one has knowledge, one may appropriately claim to know.' [Morawetz 2005, p. 165]

What is crucial according to Morawetz is not the distinction between knowledge and certainty or certitude, but the distinction between knowing something and saying one knows it. From this distinction, a second distinction can be made. There are propositions which I may correctly be said to know, but which it would be odd, in most contexts, to pronounce. Then there are propositions which I simply cannot be said to know. In the first case, the utterance is out of place, but I am able to give

certain justifications if I am asked to do so. There are propositions, though they seem certain, which lack the right context for their expression. 'The utterance is "unjustified and presumptuous" not in the sense of being dubious and questionable, but in the sense of presuming a context in which such an utterance addresses a shared concern and in which justifications, if needed, can be summoned.' [Morawetz 2005, p. 166] Thus, though it can be said of me that I know something, it would in a great many cases seem out of place for me to claim to know them. Morawetz writes that 'even when it is a correct description of a speaker that he knows what colors these objects are, it is odd to *say* so unless the context supplies a reason for saying so.' [Morawetz 1978, p. 9] He gives the example of uttering a knowledge claim regarding a true fact in a completely inappropriate context. Thus it is the utterance that seems odd, despite the fact that its content is undisputed. 'I may interrupt a discussion of French cooking with the claim, "I know that Kant wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason* before he wrote the *Critique of Practical Reason*." What I have said is doubly correct; Kant did write the one work before the other, and I do know it. But my saying so is pointless.' [Morawetz 1978, p. 77] This may remind us, as pointed out by Lee Braver, of Kierkegaard's lunatic. Braver also reminds us that Wittgenstein was very familiar with Kierkegaard's writings and may have had this story in mind when writing some passages of *On Certainty*. [Braver 2012, p. 84] The story goes as follows:

'A patient in [a madhouse] wants to run away and actually carries out his plan by jumping through a window. He now finds himself in the garden of the institution and wishes to take the road to freedom. Then it occurs to him […]: When you arrive in the city, you will be recognized and will very likely be taken back right away. What you need to do, then, is to convince everyone completely, by the objective truth of what you say, that all is well as far as your sanity is concerned. As he is walking along and pondering this, he sees a skittle ball lying on the ground. He picks it up and puts it in the tail of his coat. At every step he takes, this ball bumps him, if you please, on the r-----, and every time it bumps him he says, "Boom! The earth is round." He arrives in the capital city and immediately visits one of his friends. He wants to convince him that he is not lunatic and therefore

paces up and down the floor and continually says, "Boom! The earth is round!" But is the earth not round? […] And yet, precisely by this it became clear to the physician that the patient was not yet cured, although the cure certainly could not revolve around getting him to assume that the earth is flat.' [Kierkegaard 1992, p. 194-5]

What is interesting about this story is that the assumption that truths are truths no matter what, which is the assumption being made by the lunatic, and which is clearly ridiculous in this case, is effectively the assumption that Moore makes when he claims that he knows he has two hands. Of course, Moore was uttering this in the context of a philosophical debate and not in order to convince someone that he was of sane mind. But if philosophical debate is the only context in which this is an appropriate knowledge claim, then, Wittgenstein argues, the philosopher has gotten lost. What is of paramount importance is the context in which knowledge claims are uttered. So too, in the case of speaking about the chronological order of Kant's works in a conversation on French cooking, the statement is true, but seems strange and out of place because it does not belong in this situation. 'What is problematic here is not my knowing but my claiming to know.' [Morawetz 1978, p. 78] For Morawetz, there are a great number of things that I know but which I rarely profess to know. They are simply part of the background against which I live. However, despite this, I *could* give evidence for them if prompted and thus I can correctly be said to know them. 'Wittgenstein points out that my actions make evident many things that I know, and this is commonly the case in situations in which it would be strange and unsettling to claim to know these things. I accompany my colleagues to the cafeteria in the basement of the faculty building, and I lead the way. My actions show that I know, but I would induce more than puzzlement were I to proclaim, "I know where the cafeteria is!" to friends with whom I have shared it for 12 years.' [Morawetz 2005, p. 167] Here my leading my friends to the cafeteria shows that I know where it is, and I would, if bizarrely prompted to do so, be capable of saying how I know.

There are, however, according to Morawetz, other propositions which I do not know, because the very possibility of my knowing anything depends on these. They are what he calls methodological propositions.

'Such subjects are what I call in chapter two "methodological propositions." I contrast them with empirical propositions that may be held fast in particular contexts. It is pointless to claim to know an empirical matter when that matter is held fast as a rule in testing (or when it is simply irrelevant, etc.); but it is *generally* pointless to claim to know a methodological matter. An example is "I know that there are physical objects." This is objectionable in a way in which the claim about Kant is not objectionable: whether or not there is a point in my claiming to know that "Kant wrote…," it is correct that I know that "Kant wrote…" It is something that I have learned. But it is not correct that I know that there are physical objects.' [Morawetz 1978, p. 80]

Thus, within what Stroll and Moyal-Sharrock have called foundational propositions, Morawetz distinguishes those which are empirical, which can be held fast and become part of the foundations of knowledge and doubt, but which are not necessarily so, and, on the other hand, methodological propositions which it is never appropriate to utter as knowledge claims, and thus cannot be said to be known. "There are physical objects" is a prime example.

The kind of passage in *On Certainty* which Morawetz is concerned with here is passages which resemble the following:

'Do I know that I am now sitting in a chair? – Don't I know it?! In the present circumstances no one is going to say that I know this; but no more will he say, for example, that I am conscious. Nor will one normally say this of the passers-by in the street.

But now, even if one doesn't say it, does that make it *untrue*??' OC 552

Here, Wittgenstein is concerned to show that to utter a true proposition is not always appropriate, and yet that this does not negate the proposition in question. One can imagine a host of out-of-place knowledge claims such as those described by Morawetz. It is not clear, however, that Wittgenstein wishes to draw a sharp distinction between those that could and could not be said to be known. Wittgenstein does not rule out the possibility of providing a context in which someone *might* say

"I know there are physical objects." There is certainly a difference between saying this and saying "I know that Kant wrote …" But it is not clear that this distinction lies in one being methodological and the other not. The Kant example is a case of more or less "classic" knowledge. It is something I have learned or been taught, probably at university or in college. It represents a case of rather specialised knowledge which not many people have, and one can imagine the question coming up fairly often (in some circles, of course) as to which of these two works was written first. There will be, if one is a philosopher, an abundance of contexts in which this is a useful and interesting piece of information. Of course, a discussion of French cuisine is not one of them. But there are such contexts. It is not something which is primordially shown by my actions, like my knowing how to get to the cafeteria is. This knowledge, if we are to call it knowledge, is something which is shown in my life: I go to the cafeteria every day, I do not consult a campus map to get there, I do not stop and wonder whether to go right or left at the bottom of the stairs, I do not ask people where the nearest place to get a cup of coffee is. These actions and a host of other actions display my knowledge, and these actions probably occur more than my explicitly claiming that I know where the cafeteria is. It is certainly something that is shown in my life, but which can, on certain occasions, become a piece of information to someone who does not know. Now what of the claim that there are physical objects? Here, it seems odd to claim that I know this. Thus, unlike the previous example, cases for an explicit knowledge claim will not come up under normal circumstances. But this is not to say that they will never come up. We can always construct situations (drug use, for instance) in which something may appear doubtful, and I may reassure myself by saying that I know such-and-such. It is simply that in the course of my ordinary life these doubts do not occur. But then neither do doubts about where the cafeteria is, or better, where my house is. Yet Morawetz wants to say that my life shows that I know where my house is, despite the lack of appropriate contexts for claiming so, and deny that my life shows that I know there are physical objects. In fact, neither normally belongs to the domain of knowledge, and both can be extracted and made into propositions to be uttered under some very specific conditions. There are no absolute transcendental propositions which cannot be doubted no matter what, only propositions which cannot be doubted given the way we act, given the way we go about our lives. This

is the crucial point Wittgenstein is making, and this is what will be developed in the remainder of this chapter: the idea that Moore-type propositions are simply anchored into our actions, and that these actions constitute our primary relation to the world. Our actions are not ways of showing knowledge or systems which hold propositions fast. Propositional knowledge is derived and abstracted from the ways in which we act. Thus there are a certain number of propositions which, if made into propositions, will occupy a peculiar place in our language-games. But this does not make these propositions necessarily true in the way Morawetz suggests. It is my practical involvement with things, my commerce with the world, which makes physical objects stand fast for me, and this is not transcendental but contingent and may shift, despite being fundamental. It is what Merleau-Ponty calls the 'fundamental contingency.' [*PP* p. 221/256] This will become clearer as we move to phenomenology.

What has been left out of these interpretations is a full description of the notion of activity, of practice, of what Wittgenstein calls our 'animal' or 'primitive' contact with things which is that upon which our knowledge is based. As I have said, Moyal-Sharrock calls our certainty regarding certain things 'groundless, unreasoned, unreflective, nonpropositional, grammatical, unhesitating, unswerving and foundational' [Moyal-Sharrock 2007, p. 195] Michael Williams claims that they 'must exist implicitly in practice.' [Williams 2005, p. 52] Anthony Rudd says that they are things which we 'pick up, without thinking about it.' [Rudd 2005, p. 145] Rush Rhees says that it seems 'queer to speak of the sorts of things in question here as experiential *propositions*.' [Rhees 2003, p. 58] Mary McGinn talks of a 'non-epistemic' or 'pre-epistemic attitude' [McGinn 1989, p. 137, 144] There are many more commentators who are aware that what Wittgenstein is looking for lies beyond knowledge and theory and beyond thought and propositions. But what is missing in all of them is an account of how we are to cash this out. This is where phenomenology may come in handy. By understanding Heidegger's notions of the ready-to-hand and of being-in-the-world, it will be possible to look for the foundations of thought in a practical engagement with the world and to understand Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* in a fresh light.

Being-in-the-World and the Ready-to-Hand

A major difference between the various readings of *On Certainty* and the one which I will suggest here can be brought out by turning to the phenomenological tradition. Rather than discussing epistemology and the status of propositions as knowable or unknowable, phenomenologists have turned to the ontology of knowledge, and have discovered that traditional epistemology and philosophy in general have misrepresented the subject as primordially a knowing subject. Thus, epistemology takes precedent over ontology, since our primary contact with the world is supposed to be a theoretical one. 'That is, what were seen as proper procedures of rational thought were read into the very constitution of the mind and made part of its very structure.' [Taylor 1993, p. 317-318] This is to deeply misconceive what it is to be a subject. Heidegger's description of being-in-the-world aims to put this misconception right. 'Thus the phenomenon of Being-in has for the most part been represented by a single exemplar – knowing the world. […] Because knowing has been given this priority, our understanding of its own-most kind of being gets led astray, and accordingly Being-in-the-world must be exhibited even more precisely with regard to knowing the world, and must itself be made visible as an existential "modality" of Being-in.' [*BT* H59] Knowing the world is not, for Heidegger, a question of an inner self, grasping a world which is outside it. Rather, the self is always already in the world, among things. 'When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always "outside" alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered.' [*BT* H562] It is not consciousness which knows, not a contemplating subject, but an engaged being, going about his life. 'And furthermore, the perceiving of what is known is not a process of returning with one's booty to the "cabinet" of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it; even in perceiving, retaining, and preserving, the Dasein which knows *remains outside*, and it does so *as Dasein.*' [*BT* H62] This is to say that knowing is first and foremost a being-in-the-world, and that is what interests us here. It is being-in-the-world, among things, living our life, which is our primary relation to things, and only then can we grasp

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them theoretically, and thus claim to know them in the thetic sense. The picture of the knowing subject is gravely misleading. 'Heidegger had to struggle against this picture to recover an understanding of the agent as engaged, as embedded in a culture, a form of life, a "world" of involvement, ultimately to understand the agent as embodied.' [Taylor 1993, p. 318] This is what Heidegger means by "being-in-the-world," and this needs some further discussion.

For Heidegger, the word "in" has two meanings. On the one hand, the meaning which he gives to it in being-in-the-world, and on the other, the sense which applies to objects. 'This latter term designates the kind of Being which an entity has when it is "in" another one, as the water is "in" the glass, or the garment is "in" the cupboard.' [*BT* H53] This sense of the word "in" is taken in the sense of spatial containment. A thing is "in" another when the latter contains the former, when they are, that is, in that particular spatial relation to one-another. 'Both water and glass, garment and cupboard, are "in" space and "at" a location, and both in the same way.' [*BT* H54] These kinds of objects have the same kind of being: the present-at-hand, which is Heidegger's term for things that are merely inert object in spatial and geometrical relations to each other (Descartes' *res extensae*). 'All entities whose Being "in" one another can thus be described have the same kind of Being – that of Being-present-at-hand – as Things occurring "within" the world.' [*BT* H54] On the other hand, Dasein, Heidegger's preferred term for the subject, is in the world in a completely different sense of the word "in". This has nothing to do with Dasein's spatial situation. 'There is no such thing as the 'side-by-side-ness' of an entity called "Dasein" with another entity called "world".' [*BT* H55] It is not that the Dasein is in the world like the water is in the glass. The sense of "being-in" which Heidegger describes here is closely related to the forms 'to reside' or 'to dwell.' [*BT* H54] Thus Dasein touches the world and is touched by it, in a way in which objects cannot touch each other. 'Taken strictly, "touching" is never what we are talking about in such cases, not because accurate re-examination will always eventually establish that there is a space between the chair and the wall, but because in principle the chair can never touch the wall, even if the space between them should be equal to zero.' [*BT* H55] This is to say that Dasein has a special kind of being which distinguishes it from objects, in the sense that it is engaged with the world, has its life in it. Dasein

relates to the world, not merely as a mind which grasps it, nor, on the other hand, as an object within it, but as something which delves into it, is involved with it. Dasein has a relation to the world which objects can never have, does things that objects cannot. The kinds of things which mere objects can never do include 'having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining…' [*BT* H56] These are the kinds of attitudes which Dasein has towards the world, and the world in this sense is not merely present-at-hand but ready-to-hand.

Heidegger's notion of the ready-to-hand will be helpful in making our primary relation to the world more explicit. His distinction between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand is aimed at both empiricism and intellectualism. Despite their differences, both present the world as empty of subjectivity, as either spread out before me, as a constituting self, or as containing me, as an objective self. I am thus either in an observing relation to the world in the sense that the world is always in front of me, or within the world as a mere object among objects. For Heidegger, on the other hand, the world is always around me: I am always in the world in the sense discussed above. This manner in which I am in the world is not as an object among objects, in spatio-temporal relations to them, but as engaged in the world, as *with or towards* the world. Thus, the world for me is never the world of things present-at-hand, that is, as they are in their spatio-temporal relations to each other, with properties such as 'substantiality, materiality, extendedness, side-by-side-ness, and so forth.' [*BT* H68] The world is the world of objects ready-to-hand, those objects taken up in my engagement in the world, which he calls equipment. He says that they are always experienced as in-order-to. This can only be discovered when we engage in the world, deal with it, manipulate things, etc. But this engagement is not a particular way in which I can, if I choose to, relate to the world, but the primary way in which I encounter it. 'The kind of Being which belongs to such concernful dealings is not one into which we need to put ourselves first. This is the way in which everyday Dasein always *is*: when I open the door, for instance, I use the latch.' [*BT* H67] This is to say, I am not usually in the sort of contemplating relation to the world that empiricism and intellectualism suggest: I dwell in it, inhabit it.

Any kind of cognising, then, regarding the world, is always second to a dwelling in the world. It is of course possible to look at things without seeing them as tools, only this is not our usual relation to the world. 'This sort of attention to the look of things is precisely one that declines to see them as items of current use, and it thus removes its subject from her usual relation to the world as exemplified in using the things in it.' [Gilbert & Lennon 2005, p. 11] To posit the world of the present-at-hand requires a significant step back from the way in which I am in my everyday being, an abstraction which eliminates me as a point of view, from the world which under normal circumstances is always for me, and in-order-for-me-to… 'The kind of dealing which is closest to us is […] not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use…' [*BT* H67] We can see from this that Heidegger clearly conceives us relating to the world in a pre-cognitive manner, since the ready-to-hand is not something which we access cognitively, and is, at the same time, that which we access primarily. The world is always the world of things ready-to-hand, and 'the ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all'. [*BT* H69] Indeed, for Heidegger, 'no matter how sharply we just *look* at the "outward appearance" of Things […], we cannot discover anything ready-to-hand.' [*BT* H69] It is important to understand that the ready-to-hand is not a characteristic which I project onto the world. The world is given to me as meaningful in its readiness-to-hand. This is the primary way in which the world is for me. '[Readiness-to-hand] is not to be understood as merely a way of taking [these objects], as if we were taking such "aspects" into the "entities" which we proximally encounter, or as if some world-stuff which is proximally present-at-hand in itself were "given subjective colouring" in this way.' [*BT* H71] Rather, we never, in our day-to-day dealings, encounter anything which is not ready-to-hand. That is, we do not encounter the world through any kind of cognising, but through a kind of acting. It is quite clear here that, for Heidegger, any kind of theoretical elaboration must be abstracted from this primordial being-in-the-world.

Merleau-Ponty and the Foundations of Thought and Knowledge

For Merleau-Ponty, being-in-truth is indistinguishable from being-in-the-world. Truths are not objects which can be held before us and observed but experiences which are lived through. 'There are truths just as there are perceptions: not that we can ever array before ourselves in their entirety the reasons for any assertion – there are merely motives, we have merely a hold on time and not full possession of it – but because it is of the essence of time to take itself up as it leaves itself behind, and to draw itself together into visible things, into first hand evidence.' [*PP*, p. 395/459] Thus our theoretical grasp on things is not only dependent on our present being-in-the-world but also in our being-in-the-world in time, on our past being brought forward into our present. Being-in-the-world, then, as the precondition for knowledge is thus not merely present but also past. It carries with it an entire set of presuppositions which allow me to step back and grasp the world in the theoretical manner which is required for propositional knowledge. 'If it were possible to lay bare and unfold all the presuppositions in what I call my reason or my ideas at each moment, we should always find experiences which have not been made explicit, large-scale contributions from past and present, a whole "sedimentary history" which is not only relevant to the *genesis* of my thought, but which determines its *significance*.' [*PP*, p. 395/459] This is to say that every experience of my past and present, even those which were not explicit, which were not brought before my consciousness, is brought forward and is in fact silently present in my explicit thought, underlying it. Thus, I do not think the world, but I engage with it, I live it and all the experiences I have lived through silently feed thought and give it its meaning. Thought, then, is not my primary relation to the world, but is dependent on a prior engagement among things. Not only could no explicit thought have ever come about without this being-in-the-world-in-time, but even if it had been brought about by some miracle it could not be sustained as having any significance, and no knowledge would be possible.

If we try to consider the subject as a knowing subject, if we try to think of our primary relation to the world as a cognitive one, then the whole enterprise of

knowledge falls down. As soon as we turn away from the pre-epistemologically acquired basis for knowledge, then we can of course theoretically doubt everything. 'Which is why, as Descartes maintained, it is true both that certain ideas are presented to me as irresistibly self-evident *de facto* [factually], and that this fact is never valid *de jure* [rightfully], and that it never does away with the possibility of doubt arising as soon as we are no longer in the presence of the idea.' [*PP*, p. 396/461] Certainty is thus the holding-fast of certain grounds which provide the self-evidence of certain facts, but this certainty is never absolute, since these presuppositions can always be doubted. But given our being-in-the-word, our situatedness, our engagement in the world, most of these grounds are never made explicit as propositions. This is not a failure on our part, but the very nature of certainty: I cannot disengage from the world in which I am, and thus my situation, which is always contingent, dictates certain presuppositions inherent in my world view and, therefore, inherent in the very nature of knowledge. Self-evident truth is 'irresistible because I take for granted a certain acquisition of experience, a certain field of thought, and precisely for this reason it appears to me as self-evident for a certain thinking nature, the one which I enjoy and perpetuate, but which remains contingent and given to itself.' [*PP*, p. 396/461] Thus, I can know the properties of the triangle only if I am committed in that moment to Euclidean space, and it is then true that the sum of its angles is equal to two right angles. But this truth is not absolute truth because it has been shown that actual space does not conform to Euclidean space. It is, however, the space in which we go about our lives. Nevertheless, this truth about the triangle holds, and I am not mistaken in saying that the sum of its angles is equal to two right-angles. 'Once launched, and committed to a certain set of thoughts, Euclidean space, for example, or the conditions governing the existence of a certain society, I discover evident truths; but these are not unchallengeable, since perhaps this space or this society are not the only ones possible.' [*PP*, p. 396/461] Thus a certain hold on the world has to be taken for granted, has to be taken as ultimate, and only then can we speak of knowledge. And this knowledge is not limited by the presuppositions which we carry forward but made possible by them, so that they are part of the very essence of certainty. This knowledge is not 'destined to give way later to an absolute form' of knowledge but,

on the contrary is the only possible form of knowledge, a knowledge dependent on being-in-the-world.

Furthermore, for Merleau-Ponty, if a thought appears to me to be true, it does not matter whether it is necessarily or absolutely true, what matters is that it fits and at the same time shapes my notion of truth, such that it must fit in with other truths and that future truths must fit in with it. Any thought which I try to imagine thereafter must fit in to my world. 'My thought, my self-evident truth is not one fact among others, but a value-fact which envelops and conditions every other possible one.' [*PP*, p. 398/463] I cannot go so far as to imagine another world, but this does not mean that mine is not contingent, rather it means that imagining it would mean it fitting-in to some extent with my own. 'Consciousness, if it is not absolute truth [...], at least rules out absolute falsity.' [*PP*, p. 398/463] This is to say that I am conscious of a world in which there are truths and falsehoods, but these falsehoods only make sense against the background of my world which is assumed to have some truth-value. Errors and doubts are only possible in a world where there is also truth and knowledge, in which I can potentially recognise my errors as errors, even if this is impossible at the time I make them. But these errors and doubts cannot be absolute, cannot remove us from truth completely, without themselves falling apart. 'The truth is that neither error nor doubt ever cut us off from the truth, because they are surrounded by a world horizon in which the teleology of consciousness summons us to an effort at resolving them.' [*PP*, p. 398/463] Thus, we are constantly striving to correct mistakes and to gain a clearer understanding of the world, but this all takes place within a framework of contingency. Yet this must be taken for granted: this contingency, far from being a failure in knowledge which needs correcting, is the very condition for our enquiries about truth and knowledge. It is the contingency of being-in-the-world. It must be taken as ultimate. 'Finally, the contingency of the world must not be understood as a deficiency in being, a break in the stuff of necessary being, a threat to rationality, nor as a problem to be solved as soon as possible by the discovery of some deeper-laid necessity. That is ontic contingency, contingency within the bounds of the world.' [*PP*, p. 398/463] What Merleau-Ponty is saying here is that necessity is only possible within the world, which itself is contingent, and that this contingency is ultimate, our entire path of enquiry works

within it. This, as we have seen, is what he terms ontological contingency, that contingency which encompasses the world, as opposed to ontic contingency, which takes place within it. 'Ontological contingency, the contingency of the world itself, being radical, is, on the other hand, what forms the basis once and for all of our ideas of truth. The world is that reality of which the necessary and the possible are merely provinces.' [*PP*, p. 398/463-4] This emphasis on the world being the province of all truth and knowledge is what is of interest here. It is the world and my practical engagement with it which must be taken for granted. From this, certain propositions emerge which will form the basis of knowledge. But these propositions themselves are grounded in a practical being-in-the-world which is not propositional. They are merely abstractions from the more fundamental being-in-the-world. This is expressed by Merleau-Ponty's famous remark: 'Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of "I think that" but of "I can."' [*PP* p. 137/159] This is to say that thinking comes after acting, behaving, being-in-the-world. This is what the remainder of this chapter will discuss in relation to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein and Being-in-the-World

As I have said, the context in which knowledge claims are uttered is of great importance. One cannot, says Wittgenstein, give a list of everything that one knows in the absence of any kind of situation or circumstance. 'Now, can one enumerate what one knows (like Moore)? Straight off like that, I believe not.' [*OC* 6] This leads him to claim that there are certain things which one knows and yet which do not fit into knowledge claims. My behaviour shows that I know all sorts of things, according to Wittgenstein, but explicit knowledge claims are often meaningless. 'Thus it seems to me that I have known something the whole time, and yet there is no meaning in saying so, in uttering this truth.' [*OC* 466] These are truths which are anchored in human behaviour, which form the very basis of our life. This kind of knowledge is a kind of action, a kind of practical knowledge. By this Wittgenstein

does not mean a kind of knowing-how. Charles Taylor suggests that this is what is at stake in Heidegger's philosophy. 'This is the point that is sometimes made by saying that it is a kind of "knowing how" rather than a "knowing that."' [Taylor 1993, p. 327] But the point in both Heidegger and Wittgenstein is rather deeper than this. It makes just as little sense to say "I know *how* to walk" under normal circumstances as it does to say "I know *that* walking requires me to put one foot before the other." In both situations, the word "know" seems out of place. What is meant here by practical knowledge is rather that I simply walk, and this shows a whole host of things about me, e.g. that the thought has never seriously crossed my mind that the pavement may crumble before my feet. 'At this level, we do not depend on explication or justification. Rather, at this level, our convictions about the world, other minds, etc., are borne out in what we unreflectively do, not in what we say, nor in the reasons why we say what we say.' [Brice & Bourgeois 2012, p. 79] This is a kind of practical attitude which in some cases, Wittgenstein admits, could be called knowledge. '"I know that this room is on the second floor, that behind the door a short landing leads to the stairs, and so on." One could imagine cases where I should come out with this, but they would be extremely rare. But on the other hand I shew this knowledge day in, day out by my actions and also in what I say.' [*OC* 431] This kind of practical attitude, which commentators have called trust or certainty, but which, here, Wittgenstein does not refrain from calling knowledge, forms the very basis of our dealings with the world, belongs to what Wittgenstein calls our form of life. Upon this, we later build propositional knowledge, but it is only a second-order abstraction from this primordial way of going about one's life. It is this line of thought which is to be found in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty as shown above, and that I shall now reveal in Wittgenstein's work. Though I concentrate on *On Certainty* here, there are other passages elsewhere in his later work which show a similar concern.

Wittgenstein points out that there are many things which we do not learn by learning propositions, but by learning to behave in certain ways, and it does not follow from this that I am able to abstract from this behaviour a propositional knowledge of any kind. 'If I have learned to carry out a particular activity in a particular room (putting the room in order, say) and I am master of this technique, it does not follow that I

must be ready to describe the arrangement of the room; even if I should at once notice, and could also describe, any alteration in it.' [*Z* 119] To produce a description of what I am doing is not something which always comes naturally. This is because I am not in a detached observational relation to my own doings, but rather, I live through them. 'It could very well be imagined that someone knows his way around a city perfectly, i.e. would confidently find the shortest way from any place in it to another, – and yet would be quite incompetent to draw a map of the city. That, as soon as he tries, he produces nothing that is not *completely wrong*.' [*Z* 121] My incompetence to draw a map of, say, the university campus, which I have visited daily for seven years, does not show that I do not "know" the campus, in the sense of not being able to navigate around it, but that I do not *know* it as an abstract idea which I am capable of putting into words or drawing. This is because I did not learn my way around campus by studying a map. I may do so, of course, but generally I do not. I start by finding out where the library and the philosophy department are, and I do this, either by glancing at a map, or by asking my way, or by walking around campus to explore it, etc. From there I find out where the nearest place to get coffee is, the nearest place for food, the administrative offices, etc. That is, bit by bit, I learn to navigate around the university, not by learning where things are on a map, but by a practical engagement with university life. Bit by bit, it is integrated into my world-picture, and it ceases to make sense to say that I *know* where the library is. This has become part of the background of my campus life and has become fused into my world-picture. 'The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules.' [*OC* 95] It is in this sense that Wittgenstein wants to reject much of our use of the word "knowledge." More often than not, we simply play the game, we do not sit down and learn its rules. 'The grammar of a language isn't recorded and doesn't come into existence until the language has already been spoken by human beings for a *long* time. Similarly, primitive games are played without their rules being codified, and even without a single rule being formulated.' [*PG* 26] And this is further shown by the fact that, very often, one's explicit knowledge of the rules of a game, or of language, is shaky at best. The child learns to speak long before he learns the correct grammar of his sentences. The mistake we make when looking at the questions of knowledge

is that we fail to see that explicit rules come after the game. They serve to consolidate it and make it what it is, but this is only done once we have been playing according to implicit rules for a long time. 'But we look at games and language under the guise of a game played according to rules. That is, we are always *comparing* language with a procedure of that kind.' [*PG* 27] Our primary engagement in the world is not effected through propositions and pictures, but through action and behaviour. 'For example, explaining that the world exists is not the reason we actually hold this conviction, it develops out of our necessity of walking on it, planting trees on it, waging war on it, etc.' [Brice & Bourgeois 2012, p. 79] Actions and behaviour, in this sense, precedes propositional knowledge. 'We talk, we utter words, and only *later* get a picture of their life.' [*PI* p. 209/178] It is this talking, this behaving in certain ways, this playing of the game which forms my primordial mode of being, my life, and this I take for granted, with everything that it entails, without ever looking back upon it and making sure that it is the way I think it is. 'My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things.' [*OC* 344] We are certain of those things which pertain to this primordial activity, which phenomenologists have called being-in-the-world, but this certainty is simply contained within our being-in-the-world and not laid out before us to examine. 'Now I would like to regard this certainty, not as something akin to hastiness or superficiality, but as a form of life.' [*OC* 358] Although, in brackets, next to this remark Wittgenstein wrote that it was badly expressed, we may gain insight from this remark. Wittgenstein seems to be stressing that this certainty, this faith in things which anchor all our thoughts and yet are not themselves anchored is not a bad kind of *thinking* but a primordial way of *living*. 'That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted.' [*OC* 342] The italic stress of *in deed* and the separation of the two words here shows that Wittgenstein wishes to emphasise deeds, actions, behaviour, practice, etc., as opposed, on the other hand, to thought, knowledge, theory, etc.[19] 'I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but no ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not

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[19] Think of *OC* 396, where Wittgenstein, in a footnote, quotes Goethe: 'In the beginning was the deed.' [cf. Goethe 1892, p. 87]

emerge from some kind of ratiocination.' [*OC* 475] Man, then, for Wittgenstein is first and foremost an animal, but this does not mean that man is, as it were, *merely* an animal, but that all the abstract thought and knowledge that we have come to possess and hold dear, and at least since Descartes, consider to be the essence of our being, is but an abstraction from a more primitive behaviour, a form of life, a being-in-the-world. And neither do I mean here that evolution has moved us away from behaviour and towards abstract thought. In saying that action has priority over thought, I do not mean historically, chronologically or evolutionarily, but logically, in the sense that any being whose thoughts were not anchored in behaviour, if such a thing is possible, would be very different from us indeed.

Wittgenstein places great emphasis on the fact that as children we do not learn propositions. We do not learn *that* such-and-such is the case, but rather to behave in such-and-such a way. 'Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., – they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc.' [*OC* 476] Here we can see the parallel with Heidegger's notion of the ready-to-hand. Objects are first apprehended as having a purpose, as something with which one engages. We do not observe or contemplate books and armchairs in a detached manner: we fetch them, read them, or sit in them. It is not that in such cases we should speak of faith or certainty as opposed to knowledge, but that here, all psychological terms fall short because what is in question is a kind of acting, a kind of engaging with the thing in a practical manner. 'Does a child believe that milk exists? Or does it know that milk exists? Does a cat know that a mouse exists?' [*OC* 478] To say that they do is surely inaccurate. The child *drinks* the milk, the cat *chases* the mouse, and this does not, contrary to what is traditionally thought, presuppose that the child knows anything about the milk, nor the cat about the mouse. No theoretical considerations have entered his mind. Of course, it seems like a logical claim that milk exists and that awareness of my drinking it should constitute knowledge of its existence. The argument would be formalised as follows:

P_1: I am drinking the milk

P_2: Anything that I can drink must exist

C: Therefore, the milk exists.

And this seems like a sound and valid syllogism. Only it presupposes that logic has something to say here, as if wherever there are actions, there are syllogisms supporting them. Wittgenstein's point, on the contrary, is that the drinking of the milk is the primordial engagement with the world, and we need not go further than this and deduce its existence. It is this move Wittgenstein makes away from detached logic and towards practical engagement with the world which John Shotter has called 'revolutionary.' [Shotter 1996a] For so many before him, the action of drinking implied the knowledge, or at least the belief, that the liquid they were drinking existed. For Wittgenstein, we just drink, *that's it*. 'It is just like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having doubts.' [*OC* 510] We do not have doubts or knowledge about our towel as we exit from the shower, we just take hold of it. 'And yet this direct taking-hold corresponds to a *sureness*, not to a knowing.' [*OC* 511] Knowledge succeeds behaviour. We do things, use things, act in certain ways, before we can properly be said to know anything. 'A child can use the names of people long before he can say in any form whatever: "I know this one's name; I don't know that one's yet."' [*OC* 543] At this stage we simply go about our business in an unreflective manner. We can imagine Wittgenstein's builders and their language-game which consists only in ordering each other to bring slabs and pillars. And this, argues Wittgenstein, can be done without any explicit knowledge. 'Here there isn't yet any "knowledge" that *this* is called "a slab", *this* "a pillar", etc.' [*OC* 565] In this kind of language-game, it is less a question of explaining and learning, by means of propositions, but of training. 'Understanding is effected by explanation; but also by training.' [*Z* 186] The same goes for our ordinary life. This is, of course, not to say that there is no such thing as explanation. However, in cases where there is explanation, as there is, of course, in our ordinary life, this explanation is grounded in the more practical kind of training. 'An explanation has its foundation in training.' [*Z* 419] Before words like "knows" or "is certain" can have their place, it is necessary that the child '*can do*, has learnt, is master of' a whole host of activities. [*PI* p. 209/178] Knowledge comes after. We start by behaving in certain ways, by being trained to do certain things, and knowledge and doubt do not come into question. 'Imagine a language-game "When I call you, come in through the door". In any ordinary case, a doubt whether there really is a door there will be impossible.' [*OC* 391] Our talk of doors gets its meaning from the way we behave

around doors, not from some theoretical knowledge that doors exist, have such a shape and such a function. 'Our talk gets its meaning from the rest of our proceedings.' [*OC* 229] It stands fast for me that doors have such-and-such a purpose, for example, that when I open one, there will be a room, a corridor, a garden, a street or a cupboard behind it, and not a brick wall or the land of Narnia. Yet to put this into propositional form is very strange and can only be done 'subsequently.' 'I do not explicitly learn the propositions that stand fast for me. I can *discover* them subsequently…' [*OC* 152] Thus I can, at times, put such things into propositional form, but only because they have a prior existence in my behaviour towards doors. And if we do put them into propositional form, as odd as that may seem, it is even odder to claim to know them. 'What we have here is a foundation for all my action. But it seems to me that it is wrongly expressed by the words "I know".' [*OC* 414] It is not a question of knowing, here, in this sense, but of acting. And, naturally, I can act *with certainty*.

It is to my life that this certainty belongs, however, and not to my mind. This certainty is not thetic, theoretical, but nor is it practical in the sense of know-how. I do not know *how* to open a door because I cannot doubt how to do so, in the same say that I do not know *that* this is a door because this is beyond doubt. But doors, their existence, their function, have their place in my life, in my day-to-day intercourse with the world. 'My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend e.g. "Take that chair over there", "Shut the door", etc. etc.' [*OC* 7] Notice again that Wittgenstein does not refrain from using the word "know" here. And this goes to show that the problem he is addressing is not solved by removing the word "know" and replacing it with another, but by shifting the whole question away from the thetic apprehension of the world, towards a practical engagement with it. 'I know that a sick man is lying here? Nonsense! I am sitting at his bedside, I am looking attentively into his face.' [*OC* 10] I behave in certain ways towards a sick man. I sit at his bedside, talk to him and comfort him. This is a way of behaving which precedes any kind of thetic grasp of the situation. And thus, my attitude toward this man does not depend, as in the syllogism above, on my knowledge that he exists, but on the contrary, any such knowledge which is not merely reducible to my actions, must be dependent on those

actions. My behaviour, my actions, my life: these are the final steps in the chain of justification. These must be taken for granted, and upon them does the rest depend. The language-game 'is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there – like our life.' [*OC* 559] Doubt and knowledge cannot touch, as it were, the primacy of human life. Reasoning, arguing, justifying, all have their basis in human life, in human behaviour. 'As if giving grounds did not come to an end sometime. But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting.' [*OC* 110] It is the totality of this behaviour which Wittgenstein calls forms of life. And this is why he says that these forms of life must be taken for granted. [*PI* p. 226/192] My actions will not suffer justification, so to speak, because they form its very basis. 'Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair? There is no why. I simply don't. This is how I act.' [*OC* 150] It is action that is the final step in any justification, not propositions as, for instance, Descartes would have it. For Descartes the proposition "I am, I exist" is true and can form the basis of a new philosophy, based on epistemological certainty. For Wittgenstein, on the contrary, knowledge cannot be grounded in propositions. 'Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.' [*OC* 204] We do not *know* that we exist, but we act without doubt as to our own existence and this action is the bottom ground. 'Sure evidence is what we *accept* as sure, it is evidence that we go by in *acting* surely, acting without doubt.' [*OC* 196] This way of acting which precedes thought and knowledge is what Wittgenstein calls animal. It lies completely outside of the realm of theory, knowledge, argumentation, justification, etc. 'But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal.' [*OC* 359] He considers animals to go about their business without explicit thought, simply acting in such-and-such a way, and this is what he wants to highlight as the basis of our life. 'The squirrel does not infer by induction that it is going to need stores next winter as well. And no more do we need a law of induction to justify our actions or our predictions.' [*OC* 287] In a passage in *Zettel*, he explains what he means by "primitive" and nicely sums up my current argument. 'But what is the word "primitive" meant to say here? Presumably that this sort of behaviour is *pre-*

linguistic: that a language-game is based *on it*, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought.' [Z 541] Thus, as I have said, primitive behaviour is seen as the very basis of our engagement with the world, or, as the phenomenologists say, as our primordial mode of being-in-the-world. Explicit knowledge and theory come after, and are based upon, this primitive behaviour. Explicit thought, therefore, is seen as a second-order phenomenon which has its basis in human action. This is why we may say that Wittgenstein believes, with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, that theory and knowledge have their grounding in being-in-the-world.

Conclusion

What does all this tell us about subjectivity? As I said in the introduction, the aim of this chapter has been to ground subjectivity in human action. The first chapter had Wittgenstein battling the Cartesian picture of the mind which had us cut off from the world, and the second chapter rejected the behaviourist picture by which we are merely in the world like objects. This chapter showed that we are neither cut off from the world, nor "in" it like an object, but practically involved with it, engaged in it. We are not the detached thinking subject of the Cartesian picture, and we are not, on the other hand, merely an object among objects. We are involved with the world around us, engaged with it. It is this practical engagement among things which grounds our thoughts as we saw, and which forms their basis. Where, for Descartes, thought is the first truth upon which all else is built, and thus, our being is essentially thinking, for Wittgenstein, on the other hand, our being is first and foremost acting, behaving, engaging, etc. 'What determines our judgement, our concepts and reactions, is […] the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.' [Z 567] The analysis of *On Certainty* helped this to become apparent. By showing that *On Certainty* does not merely claim that knowledge is based upon a vague pre-epistemic certainty, but that our theoretical

grasp of things, the very possibility of thought, depends on a practical involvement in the world, we have transformed the Cartesian thinking subject into a Wittgensteinian acting subject. This acting subject was also shown to greatly resemble that found in the phenomenological tradition, where the subject's being is always already being-in-the-world.

Chapter 4: Other Selves and Intersubjectivity

Introduction

The project of this dissertation is to give a Wittgensteinian account of subjectivity which avoids the pitfalls of both the Cartesian and the behaviourist (in a very broad sense) pictures of the mind. The first two chapters served to highlight some of these pitfalls in the form of these views' inability to accommodate three aspects of subjectivity. The previous chapter dealt with the first of these aspects of subjectivity, namely that the self, far from being a detached thinking subject, is primarily an engaged, involved, acting subject which always inhabits a world. Within this world, among that which is always already there for him, are other human beings. This was the second aspect of subjectivity which the first chapter uncovered and which will be dealt with here. The question as to how we know others has been puzzling philosophers for centuries. The problem arose from the Cartesian view of the mind as an inner theatre, a private world which only I can access and which can be disassociated from the physical world, including from my body, bodily states and bodily behaviour. Having posited that I have a privileged access to my own mental states and processes, philosophers have found themselves with the task of discovering what kind of access I may have to the minds of others. The question is perhaps best expressed in the already quoted words of John Stuart Mill:

> 'By what evidence do I know, or by what considerations am I led to believe, that there exist other sentient creatures; that the walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts, or in other words, possess Minds? [Mill 1865, p. 255]

Mill's own response to this question, the argument from analogy, has been most influential in Western philosophy and would also seem to have had a considerable impact of modern psychology, namely within Theory theory and Simulation theory.

(I shall elaborate on this point shortly.) These theories, as varied as they are can all be contrasted with the various phenomenological accounts developed during the twentieth century. Rather than stubbornly seeking an answer to the question as to how we know others, phenomenologists have sought to reformulate the question and challenge some of the presuppositions which brought about the problem in the first place. I will begin this chapter by giving a very brief outline of the above three attempts at solving the problem of other minds given by analytic philosophy and scientific psychology in order to get a picture of the traditional problem. Then I will discuss Wittgenstein's treatment of this problem. By simply attending to actual examples, Wittgenstein shows that the problem as traditionally formulated only arises because we have become lost in a theory of the mind which does not conform to our lived experience. I immediately perceive the other as another subject, and can see on his face, in his gestures, words and outcries, something of what he is feeling, thinking, etc. This account of the way I am able to grasp the other immediately as a thinking and feeling subject is, I will show, remarkably similar to some phenomenological accounts. There is the risk, however, in giving such accounts, of going too far in the other direction and falling into something like a behaviourist account. This problem will be introduced in the final section of this chapter, and the intrinsic first-personality of experience will resurface, before being fully treated in Chapter 5.

As mentioned above, the argument from analogy has been hugely influential and it therefore has many versions with different amendments.[20] For the purpose of this chapter, however, it is enough to present the version put forth by J.S. Mill. The argument goes as follows. In my own case, I perceive three events which, according to Mill, are causally linked.

    A. A bodily modification (e.g. the banging of my head)

    B. A psychological modification (e.g. pain)

    C. A behavioural modification (e.g. jumping back, holding my head, perhaps cursing or swearing, etc...)

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[20] For an outline of a few of these, cf. Malcolm 1958.

In the case of others, I perceive A and C, and I reason by analogy that they are linked by B. Since, when another bangs his head, he jumps back, holds his head and shouts various things similar to those I may shout when I feel pain, I conclude that he also feels pain. It has often been objected that this is an extremely weak case of inference, reasoning from a single case to a general law, as if after seeing a white horse, I were to conclude that all horses were white. There is also the question as to how bodily and behavioural states can be in a causal relation to mental states which has produced huge amounts of literature, from Descartes to modern cognitive science. But these objections need not trouble us here. The above will be enough to show the similarities between the argument from analogy and Theory and Simulation theories and the presuppositions they appear to share, so as to outline the traditional way of thinking about other minds. I shall begin with the former.

For Theory theory, what is required for me to know other minds is that I have a theory of mind which explains behaviour. Understanding the mind, for Theory theorists, is similar to sitting down 'with pencil and paper, a detailed set of specifications […], and a state of the art textbook' and using these tools in order to describe, explain or predict behaviour. [Stich & Nichols 1995, p. 125] The only difference is that we do not sit down with pencil and paper, but use an 'internally represented theory.' Mental states are viewed as theoretical entities, which we postulate as the best explanation for human behaviour. We can see the similarities with the argument from analogy. Both posit mental modifications as the most likely causes of behavioural modifications. Neither is then troubled by the problem, raised by many philosophers, of deducing causes from effects: this is an inference to the most likely cause which does not attempt to grasp the only possible cause.[21] Where Theory theory differs from the argument from analogy is that we are not transferring self-knowledge to others. I need not know my own mental states by introspection for Theory theory to be valid. Rather, self-knowledge is gained in the same way as knowledge of other selves, by inference from my physical and behavioural states: my mental states, like those of others, are posited as hypothetical entities.

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[21] This problem is a well-known tool of the sceptic. For example, Descartes' method of doubt is based on the claim that we cannot infer a cause from its effect. The images in my mind could be caused by an Evil Genius rather than a physical world around me. [Descartes 1975]

Although there is merit to not relying on introspection as the foundation of my knowledge, it seems counter-intuitive to claim that I am in a theorising relation to my own mental states. On this point, Simulation theory improves. Before launching an attack on Simulation theory, Gopnik and Wellman summarize it as follows: 'Understanding states of mind involves empirically discovering the states or results of a model. [...] Consider [...] an understanding of the planets. An appeal to theoretical notions such as heavenly bodies revolving around one another can be contrasted to use of a planetarium-model to predict the star's appearance.' [Gopnik & Wellman 1992, p. 159] In trying to predict a solar eclipse, for instance, I may refer to my planetarium, which simulates the movements of the planets, and thus infer that such-and-such a phenomenon will take place when such-and-such bodies are aligned. Here, then, the simulation is the basis for my knowledge of the original. For Simulation theory, my relation to other minds is based on my empirical observation of a simulation which I run in my own mind. In Gordon's terms, 'we first try to simulate, by a sort of pretending, another's state of mind; then we just "speak our mind".' [Gordon 1995, p. 67] Once again, the affinity with the argument from analogy is easy to see. Third-person knowledge is an inference from first-person knowledge, upon which I am in an authoritative position. Mistakes can be made if I do not run the simulation correctly, and I am thus not infallible as to what goes on in another's mind. It does, however, provide me with good reason to believe that there are other minds, and give me some idea as to what happens in them.

Wittgenstein's Account of the Other

Simulation theory and Theory theory therefore share certain presuppositions with the argument from analogy. For Theory theory, I know others by positing mental states as the cause of behaviour, and for Simulation theory, I use my own mental states in order to know more about the other's. In all three cases, it is assumed that I need some sort of help knowing others, that other minds need to be figured out or

investigated in some way, before I have access to them. And in both the argument from analogy and Simulation theory, though not in Theory theory, it is assumed that I have immediate knowledge of my own mental states. These two presuppositions are widely rejected in the phenomenological tradition. In *The Nature of Sympathy*, for example, Scheler highlights two mistaken presuppositions which he believes to underlie all traditional other mind theories. These two presuppositions are as follows:

'(1) That it is always *our own self, merely, that is primarily given to us*;

(2) that what is primarily given in the case of others is merely the *appearance of the body*, its changes, movements, etc., and that only on the strength of this do we somehow come to accept it as animate and to presume the existence of another self.' [Scheler, 1954, p. 244]

Thus in the first place, Scheler rejects the idea that the subject is always self-aware in the introspective sense. The self is not before oneself, and can at times be difficult to grasp. This is shown in cases when I am not sure whether I am hungry, or have difficulty describing my own pain, even to myself. Secondly, he rejects the notion that the other is first perceived as an automaton, and that it is only by reasoning from analogy that I come to see him as another subject. According to Scheler, this lacks phenomenological accuracy. I do not first perceive the other's bodily movements, then introspect, in order to find out which of my thoughts correspond to similar movements in my body, and thus conclude that the other must be thinking or feeling such-and-such a thought, sensation or emotion. I can see immediately that the other has thoughts, feelings, etc., and very often I can get a clear idea of what those thoughts or feelings are. This is not to say that I do not, at times, use a form of reasoning in order to get a better picture of what another is thinking, but this is not the starting point, it is a specific tool in specific contexts. The later Wittgenstein can also be seen as rejecting these two presuppositions, and thus rethinking the traditional problem on similar grounds. Firstly, as we have seen in Chapter 1, he rejects the idea that I have immediate epistemic access to my own thoughts, independently of my engagement in the world. Secondly, and this is the focus of the

current chapter, he rejects the idea that the other is inaccessible to me. The other is immediately seen as another subject.

There are many problems that have been raised with the argument from analogy, as well as with Theory and Simulation theories, but for Wittgenstein, one of the most important of these is their lack of phenomenological accuracy (though he of course never used the term). Any kind of reasoning, be it from analogy or via a theory of mind, suffers from the crucial flaw that in most circumstances it simply does not seem to occur. I do not first of all perceive the physiology of the other and infer from it that he has certain mental states. As seen in Chapter 2, it is not clear that the pure physiology ever enters into consideration at all. 'Think of the recognition of *facial expressions. Or of the description of facial expressions – which does not consist in giving the measurements of the face!'* [*PI* 285] Wittgenstein reminds us here that we often say that such-and-such a person had a friendly face, for instance, or a sad face, or that he looked happy, in situations in which we would be completely incapable of describing his face in any other way, i.e. by giving its measurements or the geometry of his mouth and eyes. '"We *see* emotion." – As opposed to what? – We do not see facial contortions and make inferences from them (like a doctor framing a diagnosis) to joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features. – Grief, one would like to say, is personified in the face.' [*Z* 225] What I perceive is directly the subjective state. I see pain, anger, joy, etc. I do not normally need to think and figure out what kind of state of mind a person is. 'Suppose I said: "It is not enough to perceive the threatening face, I have to interpret it." – Someone whips out a knife at me and I say "I conceive that as a threat."' [*Z* 218] Words like "conceive," "interpret," "infer," "theorise," etc., are out of place here. Of course, there may be situations in which I do this kind of thing. 'I interpret words; yes – but do I also interpret looks? Do I interpret a facial expression as threatening or kind? – That *may* happen.' [*Z* 218] For example, I am sitting at a poker table, desperately trying to hide my own thoughts and trying equally hard to read those of the person sitting opposite me. In such cases, I am indeed looking for clues, a glance, a gesture, a tone of voice: a tell, from which I will infer, along with the other data available (the cards on the table in Texas Holdem, the attitudes of the other players, etc.) what is available to

him and not to me: knowledge of his hand. But this, points out Wittgenstein, is a very particular and specialised situation. Both the difficulty of reading people and the difficulty of hiding one's own thoughts are a testament to the fact that this is not how we normally function. Interpretation, concepts or inference simply do not enter into the picture. 'Do you look into *yourself* in order to recognize the fury in *his* face? It is there as clearly as in your own breast.' [*Z* 220] This kind of inference from analogy does not fit in with how we normally go about our relations with others. One of the key points which Wittgenstein makes is that expression is not something which is added onto the experience in order to convey it to somebody, but something which is internally liked to the experience itself. If we are keeping hold of the former picture, we cannot but end up in a muddle, with expression acting as a mere symbol of something hidden. 'But that which is in him, how can I see it? Between his experience and me there is always the expression! Here is the picture: He sees it immediately, I only mediately. But that's not the way it is. He doesn't see something and describe it to us.' [*LWII,* p. 92] For Wittgenstein, as we have seen, propositions like "I am in pain" do not function on the model of introspection: I do not look inside myself and describe what I find. Expression is always already a part of the sensation, even if the sensation is not expressed. Pain here is seen as a whole, within which it takes a great deal of abstraction to distinguish an inner state and its expression. Expression is seen as in part constitutive of the pain. 'But what if I said that by facial expression of shame I meant what you mean by ''the facial expression + the feeling'', unless I explicitly distinguish between genuine and simulated facial expressions? It is, I think, misleading to describe the genuine expression as a sum of the expression and something else, though it is just as misleading […] if we say that the genuine expression is a particular behavior and nothing besides.' [Wittgenstein 1968, p. 302–303] Here we get a good idea of what Wittgenstein is getting at. For him, expression is not something merely behavioural. When I perceive the expression on someone's face I am not just seeing a piece of lifeless behaviour, but a living human being, a subjectivity making itself manifest. But expression is not simply behaviour + something inner. We must consider the whole. Cartesians and behaviourists are mistaken in their desire to emphasise the inner or the outer. For Wittgenstein, both function together, to the extent that they cannot be separated in the way these two views would have it. This search for simplicity does not allow

their result to conform to our experience which is always varied, where distinctions of this kind are never clear cut. 'Philosophical inquiry can therefore go wrong, Wittgenstein argues, to the extent that it conceives of the nature of, say, mind or meaning as something superbly exact.' [Bax 2010, p. 73] Pain and its expression are inseparable, it is not possible to draw a straight line down the middle and distinguish one from the other. 'So', as Overgaard points out, 'when I say, ''NN has a headache'', what I mean is something very intimately connected with her rubbing her forehead, her paleness, etc. (although I mean none of these things, considered in isolation).' [Overgaard 2005, p. 255] The dualism between behaviour and inner states is what is under scrutiny here. Expression is intended by Wittgenstein to be something like living behaviour, enminded behaviour. It does not merely translate a hidden pain, but reveals it. This is shown by the example of the poker player given above. It takes a great effort to hide that one is excited or afraid. In these cases, expression is not the report of something which is naturally hidden within me, quite the contrary. 'In general I do not surmise fear in him – I see it. I do not feel that I am deducing the probable existence of something inside from something outside; rather it is as if the human face were in a way translucent and that I were seeing it not in reflected light but rather in its own.' [*RPPII* 170] Of course, pain can be hidden, but it is often harder to hide it than it is to reveal it. And when it is indeed revealed, I have no need to look into myself in order to see it, it is there, on the other's face. 'You say you attend to a man who groans because experience has taught you that you yourself groan when you feel such-and-such. But as you don't in fact make any such inference, we can abandon the justification by analogy.' [*Z* 537] This is just not what we do. If we merely describe our relations to others, we can do away with this kind of reasoning. 'And what do we want to say now? That someone else's face stimulates me to imitate it, and that I therefore feel little movements and muscle-contractions in my own face and *mean* the sum of these? Nonsense. Nonsense, – because you are making assumptions instead of simply describing. If your head is haunted by explanations here, you are neglecting to remind yourself of the most important facts.' [*Z* 220] Here, Wittgenstein claims that what is needed is an accurate description of what goes on when I perceive another subject, and he gives us one, by reminding us of the kinds of situations in which we interact with others.

Wittgenstein points out that we see consciousness in other people, we perceive joy or sadness in their facial expressions, in their gestures. 'Consciousness in another's face. Look into someone else's face, and see the consciousness in it, and a particular *shade* of consciousness. You see on it, in it, joy, indifference, interest, excitement, torpor and so on. The light in other people's faces.' [Z 220] This is not intended as a metaphor: joy is seen. But this does not entail that it is seen in the same way the colour of the eyes is seen. '"I see that a child wants to touch the dog, but doesn't dare." How can I see that? – Is this description of what is seen on the same level as a description of moving shapes and colours? Is an interpretation in question?' [*RPPI* 1066] What Wittgenstein is pointing to here is the fact there may be different ways of seeing. Seeing, as discussed above, need not be restricted to purely physiological processes. In fact, very often, it is difficult to say what we have seen other than in psychological terms. I often describe someone as jolly or severe, and would be unable to give any other description of their faces, in terms of geometrical measurements, for example. This kind of talk about people's faces being joyous or indifferent is not one which is rare, but one which we use in our day-to-day life. We often speak of someone looking upset or sounding afraid. We speak of a friendly face, an angry look, 'a *smiling* tone of voice.' [*PI* p. 174/148] The other person's body is overflowing with consciousness, consciousness which is readily available to us and which we do not need to go and look for behind a meaningless exterior. Wittgenstein talks about the human eye, and how we normally think of it. 'We do not see the human eye as a receiver, it appears not to let anything in, but to send something out. The ear receives; the eye looks. (It casts glances, it flashes, radiates, gleams.) One can terrify with one's eyes, not with one's ear or nose. When you see the eye you see something going out from it. You see the look in the eye.' [Z 221] It is difficult to conceive of a look as a mere automatism. The eye always seems to tell us something about the other's state of mind. Even if it tells us nothing, we always feel uncomfortable when a person is staring at us. The eye reveals consciousness to us, as does the rest of the body. In normal situations, we cannot doubt that others have minds. 'If I imagine it now – alone in my room – I see people with fixed looks (as in a trance) going about their business – the idea is perhaps a little uncanny. But just try to keep hold of this idea in the midst of your ordinary intercourse with others, in the street say! Say to yourself, for example: "The children over there are mere

automata; all their liveliness is mere automatism.'" [*PI* 420] Wittgenstein's point here is that it is much more difficult to imagine that the person with whom you are having a conversation has no mind and no feelings than it is to imagine when you are sitting alone. If a friend is telling me about the loss of a family member, telling me how he feels sad, full of regret, occasionally breaking into tears, it is difficult to imagine, in that moment, that this person could merely be an automaton. The sceptic would say that it is nevertheless conceivable. But can I really conceive of it, there and then? It is important to note that in this situation I am rarely, if ever, a mere observer. I am responding to his grief, comforting him, I am engaged in an intersubjective exchange from which I must myself withdraw before I can even imagine that the other is not grieving at all because he has no consciousness. And it is to this taking up of a particular attitude that Wittgenstein objects here. The problem must be addressed "on the ground" as it were, and not in the isolated head-office in which the sceptic locks himself. We are always involved with other people. Of course, there are some people who are less engaged with others, people who prefer solitude or who are physically isolated. There are times at which people may seek more or less human contact, have more to say or less to say, be more or less in the mood to listen. But these are all aspects of human interaction. Nobody is completely isolated from birth like a wolf-child-Crusoe. And the question as to whether or not this is conceivable is neither here nor there. What is interesting is to look at our normal day-to-day lives and the fact that we are, as a matter of fact, always involved with other beings to a greater or lesser extent. Wittgenstein reminds us of this when he speaks of our primitive reactions towards others, and shows us that we are always already involved with others as creatures who feel e.g. pain, and we do not stop to wonder whether or not they are really such creatures. 'It is a help here to remember that it is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely when oneself is – and so to pay attention to other people's pain-behaviour, as one does *not* pay attention to one's own pain behaviour.'[22] [*Z* 540] What he here calls primitive, he elsewhere call natural and instinctive. This kind of vocabulary helps us to get the idea that doubt about other minds comes very late on. As discussed in the previous chapter, our

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[22] The asymmetry which this highlights between my relation to my pains and my relation to the other's will be crucial to the final chapter of this dissertation.

engagement in the world is not an intellectual or theoretical one, but a practical one. The same can be said of our involvement with other people. Our primary relation to others is not a detached surveying of physical data to be interpreted, but an engagement in common activities, common tasks and discussions. Our grasp of concepts depends on this primitive interaction. We begin by playing with people, talking to them, working alongside them, loving them, hating them, comforting them, etc. Only then is it possible to doubt whether they mean what they say, love or hate us back, etc. and use clues and reasoning to find out for sure. The concept of doubt must be preceded by practical involvement with others. 'Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive, kinds of behaviour towards other human beings, and our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this relation. Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour.' [*Z* 545] Our normal relation to others is one which precedes doubt.

But are we being naïve here? The sceptic will reply that what our normal relation to others is has no significance, because it may all be false. It is not impossible for me to engage and be involved with automata, for example. But Wittgenstein goes further than merely describing our normal relations to others. He claims, as we saw in the previous chapter, that until a certain amount of interaction is in place, the very notion of doubt makes no sense. Knowledge claims and doubt claims have to be fitted into appropriate contexts. One's feelings cannot always be hidden, for example. Neither can everyone always pretend to have a certain feeling. In these cases the notions of hiding and pretending lack sense. 'There are only certain circumstances in which "He has pain but does not show it" has any sense. And to say "*Everyone* has pain but does not show it" does not have sense.' [*PO* p. 295] Furthermore, Wittgenstein claims that we struggle to see what it would mean for us to be wrong about someone having a mind. 'What would it mean for me to be wrong about his having a mind, having consciousness? And what would it mean for me to be wrong about *myself* and not have any? What would it mean to say "I am not conscious"? – But don't I know that there is a consciousness in me? – Do I know it then, and yet the statement that it is so has no purpose?' [*Z* 394] The point here is one similar to the one which was made in the previous chapter, namely that there are certain things which we simply

cannot doubt in practice, without giving up the entire framework in which doubt functions. 'If I am wrong about *this*, I have no guarantee that anything I say is true.' [*OC*, 69] I cannot doubt that another person is not an automaton, just like I cannot know it. Knowledge and doubt do not enter into our human practice here. Or if they do, it must be an isolated case, set against the background of normal human interaction, that is to say, set against the practice of treating people like subjects and not like automata. 'Suppose I say of a friend: "He isn't an automaton". – What information is conveyed by this, and to whom would it be information? To a *human being* who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information *could* it give him? (At the very most that this man always behaves like a human being, and not occasionally like a machine.) "I believe that he is not an automaton", just like that, so far makes no sense. My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.' [*PI* p. 178/152] Wittgenstein's point here is that the other person's not being an automaton is not something which enters into our domain of thought and knowledge, it is not, he says, an "opinion." It rests on a different level than this, it is something which is primordially manifested in my actions, it is an "attitude." Overgaard expresses this point astutely. 'Wittgenstein is not saying that we are instinctually programmed to be absolutely certain that others have souls, and to react accordingly […], but that intersubjectivity is much more basic than the phenomena of knowledge, judgment, doubt, and justification. We do not have to build epistemic bridges to reach other minds; more fundamental than any knowledge is our instinctive *attitude* towards theirs.' [Overgaard 2006, p. 55] What phenomenologists call being-in-the-world is, as shown in the previous chapter, prior to any "ratiocination" or theoretical grasp of this world. Similarly, I first encounter other human beings in the midst of our practical interactions. 'We are already situated in an intersubjective world, attuned to others as other *minds* or *human beings*, and since it is neither an opinion, nor a belief, nor something claiming the status of indubitable knowledge, this attunement is not vulnerable to attacks from skeptical thought experiments. It comes *before* opinion, knowledge, doubt, and justification, thus *before* the game the skeptic wants to play.' [Overgaard 2006, p. 56] Concepts such as minds, others, consciousness, thought, etc., come after this basic involvement with the world and with others. We begin with the practice, not with an introspectable state. Our concept of friendliness depends, not on our own

inner states of friendliness, for it would be difficult to imagine what these would be like, but on friendly behaviour, on acting in a friendly manner, on looking friendly and responding to others who look it also. These are not merely patterns of behaviour which we observe, but primordial practices in which we engage. We are involved with others. This primordial kind of interaction with others is what determines concepts such as friendliness. 'It may be said: the friendly eyes, the friendly mouth, the wagging of a dog's tail, are among the primary and mutually independent symbols of friendliness; I mean: They are part of the phenomena that are called friendliness.' [*PG* 129] That is to say, in order to speak of friendliness, certain things must determine what friendliness is, and among these things are a friendly face and a friendly gesture. We function with these basic expressions of friendliness because they teach us the very concept of friendliness. All this is grounded in human interaction, in which we cannot doubt, in practice, the existence of the other. The form of life has to be accepted as basic. We consider human behaviour as expressive of subjectivity because our attitude towards others is an attitude towards subjects. This is why Wittgenstein says that 'the human body is the best picture of the human soul.' [*PI* p. 178/152] The very concept of intersubjectivity emerges in a world in which we are already engaged with others, as embodied subjects. To doubt this, and to go through with this doubt in practice, would be to undermine the very concepts upon which doubt can be built. We do not start with doubts about other minds and build successful interaction by overcoming this doubt. Our concepts, doubts, questions and thoughts are built upon a practical interaction which does not cause us any problems in our daily involvement with each other. The starting point is the communal form of life and the other-mind sceptic can only give his arguments once this is in place.

Merleau-Ponty and Scheler's Accounts of the Other

Above I have shown that Wittgenstein tries to dissolve the traditional problems associated with intersubjectivity by showing that such reasoning as is suggested by traditional other-mind theory is not needed, since the other is always presented to me as another subject and that it takes a large amount of philosophical abstraction to give us even the idea that the other does not have a mind. I see, in the other's face, in his gestures, in his cries, that he is another subject. Furthermore, doubting this is often incoherent when we try to put this doubt into practice and to maintain it in our ordinary interactions with others. Merleau-Ponty offers us an attack on the traditional problem of other minds which, though its method is different, yields very similar conclusions. For Merleau-Ponty too, we are always already among others and able to see consciousness on the other's face. This does not present a problem for Merleau-Ponty, once we see that the body is not a mere object with a consciousness attached, but the very embodiment of the subject incarnate.

After having set up the problem of other minds, Merleau-Ponty dissolves it in characteristic fashion by showing that the entire problem rests on a misleading picture of embodiment and being-in-the-world. It is the dualistic picture of subject and object which forces me, as subject, to reduce the other to a mere object. His behaviour, then, can only be mere automatism. But, as we saw in the previous chapter, Merleau-Ponty believes this picture to be gravely mistaken. This dualism between subject and object, between consciousness and world, is shattered by attending to the experience of the body. The body is not arrayed before me, says Merleau-Ponty, and in objective relations to the world. On the contrary, I move among things as an embodied consciousness, I move towards the world which provides the completion of my consciousness. Thus, my body is not an object in the world, but forms part of a two way relationship between myself as an embodied subject and the world towards which I reach out. 'I *have* the world as an incomplete individual, through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world, and I have the positing of objects through that of my body, or conversely the positing of my body through that of objects [...] because my body is a movement towards the

world, and the world my body's point of support.' [*PP*, p. 350/408] And since the body is not an object but an embodied consciousness, consciousness is not a pure constituting subject, but a consciousness which is fully implicated in its body and therefore in the world. 'At the same time as the body withdraws from the objective world, and forms between the pure subject and the object a third genus of being, the subject loses its purity and transparency.' [*PP*, p. 350/408] Thus, the self is always incomplete, is never 'concordant with itself', and is therefore never sealed off from the world, but on the contrary, always moving towards it as towards its own completion. The world is not arrayed before me in the sense that I do not survey it from a distance as a disinterested consciousness. I am always implicated in it, moving among things, towards things, engaged in the very fabric of the world. 'We must conceive the perspectives and the point of view as our insertion into the world-as-an-individual, and perception, no longer as a constitution of the true object, but as our inherence in things. [*PP*, p. 350-1/408]

This kind of involvement in the world is what was discussed in Chapter 3, and as we saw above, is also relevant to Wittgenstein's dissolution of the problem of other minds. Once this barrier between consciousness and world has been broken down, once the dualism of subject and object has been rectified by the introduction of embodied consciousness as a third genus of being, then the apprehension of another self is no longer a mystery. 'If I experience this inhering of my consciousness in its body and its world, the perception of other people and the plurality of consciousnesses no longer present any difficulty.' [*PP*, p. 351/408-9] Since as a perceiving subject, I am bound up with my body as that which allows there to be a world for me, there seems to be no difficulty in saying that other bodies should be 'similarly inhabited by consciousnesses.' [*PP*, p. 351/409] Of course, the notions of mind and body at play here are quite different to the ones set out by objective thought. On the one hand, according to Merleau-Ponty, a body is not the scientific body laid out by biology and other sciences. It is not a 'molecular [edifice] or [mass] of cells', for one struggles to find a way in which consciousness could inhabit such a body. For Merleau-Ponty, we must realise that this scientific body requires a particular kind of abstraction from phenomenological experience, and depends first of all on our experience of the body as lived. 'It is simply a question of recognizing

that the body, as a chemical structure or an agglomeration of tissues, is formed, by a process of impoverishment, from a primordial phenomenon of the body-for-us, the body of human experience or the perceived body, round which objective thought works, but without being called upon to postulate its completed analysis.' [*PP*, p. 351/409] The body-for-us, therefore, is the primordial body upon which the objective body is built, and not vice versa. On the other hand, consciousness must no longer be seen as a pure constituting consciousness, but as a consciousness intermingled with the world. Again, pure consciousness requires a peculiar kind of abstraction from experienced consciousness, and conceiving of it rests upon this prior consciousness-as-lived. 'As for consciousness, it has to be conceived, no longer as a constituting consciousness and, as it were, a pure being-for-itself, but as a perceptual consciousness, as the subject of a pattern of behaviour, as being-in-the-world or existence, for only thus can another appear at the top of his phenomenal body, and be endowed with a sort of "locality".' [*PP*, p. 351/409] Once we have understood that consciousness inhabits the body and permeates its every corner, the traditional problem of other selves disappears. Passages of the *Phenomenology* here are strikingly reminiscent of Wittgenstein's remarks about the expressive face discussed above. For Merleau-Ponty, 'that expressive instrument called a face can carry an existence.' [*PP*, p. 351/409] When I perceive the body of the other, I immediately grasp it as capable of all the same intentions as my own. This body presents me with the 'trace of a consciousness which evades me in its actuality', which is to say that it is not my own and 'I re-enact the alien existence in a sort of reflection.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] But Merleau-Ponty is quick to point out that this is not an inner reflection in the manner which is presupposed by reasoning by analogy, but a realisation that this existence is another "I" against which I may come to rest. Thus, reasoning by analogy, according to Merleau-Ponty, who draws support from Scheler, presupposes what it must prove.

For Scheler, as has been mentioned, reasoning by analogy adheres to two mistaken presuppositions, namely:

> '(1) that it is always *our own self, merely, that is primarily given to us*; (2) that what is primarily given in the case of others is merely the *appearance of the body*, its changes, movements, etc., and that only on the strength of

this do we somehow come to accept it as animate and to presume the existence of another self.' [Scheler, p. 252]

Addressing the first presupposition, Scheler claims that we do not have the kind of privileged access to our own consciousness that Cartesianism posits. 'What is the meaning of the proposition that "a man can only think his own thoughts and feel his own feelings?" What is "self-evident" about it? This only, that if once we postulate a *real substratum* for the experiences, of whatever kind, which I may happen to have, then all the thoughts and feelings which occur in me will in fact belong to this real substratum. And that is a tautology.' [Scheler, p. 244-5] What Scheler is arguing here is that there is a difference between thinking my own thoughts or feeling my own feelings, on the one hand, and having some kind of knowledge of myself as a subject, on the other. When Scheler then says that only I can think my thoughts is tautological, this is because the fact that only a subject can experience his experience is just what we mean when we speak of subjectivity. This point is of great interest and will be discussed in detail in relation to Wittgenstein in the final chapter of this dissertation. But, furthermore, and more relevant here, Scheler argues that our subjectivity is not grasped independently of its expression and its manifestation in action. This kind of distinction is misleading. 'It would therefore be quite wrong to suppose that we first simply perceive ourselves and our experiences, and then go on subsequently to take additional account of our expressive movements and tendencies, our actions, and their effect upon our bodily states.' [Scheler, p. 252] Here, just like for Wittgenstein, pain and its expression, for instance, are grasped together as a unified whole. My concept of pain is grasped as the unified whole which includes the expression of pain, as well as the other's expression of pain. Indeed, my concept of pain is false unless it is equally applicable to myself and to others. But Scheler's point is that my very ability to grasp the concept of pain, depends on my being able to grasp it as a unified whole, for if I were to try to grasp it as something inner and private I would fail. 'The fact is that the articulation of the stream of consciousness and the ascription to it of those specific qualities of vividness which bring certain parts of it into the focus of internal perception, are *themselves governed* by the potential unities of action and expression (and the physical significance of these), which they are able to induce.' [Scheler, p. 252]

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Thus, to grasp the concept of pain is to grasp it as instantiated by others as well as myself. I cannot therefore reason from my case to that of others, since from my case alone, I would have no concept of pain.

As for the second presupposition, Scheler claims, like Wittgenstein, that what we experience when we see another human being is also a unified whole. I do not perceive a body in the sense of an inanimate object, but rather, I directly perceive an embodied subject. 'Our immediate perceptions of our fellow-men do not relate to their bodies (unless we happen to be engaged in a medical examination), nor yet to their "selves" or "souls". What we perceive are *integral wholes*, whose intuitive content is not immediately resolved in terms of external or internal perception.' [Scheler, p. 252] For Scheler, it is absurd to say that we are not acquainted with the minds of others. We are as well-acquainted with their minds as we are with their bodies in the physiological sense of the term, if not better acquainted. Subjectivity is given in facial expressions, gestures, outcries, words; it is immediately perceived in the other's eyes, his tone of voice, his posture. It is phenomenologically inaccurate to claim that the other's subjectivity is completely hidden from us and that its physical manifestations are but signs of something inner. 'For we certainly believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person's joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched hands, with his love in his look of affection, with his rage in the gnashing of his teeth, with his threats in the clenching of his fist, and with the tenor of his thoughts in the sound of his words.' [Scheler, p. 260] For this, we do not need to reason by analogy, we do not need to reason at all, we perceive it as clearly or unclearly as we perceive anything else.

For Scheler, rectifying these two mistaken presuppositions is the condition for any kind of reasoning from analogy, while simultaneously making any such reasoning superfluous. If I was given to myself as a pure consciousness and others were given to me as mere bodies, I could never come to formulate any kind of analogy between myself and the other. If, however, we are both embodied consciousnesses, unified wholes, then the analogy becomes possible, but useless, since we have already accessed the other. The argument from analogy, then, presupposes what it must prove, since only once I have perceived the other as an expressive subject, that is to

say, as another self, can I say that he behaves like me in certain respects. This is what Merleau-Ponty picks up on here. 'The other consciousness can be deduced only if the emotional expressions of others are compared and identified with mine, and precise correlations recognized between my physical behaviour and my "psychic events". [But] the perception of others is anterior to, and the condition of, such observations, the observations do not constitute the perception.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] He gives the example of a child who imitates my playful behaviour, even before he has looked at himself in a mirror, which is to say, before he has formulated any idea of what he looks like. And even if he did have a picture of himself in his mind, this picture would scarcely resemble that of a grown man. 'A baby of fifteen months opens his mouth if I playfully take one of his fingers between my teeth and pretend to bite it. And yet it has scarcely looked at its face in a glass, and its teeth are not in any case like mine.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] As an embodied subject, the child feels that his teeth are for biting, and it is in his embodied relation to the adult that he is able to discern the playful intention. 'The fact is that its own mouth and teeth, as it feels them from the inside, are immediately, for it, an apparatus to bite with, and my jaw, as the baby sees it from the outside, is immediately, for it, capable of the same intentions.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] The child, rather than being a constituting consciousness reigning over an objective body, is an embodied consciousness, and thus, only through his body is he aware of his intentions. It is no surprise then that in his embodied relation to the other, he perceives the body of that other as similarly conscious and capable of the same projects as his own. 'It perceives its intentions in its body, and my body with its own, and thereby my intentions in its own body.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] This is not to say, of course, that I never use reason to decipher the thoughts of an introverted other. But I can only do this if I have established, prior to this use of reason, a pre-rational resemblance between that other and myself, and already assume the other to be capable of thoughts. 'The observed correlations between my physical behaviour and that of others, my intentions and my pantomime, may well provide me with a clue in the methodical attempt to know others and on occasions when direct perception fails, but they do not teach me the existence of others.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] I may at times have the same relation to others as the poker player or the double-agent, but this only comes once I am in the world and involved with others as subjects. I do not doubt the existence of my opponent at the poker

table. 'My experience of our common character as persons […] is not based on any analogical or comparative observation of myself and them,' but precedes them. [Carman 2008, p. 141] This is the case, for Merleau-Ponty, because I am not in the kind of external relation to others that traditional other mind theory supposes I am. I am not in a subject-object relation to my body and that of others, but in an internal subject-subject relation, which allows my subjectivity to outrun itself and come to rest in the other subject. 'Between my consciousness and my body as I experience it, between this phenomenal body of mine and that of another as I see it from the outside, there exists an internal relation which causes the other to appear as the completion of the system.' [*PP*, p. 352/410] For Merleau-Ponty, the self, the other and the world are not completely separate entities externally linked, but are always already internally linked, always already involved with each other and interdependent. It does not strike us as odd that there be other people. On the contrary, they appear to be the natural completion of my being-towards-the-world.

There is one aspect of intersubjectivity which Merleau-Ponty discusses and which Wittgenstein does not, namely the cultural object. 'No sooner has my gaze fallen upon a living body in process of acting than the objects surrounding it immediately take on a fresh layer of significance: they are no longer simply what I myself could make of them, they are what this other pattern of behaviour is about to make of them.' [*PP*, p. 353/411-2] Objects, which, as we have seen, for the phenomenological tradition, are not merely lumps of matter arranged in certain ways, but pieces of equipment or tools which serve my projects, do not only serve my own projects but those of the people around me. They appear to me as also appearing to others, they have 'a place in some form of human behaviour.' [Romdenh-Romluc 2011, p. 131] The world is not simply the world for me but the world for us: our worlds merge into one and the same world. 'Round about the perceived body a vortex forms, towards which my world is drawn and, so to speak, sucked in: to this extent, it is no longer merely mine, and no longer present, it is present to *x*, to that other manifestation of behaviour which begins to take shape in it.' [*PP*, p. 353/412] Thus, this other body is not merely an object in my sensory field, but a reshaping of the world as that towards which it moves. The other body engages the world in a way which is already familiar to me, and I am not surprised to

see it doing so. Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'miraculous' here, to describe our encounter with the other. This is to be taken as meaning inexplicable, basic, given. 'I experience my own body as the power of adopting certain forms of behaviour and a certain world, and I am given to myself merely as a certain hold upon the world; now, it is precisely my body which perceives the body of another, and discovers in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world.' [*PP*, p. 354/412] The other body, far from being an object, gives new significance to the world of natural objects. 'It annexes natural objects by diverting them from their immediate significance, it makes tools for itself, and projects itself into the environment in the shape of cultural objects.' [*PP*, p. 354/412] It is these cultural objects that the child finds everywhere surrounding him and learns to manipulate because others do so. Upon seeing his parents eat, a baby grasps at the fork with which they do so, and gradually is allowed to learn to use it as they do. Even learning what objects are depends on seeing them being used by others around him. As Katherine Morris points out, to 'learn how to walk, to gesture and to dance is to learn how these *others* do these things,' and in just the same way, 'to learn what a chair, a cup, or a rocking horse *is* is to learn how it *is used*, that is, how it is used by *others*.' [Morris 2012, p. 110] Here, Merleau-Ponty rejoins Wittgenstein. Just like Wittgenstein did, Merleau-Ponty shows how the child does not *learn that there are* objects and people, but *acts* and *engages with* objects and people. But the objects he engages with are not simply his own objects, but object which are always already imbued with significance. And this, for Merleau-Ponty, is all possible because the adult is immediately, for the baby, another self, made of the "same stuff" as him, as it were, and he is therefore capable of the same range of intentions. This is what allows cultural objects to appear as objects-for-us.

Among these cultural objects such as knives and forks, books, paintbrushes, buckets and spades, etc., is language, which is of great importance. 'There is one cultural object which is destined to play a crucial role in the perception of other people: language.' [*PP*, p. 354/412-3] Merleau-Ponty gives an account of dialogue, of losing oneself in dialogue, which helps highlight the primacy of intersubjectivity. There are not, in genuine dialogue, two individuals but there is formed between my interlocutor and myself a 'dual being' in which 'my thoughts and his are inter-woven

into a single fabric', our words 'called forth by the state of the discussion'. [*PP*, p. 354/413] There is no distinguishing, when I am engaged in a genuine dialogue, two subjects of autonomous thought. 'Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world.' [*PP*, p. 354/413] Thoughts are drawn from me, says Merleau-Ponty, by my interlocutor, even thoughts which I had not previously had, and therefore, we have a common thinking, and not two individual subjects, already transparently self-conscious, sharing their already established thoughts. Thoughts are made by the dialogue which blends our two experiences together. It is only later that I can reconstruct this as my having said such-and-such and the other such-and-such else. But these boundaries are, for Merleau-Ponty, artificial, and only constructed by an abstraction from the genuine experience of dialogue. Intersubjectivity comes first. 'Our first instinct is to believe in undivided being between us.' [Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 17] This is shown, according to Merleau-Ponty, by the fact that the child has no awareness of the boundaries between subjects. 'He has no awareness of himself or of others as private subjectivities, nor does he suspect that all of us, himself included, are limited to one certain point of view of the world.' [*PP*, p. 355/413] Thoughts are not, for the child, individual thoughts which dwell in people's head, but present in the world for everyone to see. 'For him men are empty heads turned towards one single, self-evident world where everything takes place, even dreams, which are, he thinks, in his room, and even thinking, since it is not distinct from words.' [*PP*, p. 355/413] This state of openness fades with time, and, around the age of twelve, disappears to leave place for his individual perspective as formulated by the Cartesian picture. But the individual subjectivity which is now formed and which searches in itself an objective world would never arrive at such a world if he was not in contact with others on the fundamental level of being. This isolated subject, struggling to establish himself among other subjects, would never know such as struggle were it not for some primary contact with others. 'For the struggle ever to begin, and for each consciousness to be capable of suspecting the alien presences which it negates, all must necessarily have some common ground and be mindful of their peaceful co-existence in the world of childhood.' [*PP*, p. 355/414] Individual consciousness is born out of a pre-reflective intersubjectivity. Thus, Merleau-Ponty gives us a picture in which the other is always already with us in a world which is shared, and the perception of the other seems to present no difficulty if we pay

attention to the phenomenological experience of the other. 'The embodiment of consciousness successfully releases us from the problematic conception of consciousness as pure interiority in favour of a conception of being-in-the-world, in which the idea of the first-person no longer occupies its traditional (and problematic) position of privilege.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 49] The other is given to me through his behaviour, and immediately perceived as an agent capable of the same intentions of which I am capable and furthermore, the world is not simply the world for me, but a world which is always already ours, a shared world in which others are engaged while engaging with me. Being-in-the-world is *eo ipso*, like for Wittgenstein, being-with-others.

Summary and New Problematic: the Loss of the Self

So far, it has been shown that Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty, as well as Scheler, break free from the notion that I am enclosed in my own mind. I am in the world, as we have seen, involved with things in a practical engagement with the world. So too, the other is not just an object for me, his behaviour not merely a set of objective movements, he is another subject, with whom I am involved but who is also involved with me and with whom I share my world. This much seems shared by Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty. But the question now is whether this does not take us too far the other way, by stripping the other of his otherness. Merleau-Ponty claims that in the experience of dialogue both subjects are lost and all that is left is the dialogue. If we share in one world, if we are not sure who thinks in a genuine dialogue, does any notion of subjectivity remain? As Chantal Bax puts it in relation to Wittgenstein, 'in thus contesting the Cartesian view on subjectivity […], Wittgenstein may appear to simply reduce the inner to the outer and the self to the other.' [Bax 2008, p. 103] This is the problem to be investigated. On the one hand, it is clear that the self-enclosed Cartesian mind and the problems which it sets up when it comes to knowing other minds lack phenomenological accuracy. I am not a mind

isolated from things and beings but an engaged subjectivity, a being-in-the-world, and as such it seems that I am always already in contact with others. It does indeed seem that we share a world. Merleau-Ponty's example of looking at a landscape is an excellent demonstration of this. When looking out at a landscape with a friend, at no point does it cross my mind that this landscape is only there for me, and that my friend does not see it (under normal circumstances, of course). If there is part of it that he does not see, I can point to it or explain where it is, how it fits in with what he does see. This, as Wittgenstein points out in a very similar passage, is not some kind inner pointing, transferred across to the other's mind: 'if you point at anything […] you point at the sky.' [*PI* 275] Thus, our perspectives are perspectives of one and the same world and this world is not inner and private but shared. This goes for landscapes and external objects as well as for expressions of consciousness. There is often no reason to believe that another person's joy is better known to him than it is to me. When he is jumping up and down with excitement having just heard a piece of excellent news, and hurriedly telling me all about it, there can be no doubt in my mind that he is experiencing joy. Here too, it seems that our states merge as I become happy for him and our experience of the matter becomes a shared one. Thus, on the one hand, it seems to lack phenomenological accuracy to claim that I am a lone, isolated mind, and that others may all be automata. It seems counter-intuitive to say that I only infer from their behaviour that they have minds like my own, and that this inference is a very weak case of induction and thus may be very wrong. This picture, as has been shown, does not sit with our ordinary experience of others. But, on the other hand, it seems no more accurate to claim that in cases of pain, for instance, we have the exact same experience whether we are experiencing pain ourselves or comforting someone else who is in pain. And this latter point is just as crucial as the former. As Overgaard puts it, 'even when we do know what another is feeling, her feeling is presented to us as hers, not ours.' [Overgaard 2005, p. 252] It would seem, therefore, that there is a certain aspect of experience which is my own and which is not shared, and this is why I *can* hide my thoughts and feeling at times. The difficulty here is to get to grips with this intuition without ending up in an entirely inner, private realm which dismisses the conflicting intuition that the other's subjectivity is available to me. One intuition or the other may present itself more strongly depending on the context. 'We think that there are situations in which the

fact that another is in pain is as plain as day, and yet we would also be inclined to agree that if another person does not tell us what she is thinking, and she is not behaving in any particularly revealing way, we are quite often in doubt as to what she is thinking.' [Overgaard 2005, p. 250] Thus, some experiences, such as pain, or strong emotion, may be more manifest in behaviour, others, such as abstract thought, may be more akin to the kind of inner, non-physical processes which the Cartesians claim they are. Furthermore, the same state may, of course, at different times, be expressed to its fullest extent, completely hidden away, or something in between. These seem like fairly obvious points, but in their desire to systematise mental states, philosophers have had the tendency to go one way or the other. As we have seen, the Cartesian framework permeates much of Western philosophy, and behaviourism, seen as its antithesis, gained huge amounts of support in the twentieth century. But our experience of what pain is does not conform to this all-or-nothing kind of definition. It is not 'enforced by one essential characteristic that supposedly defines what [it] is.' [Bax 2008, p. 113] As shown in Chapters 1 and 2, both behaviourism and Cartesianism are highly problematic, and it seems that it may be for the very reason that both insist in building coherent theories, despite the fact that they often have little to do with our everyday experience. 'Part of our dissatisfaction with Cartesianism and behaviorism thus seems to turn on the fact that each position emphasizes only one set of intuitions, and downplays, ignores, or even contests the other set, thereby contradicting some quite ordinary experiences and well-established ways of talking.' [Overgaard 2005, p. 250] It has often been said that Wittgenstein pays much attention to behaviour, to the community, to interpersonal and cultural exchanges, and thus dismisses the individual subject. This is the reason he has been called a behaviourist, and this worry would seem to grow in light of what has been said above. However, it must be borne in mind that Wittgenstein explicitly claims that he does not want to deny that I have my own particular experience of e.g. pain. To his imaginary interlocutor who objects '"But I do have a real *feeling* of joy!"', Wittgenstein replies with apparent incomprehension, 'Yes, when you are glad you really are glad. And of course joy is not joyful behaviour, nor yet a feeling round the corners of the mouth and eyes.' [Z 487] Wittgenstein in no way wishes to claim, as he is often said to, that pain is nothing but pain behaviour. What he is saying is that pain cannot be an entirely inner process, or an entirely outer one. His task is to help

us get to grips with our two conflicting intuitions. 'Wittgenstein is concerned to re-describe subjectivity in such a way as to make intelligible both how it can be something situated in the world and accessible to others, and how, nevertheless, it is "given" differently from a first and a third person perspective.' [Overgaard 2006, p. 67]

Merleau-Ponty is also well aware that the account of intersubjectivity given above is likely to lead to complications. The above discussion of Merleau-Ponty occupies only a third of his chapter on intersubjectivity, and yet it is widely considered to constitute his entire account.[23] On the contrary, he realises that this naïve "no problem" account of intersubjectivity ignores a crucial aspect of individual experience and he is quick to address this problem. For Merleau-Ponty a certain first-personality of experience, far from being simply dismissible, has its source in 'the very nature of subjectivity itself.' [Marshall 2008, p. 183] The fact that the first person is constitutive of subjectivity and thus necessary for intersubjectivity is exemplified is the following passage.

> 'The grief and the anger of another have never quite the same significance for him as they have for me. For him these situations are lived through, for me they are displayed. Or in so far as I can, by some friendly gesture, become part of that grief or that anger, they still remain the grief and anger of my friend Paul: Paul suffers because he has lost his wife, or is angry because his watch has been stolen, whereas I suffer because Paul is grieved, or I am angry because he is angry, and our situations cannot be superimposed on each other. If, moreover, we undertake a project in common, this common project is not one single project, it does not appear in the selfsame light to both of us, we are not both equally enthusiastic about it, or at any rate not quite in the same way, simply because Paul is Paul and I am myself.' [*PP*, p. 356/415]

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[23] Dan Zahavi, for instance, after discussing various phenomenological accounts of what he calls empathy, which include Merleau-Ponty's account of how I am always already with others, moves to a section in which he discusses those phenomenologists who 'have argued that it is essential to respect the irreducible difference between self and other.' [Zahavi 2005, p. 168] But here, Merleau-Ponty disappears entirely from the text, to be replaced by the more obvious Sartre and Levinas. Stephen Priest also makes no mention of the necessary tension between one's openness to others and one's individual perspective which troubles Merleau-Ponty, but merely concentrates on the former. [Cf. Priest 1998, especially Chapter XI: Other Minds]

Thus, it is part of what it is for me to be me, and Paul to be Paul, that the world is not presented to us in the exact same way. There must be something about my experience which is mine and mine alone if we are to understand subjectivity, and thus intersubjectivity, correctly. There must be something distinguishing my experience from Paul's if we are to be two individual subjects and thus have the possibility of communication. The role of the final chapter of this dissertation will be to uncover this aspect of the self, without falling back into the pitfalls of Cartesianism or behaviourism. On the contrary, a discussion of the first person in relation to Wittgenstein, Kant and Merleau-Ponty, will show how an account of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and expression which relieves us of the Cartesian framework need not entail a loss of the first person altogether: quite the opposite.

Conclusion

Many of the problems associated with subjectivity and intersubjectivity have stemmed from arguing uncompromisingly for all-out openness or full-blown privacy, at the expense of intuitions considered to belong to the other "extreme." A comprehensive account of subjectivity and intersubjectivity will be able to account for the to-ing and fro-ing between openness and privacy, understood here, not as two conflicting, mutually exclusive absolutes, but as moments in one and the same experience, or as varied modes of one and the same being-in-the-world. While it seems true that there is something intrinsically first-personal about experience with which we cannot simply do away, it is also true that we would not speak of first-personal experience if there were no other subjects of whom my experience was not first-personal, and against whose mine can be set. There seems to be an interdependence here between the concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Of course, as has been shown, the first-personality of experience cannot be equated to an inner realm, cut off from everything external, and seems to depend on the possibility of otherness. On the other hand, communication between two subjects

requires that certain conditions for subjectivity be met. For two subjects to communicate, that is, for this communication to not merely be an anonymous and subjectless experience, but the communication of two sets of individual experiences, there must indeed be two distinct subjects with an experience of the world which belongs to each in his uniqueness. The difficulties brought up in the final section of this chapter are not merely due to the fact that one of the opposing camps is wrong about intersubjectivity, but to the fact that both are addressing important insights, and that these difficulties are inherent. The tension between wanting to say that the other is open to us and that we can access his thoughts and feelings, and yet wanting to avoid the blatant absurdity of saying that we all share in one and the same stream of consciousness is not a tension which can be done away with, but one which is structural, built into the concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. As we shall see in the following chapter, this is how Wittgenstein sets up the problem. The concept of the self assumes certain things, not least of which the fact that I have a first-personal experience which is my own. This, however, has often been overlooked in Wittgenstein, because of his insistence that subjectivity is openly available to all, and that the privacy of experience is "grammatical." I will argue, however, in the following chapter, that "grammatical" is not to be understood here as "merely linguistic," but, as I have said in Chapter 1, as essential to our concepts: one of the rules without which the game could not function. This chapter has therefore served two purposes. On the one hand, it has given an account of Wittgenstein's discussions of the openness of the mind, and the expressive nature of mental states. This account was then compared to those of Scheler and Merleau-Ponty with whom remarkable similarities were highlighted. The traditional problem of other minds was dissolved by drawing attention to the phenomenological experience of intersubjectivity, the day-to-day interactions we have with others. On the other hand, this chapter has served to bring the issue of the first person back to the forefront of the current dissertation. The issue raised in Chapter 2, namely the risk that emphasis on behaviour had a tendency to ignore, downplay or even deny the asymmetry between first and third persons, has once again been brought to the fore by the discussions of the openness of the mind. There seems to be an interdependence between openness and privacy which are often thought to exclude each other. But this interdependence, far from being problematic is one of the 'features that

characterize and reveal the immensely rich and complex essence of human psychological phenomena.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 53] It is this complexity and richness which is often excluded from Wittgenstein interpretation. The emphasis is often placed on aspects of his writings which put behaviour and openness at the forefront of his exploration of the self. The role of the final chapter of this dissertation is to correct this, by drawing attention to several passages in which he discusses the importance of the first person.

Chapter 5: The First Person

Introduction

The exploration of Wittgenstein's account of subjectivity which this dissertation has undertaken has now reached a crucial point. The first chapter, the rejection of the Cartesian self, revealed two aspects of subjectivity which seemed to permeate Wittgenstein's later thought. First of all, it became clear that the subject, for Wittgenstein, is not first and foremost a detached thinking subject, but a subject involved in the world, engaged through a number of practices. Thinking is not my primary way of relating to the world, but merely one practice among many, which has the particularity of being able to abstract and formalise the others. This abstraction, however, remains a second-order process, and is dependent on a primordial engagement in the form of life. Secondly, the form of life is not that of an isolated subject, but presents me with other people, with whom I am always already engaged. To doubt this, as the Cartesian does, is to distort my natural attitude towards others, to the extent of rendering my philosophical stance untenable in normal contexts. Not only this, but further, it is not clear that I would be able to doubt anything if I were not immersed in an intersubjective form of life, along with the language and the concepts it brings (of which doubt is one). These two aspects of subjectivity have been discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 4. However, one problem arises from these discussions, namely that they appear to have left us rather removed from the notion of individual subjectivity. While they are of course aspects of subjectivity, the focus on being-in-the-world and on intersubjectivity may appear to lessen the importance of the individual. This problem was raised in Chapter 2. There, the notion of an objective subject was rejected because of its counter-intuitive treatment of the first person. Though the phenomenological notion of being-in-the-world differs greatly from a mere being in the world (i.e. as an object among objects), because it carries with it the idea of a practical engagement, it may

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nevertheless appear to place too great an emphasis on the world and not a sufficient emphasis on the subject. This worry certainly applies to the discussion of intersubjectivity. The Cartesian problem of accessing the other was initially taken up and reformulated into a non-problem. I can, it was said, quite easily be aware that another person has a consciousness, and indeed, something of what kind of state of mind he may be in. On his face, in his gestures, his words and his outcries, I see and hear a subjectivity to which I respond appropriately. But the problem then returned as the problem of the self. If I have complete and immediate access to other minds, then what is to distinguish my mind from theirs? We would appear to have melted into one big anonymous subject, rather than the distinct individuals which we intuitively feel we are. While I can see that someone is in pain, and empathise to a large extent, nevertheless the other's pain remains his own and I cannot feel it as he does. The fact that my experience is mine and mine alone, that is, the fact that there is something intrinsically first-personal about experience, provides the individual subjectivity upon which intersubjectivity rests. In order for there to be communication between two subjects, there must indeed be two distinct subjects who are communicating. As Søren Overgaard puts it, 'if we want to make the social world intelligible in terms of *intersubjectivity* we may not bypass individual subjectivity.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 99] The previous chapter ended by stating the need for a proper understanding of the intuitive asymmetry between first- and third-personal experiences. This chapter aims to respond to that need by discussing the third aspect of subjectivity uncovered in the opening two chapters: the importance of the first person.

An important task of this chapter will be to break down a misconception which seems to permeate much of western philosophy, namely that rejecting the Cartesian inner theatre of private objects somehow entails a rejection of the first person altogether. This fundamental misconception thus pushes philosophers into two opposing camps. One camp accepts that there is something intrinsically first-personal about experience, and thus tends towards Cartesianism, the other, wishing to reject Cartesianism, rejects everything that goes with it, including the claim that experience is intrinsically first-personal. This picture has been applied to Wittgenstein, and explains his association in the secondary literature with third-

personal theories, such as those discussed in Chapter 2. Given his rejection of the Cartesian picture, it seemed natural that he should belong to the opposing camp. Thus, before treating the question of Wittgenstein and the first person, it will be useful to loosen the grip that this picture holds on our thoughts.[24] To this end, I will begin by discussing two philosophers who provide a rejection of the Cartesian inner theatre model of the mind while remaining firmly grounded in first-personal experience. For Kant, any kind of observation of my own mind through inner sense is merely one representation among others and would not be possible were there not, prior to this, a unity of consciousness to which these representations could appear. Thus, in the form of the unity of apperception, we have first-personality which is not a Cartesian inner theatre, since the latter depends on the former. For Merleau-Ponty, both intersubjectivity and being-in-the-world, while they both represent strong rejections of the Cartesian inner mind, nevertheless also represent a strong defense of subjective experience. Being-in-the-world and being-with-others are both impossible without the intrinsically first-personal aspect of experience. Thus, I will discuss two philosophies which avoid the picture of the Cartesian inner theatre, without, however, rejecting the first person altogether and ending up with a behaviouristic picture. I will then show how Wittgenstein does this too.

In discussing Wittgenstein, I will begin with his claim that I am not in an observational relation to myself, be it inner observation of the Cartesian kind, or outer observation of the behaviourist kind. From this it will follow that I am not in an epistemic relation to myself. This will be contrasted to others: in the case of determining what others think and feel, I often do observe their behaviour, and count this as evidence for saying that I know that they think and feel such-and-such. This asymmetry will then be developed thanks to Wittgenstein's discussion of what is hidden and private and in what sense it is hidden and private. There is indeed a sense in which my thoughts are "hidden" and "private" but it is the grammatical sense from which it does not follow that my thoughts are private objects. This, however, does not mean that it is merely linguistic as some have suggested,[25] but rather, that it

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[24] This argument can be found in Overgaard 2007, and is discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

[25] Arrington, for example, claims that Wittgenstein 'promotes the autonomy of language.' [Arrington 1993, p. 55, cf. also Schwyzer 2001] Bennett and Hacker [2003] also seem to place more emphasis on language than on its embeddedness in the form of life: the role of philosophy is of course to

has a peculiar role in the language-games we play with "thought," themselves embedded in the form of life. This grammatical privacy does not however entail anything like the Cartesian private object, which I am in a privileged position to observe. It is the conceptual rule, grounded in the form of life, that my experience is indeed *my* experience and not yours. Thus it will be shown, against many readings, that Wittgenstein's account of subjectivity makes room for the idea that experience is intrinsically first-personal.

Kant's Unity of Apperception

There are a number of accounts, particularly in the continental tradition, which reject the Cartesian inner theatre while maintaining that the first person is crucial to subjectivity. The mineness of experience is indeed common, if not to all phenomenologists, to a great majority of them. Heidegger is the first to use the term "mineness" or "*Jemeinigkeit.*" He writes that 'Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein.' [*BT* H53] Here, however, I have picked out two examples which show, clearly and concisely, ways in which the Cartesian subject can be avoided while, at the same time, granting a great importance to the first person. The first example, while not properly phenomenological, is in many ways the forefather of the phenomenological movement, and among the first to suggest a unity of consciousness which does not entail an introspective subject. Kant's transcendental unity of apperception is of great interest in relation to Wittgenstein because it allows for first-personal experience as the condition of there being experience at all, without building a self-observing subject into this. Thus, it seems that we can avoid the Cartesian subject while maintaining a minimal notion of subjectivity in the form of the mineness of experience. It is his critique of the first

'disentangle conceptual confusions,' but this is done, according to Wittgenstein, by considering how these concepts can or cannot be accommodated by the form of life. Hacker's claim that grammar is arbitrary is similarly misleading. [Hacker 1996a, pp. 214-145] Of course, he is right to say that language is not justified by reality, but this is not because grammar precedes reality in some way, but on the contrary, because language and reality can never be disentangled.

paralogism of rational psychology which is of particular interest here, as it is here that he rejects the development of a substantial Cartesian-type subject, but in order to understand this, it will be necessary to say something about the unity of apperception. For Kant, in order for me to have experience, this experience must have a certain kind of unity. Since our intuition is of a unified manifold of representations and not merely discrete items of experiential data, it follows that there must be, in the subject, a corresponding unity. This unity is transcendental because it lies outside of experience itself, as the necessary condition for the possibility of that experience. What Kant is looking for here is the necessary condition of experience. This cannot be found in experience itself. 'What has *necessarily* to be represented as numerically identical cannot be thought as such through empirical data. To render such a transcendental presupposition valid, there must be a condition which precedes all experience, and which makes experience itself possible.' [*CPR* A107] This condition is that there must be a unity wherein I can conceive all my thoughts as mine, my thoughts must be unified in one and the same consciousness. This is what Kant calls the transcendental unity of apperception. 'This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name *transcendental apperception.*' [*CPR* A107] Experience, for all its variety, is always *my* experience, and thus the "I think" accompanies all experience insofar as it is experienced by me. 'When we speak of different experiences, we can refer only to various perceptions, all of which, as such, belong to one and the same general experience.' [*CPR* A110] This unity must be an *a priori* truth, according to Kant, since experience could never provide us with anything if it were not so, and therefore, we could not learn this unity from experience. Inner perception gives us nothing like the unity which is needed here as the basis of all experience, since it is itself experience of the inner. As Kant writes, 'consciousness of self according to the determinations of our state in inner perception is merely empirical, and always changing.' [*CPR* A107] Thus the kind of self-observational Cartesian subject rejected by Wittgenstein in the first chapter is also rejected by Kant here. In order for there to be an observed self, there must be an observing self, and it is the latter which is of interest, not the former. Everything that we experience, even in inner sense, i.e. even introspective mental "objects," must be united in one and the same consciousness, or else it could never be said that we experience anything. That is,

everything that comes from experience can only do so insofar as it comes to one undivided and unified consciousness. 'The objective unity of all empirical consciousness in one consciousness, that of original apperception, is […] the necessary condition of all possible perception.' [*CPR* A123] The unity of apperception must be prior to any empirical data that we receive through intuition, otherwise it would not be possible for us to experience it as *my* experience, which comes down to not experiencing it at all, according to Kant. Experience is made possible only by the unity of consciousness which, in Kant's terms, must precede all experience. 'There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible.' [*CPR* A107] And since it precedes all experience to the extent that there cannot be any experience without it, and thus, as stated in the above quote, no knowledge, the unity of apperception must be *a priori*, and this is why Kant calls it transcendental. All concepts are based on this unity of apperception. 'The numerical unity of this apperception is thus the *a priori* ground of all concepts.' [*CPR* A107] Thus, for Kant, all experience is *my* experience.

But it is important to show that, for Kant, this mineness of experience does not entail the kind of Cartesian mind discussed in Chapter 1. Descartes' "I think" is merely the "I think" available as an object of inner sense, not this kind of mineness accompanying all experience, including this "I think." The Cartesian "I think" is but one representation and cannot therefore accompany all my representations as demanded by Kant's unity of apperception. The critique of the paralogisms is the opportunity for Kant to make himself clearer on what he means by the expression "I think" and how it is to be distinguished from Descartes' use. Thus, the critique of the paralogisms concerns itself with 'the concept or, if the term be preferred, the judgement, "I think"' which is 'the vehicle of all concepts.' [*CPR* A341/B399] It is, therefore, present as accompanying all our thoughts, as has been said in the Deduction, but from this it does not follow that anything can be said about it. 'But it can have no special designation, because it serves only to introduce all our thought, as belonging to consciousness.' [*CPR* A341/B399-400] This is the problem to be investigated in the following critique. For the Cartesian, all our knowledge is built on

this basic proposition. For Kant, on the other hand, the representation "I" merely accompanies our concepts as the formal condition of there being any such concepts. 'We can assign no other basis for this teaching than the simple, and in itself completely empty, representation "I"; and we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts.' [*CPR* A346/B404] Therefore, we cannot base anything on this representation. 'Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = *X*.' [*CPR* A346/B404] Thus, we have no grasp on the transcendental subject other than the idea that it is a unity that accompanies all our thoughts, and we can never get a clearer grasp than this. Since the "I" is always already involved in every judgement, every judgement upon it already makes use of it. 'It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any concept whatsoever, but can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgment upon it has always already made use of its representation.' [*CPR* A346/B404] Thus we find a circularity here, and an impossibility to get any further in investigating the "I," because it is the form of all our thought and thus cannot be made into a thought itself without already presupposing itself. 'And the reason why this inconvenience is inseparably bound up with it, is that consciousness in itself is not a representation distinguishing a particular object, but a form of representation in general...' [*CPR* A346/B404] Thus consciousness as "I think" is nothing but the form of our representations, that which accompanies and structures all experience, and is therefore the elusive condition of there being anything for me.[26]

What is particularly interesting is the rejection of the private inner objects of introspection, or rather, the denial that these constitute the subject. Insofar as they are objects of inner sense, they are no longer the subject of experience. This is closely related to Wittgenstein's claim that I am not by default in an observing relation to myself, discussed briefly in Chapter 2, and which I will discuss further in this chapter. I can of course, for both Kant and Wittgenstein, observe my own mental states: this is Kant's notion of inner sense. But as Kant points out, what is accessed

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[26] This kind of minimalist reading of Kant's unity of apperception can be found in Strawson, where he argues that these sections are better read dissociated from claims regarding the transcendental, noumenal self. [Cf. Strawson 1966, part II, Section ii; and Strawson 2000]

in this case is merely one representation among others and not the self which has them. So too, for Wittgenstein, in cases when I am observing a mental state, this state is no longer what it was prior to the observation. The reified state under inner observation is not the state in its natural habitat. Yet, as we have seen, for Kant, this does nothing to reject the first person. It is, on the contrary, because the self of inner sense has lost this first-personality, to become one representation among others, that Kant dismisses it. But the first person remains in the formal unity of apperception. Kant, therefore, is able to hold on to the first person while ridding us of the fallacious Cartesian model of the self. Thus, here we have an account which helps dispel the myth that first-personal experience entails Cartesianism.

Merleau-Ponty and the First Person

Merleau-Ponty also helps dissolve this misconception since, despite rejecting the Cartesian inner object model, his phenomenology remains firmly rooted in the first person. As we began to see in the previous chapter, Merleau-Ponty is well aware that failing to draw limits to intersubjectivity by saying that I can share every aspect of another person's experience is bound to lead to a number of difficulties. While it is true, on the one hand, that I am able to access the other's pains, feelings and thoughts, and to share mine, in many cases without much difficulty, it is also true that there is a limit to this sharing, insofar as the other and myself are distinct subjects.

> 'The grief and the anger of another have never quite the same significance
> for him as they have for me. For him these situations are lived through, for
> me they are displayed. Or in so far as I can, by some friendly gesture,
> become part of that grief or that anger, they still remain the grief and anger
> of my friend Paul: Paul suffers because he has lost his wife, or is angry

because his watch has been stolen, whereas I suffer because Paul is grieved, or I am angry because he is angry, and our situations cannot be superimposed on each other. If, moreover, we undertake a project in common, this common project is not one single project, it does not appear in the selfsame light to both of us, we are not both equally enthusiastic about it, or at any rate not quite in the same way, simply because Paul is Paul and I am myself.' [*PP*, p. 356/415]

Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, my reach of the other is not absolutely complete. As Marie McGinn aptly points out, 'he feels that we are left with a sense that I am essentially the one by whom the other is experienced, that the other is essentially "elsewhere," that his experiences are merely displayed whereas mine are lived through.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 49] This is expressed by Merleau-Ponty by saying that, while we do, of course, live in an interworld, this interworld is still *my* interworld. 'I enter into a pact with the other, having resolved to live in an interworld in which I accord as much place to others as to myself. But this interworld is still a project of mine, and it would be hypocritical to pretend that I seek the welfare of another *as if it were mine*, since this very attachment to another's interest still has its source in me.' [*PP*, p. 357/415] Thus, despite having rejected the Cartesian inner theatre and the traditional problem of other minds, Merleau-Ponty has not rejected the distinction between self and other. In Marie McGinn's words we 'are still left with a sense of our separatedness that seems like a reverberation of the philosophical idea we have rejected, and which remains even when the antinomies of traditional thought have vanished.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 50] There is something about Cartesianism's presentation of the mind as private and inner which lingers on despite our having encountered the other. His behaviour is available to me through his body and mine, but there is still something which eludes me. 'Although his consciousness and mine, working through our respective situations, may contrive to produce a common situation in which they can communicate, it is nevertheless from the subjectivity of each of us that each one projects this "one and only" world.' [*PP*, p. 356/414] Thus, attending to the experience of the other, while it does rid us of philosophy's doubts as to his existence, does not make the perception of the other unproblematic. The difficulty, as expressed by Komarine Romdenh-Romluc is that 'although I can

experience another's emotions and do not need to *infer* that he feels a certain way, my experience of their emotions is different from my awareness of my own.' [Romdenh-Romluc 2011, p. 145] There is something about my experience which is mine and mine alone. While I can tell another how I feel, I cannot make him feel it the same way I do. Yet, for Merleau-Ponty, this does not isolate me in a Cartesian-type inner theatre. Rather, the mineness of experience here, far from excluding intersubjectivity, is seen as a condition of its possibility. As Taylor Carman writes, there is indeed an 'asymmetry at the heart of our being with others,' but it is 'in no way a regress into skepticism, for individuation and interaction are not incompatible ontological conditions, but essentially intertwined and interdependent aspects of social life.' [Carman 2008, p. 147] I cannot do away with my own unique experience, without doing away with the other's otherness and, hence, with communication. 'This self, witness to any actual communication, and without which the latter [would not know itself to be, and thus would not be, communication], would seem to preclude any solution of the problem of others.'[27] [*PP*, p. 358/417] It is this self, therefore, which allows there to be communication, since without this self, there would be nobody to communicate and nobody *with whom* to communicate. In the example of dialogue, for instance, there would merely be an anonymous stream of words, which does not in fact constitute a dialogue, or even a monologue. Thus, individual subjectivity, for Merleau-Ponty, is the condition for intersubjectivity.

But Merleau-Ponty goes further. Not only is the mineness of experience a condition of there being communication between subjects, it is also a condition of there being a world. As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, far from being a Cartesian isolated and disembodied self, the subject, according to Merleau-Ponty, is an embodied subject, always already involved in the world and with others. On the other hand, this inherence in the world is always the inherence of a particular subject. For Merleau-Ponty, to remove the first person from the world is to remove the world entirely and

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[27] My modification of Colin Smith's translation. The French reads: '…ne se saurait pas et ne serait donc pas communication...' more clearly translated with the use of commas. Smith mistakes this as meaning that communication would not know itself, and therefore would not be communication. The issue here is not whether communication knows itself, but whether it knows itself *to be communication*. Communication, therefore, is thought to be dependent on an awareness that one is communicating, without which a dialogue would be nothing more than a string of words. [cf. Merleau-Ponty 1945/2005 p. 411/415]

thus the possibility of sharing it. He takes the example of looking at a landscape with his friend Paul.

> 'When I consider my perception itself, before any objectifying reflection, at no moment am I aware of being shut up within my own sensations. My friend Paul and I point out to each other certain details of the landscape; and Paul's finger, which is pointing out the church tower, is not a finger-for-me that I *think of* as orientated towards a church-tower-for-me, it is Paul's finger which itself shows me the tower that Paul sees, just as, conversely, when I make a movement towards some point in the landscape that I can see, I do not imagine that I am producing in Paul, in virtue of some pre-established harmony, inner visions merely analogous to mine: I believe, on the contrary, that my gestures invade Paul's world and guide his gaze.' [*PP*, p. 405/471-2][28]

This is to say that neither Paul nor I is in a private contemplating relation to the world-for-him: we are both engaged in the world that we share. There is never a question of being isolated within myself, of my perception belonging to me alone, or of pointing at a landscape being a kind of inner pointing, only contingently echoed by an outer pointing. I share the landscape with my friend Paul. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. But this does not mean, however, that Paul is indistinguishable from me, as if we shared the exact same consciousness and were, in the end, the same subject, but rather that because we are both, as subjects, engagement in the world, because consciousness is nothing but a manifestation of this engagement, we never construe consciousness as private since it is merely the living through of the world which we share. 'When I think of Paul, I do not think of a flow of private sensations indirectly related to mine through the medium of

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[28] Here it is interesting to note the remarkable similarity with the following passage from Wittgenstein. '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*. And you have no hesitation in exclaiming that to someone else. And if you point at anything as you say the words you point at the sky. 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". Nor do you think that really you ought not to point to the colour with your hand, but with you attention. (Consider what it means "to point to something with your attention".)' [*PI* 275]

interposed signs, but of someone who has a living experience of the same world as mine, as well as the same history, and with whom I am in communication through that world and that history.' [*PP*, p. 405/472] When I am looking at the mountain with Paul, I enjoy it as lived by me and by Paul, and given to us both in one indivisible space. But it is precisely because the mountain is lived by *me* that I am able to grasp it as being shared by those present. Here, the mineness of experience plays a crucial role. It is this first-personal experience which discloses the world to me, and only because this is the case can I share it with others. 'It is precisely because the landscape makes its impact upon me and produces feelings in me, because it reaches me in my uniquely individual being, because it is my own view of the landscape, that I enjoy possession of the landscape itself, and the landscape for Paul as well as for me.' [*PP*, p. 406/472] It is this very inherence in an individual perspective which allows there to be a seen world. For Merleau-Ponty, 'the world is the *field* of our experience, and […] we are nothing but a view of the world...' [*PP*, p. 406/472] And as this openness upon the world discloses a world as unity, this unity is echoed back onto the subject. 'There must be [...] corresponding to this open unity of the world, an open and indefinite unity of subjectivity.' [*PP*, p. 406/472-3] But the unity of the self is not in front me in the way an inner theatre might be, but rather, it underlies each of my experiences. 'Like the world's unity, that of the *I* is invoked rather than experienced each time I perform an act of perception, each time I reach a self-evident truth, and the universal *I* is the background against which these effulgent forms stand out: it is through one present thought that I achieve the unity of all my thoughts.' [*PP*, p. 406/473] Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, my very embeddedness in the world is simultaneously a unity of subjectivity. Being-in-the-world is the being-in-the-world of a particular individual subject. As he writes, 'the fundamental power which I enjoy of being the subject of all my experiences, is not distinct from my insertion into the world.' [*PP*, p. 360/419] Being-in-the-world is therefore always being-in-*my*-world: all experience belongs to me, and has the structure of *mineness*. Without this mineness, there is no world and there are no others.

For Merleau-Ponty, therefore, the very rejection of the Cartesian mind, the criticism of the inner theatre, far from removing the first person entirely, as claimed by third-personal accounts, keeps hold of the first person as that by which there is a world. It

is the very rejection of the Cartesian picture, i.e. the grounding of the subject in the world and among others, which gives us the subject of experience understood as a unique individual experience of the world. Being-in-the-word, for Merleau-Ponty, is never collapsing into the world and becoming an object, just like being-with-others is not merging into each other's unique experience. On the contrary, being-in-the-world means *eo ipso* having one's own individual experience of this world, just like being-with-others is having one's own individual experience to share with others. Indeed, they are only others insofar as I have this experience which is uniquely mine. Thus, Merleau-Ponty too helps rid us of the picture by which a uniquely first-personal experience entails a Cartesian mind. On the contrary, this experience is the condition for there being a world and others, both of which present a challenge to the Cartesian view as discussed in Chapter 1. Thus, both Kant and Merleau-Ponty find ways of rejecting the private, inner theatre, while keeping hold of the intuitive idea that my experience cannot be experienced by others in the same way as it is by me. This dissolution of the link between first person and inner mind will allow an approach to Wittgenstein which, by considering some often misread passages in his later works, will be shown to present a similar dissolution. Part of this dissolution comes in his rejection of the idea that I am in an observational relation to my own mental states, and this, therefore, is where I begin.

Self-Observation

Central to Wittgenstein's discussions of subjectivity are the rejection of self-observation and the insight that first-person psychological sentences do not take the form of a description. '"Is 'I am afraid - - -' therefore a description of my state?" It can be used in such a connection and with such an intention. But if, for example, I simply want to tell someone about my apprehension, then it is not that kind of description.' [*LWI* 20] Only under very specific circumstances do I describe my mental states. I may do so when I go to the doctor, for example: I may say that I have

such-and-such a pain, that it comes and goes at such-and-such a frequency, what it feels like, etc. I can describe my pain if I need to, but this is not my default relation to my mental states. 'Describing my state of mind (of fear, say) is something I do in a very particular context.' [*LWI* 27] In my everyday life, pain is not in front of me in this way, and it is only in particular contexts that I observe it and describe what I "see." 'Are the words "I am afraid" a description of a state of mind? It depends on the game they are in.' [*PI* p. 187/160] Wittgenstein's insistence that language does not always function in one way underlies this last quote. The "game" is the context in which the words are spoken. Imagine a child walking into his parent's room at night and telling them he is afraid of the monster in his room and, on the other hand, imagine a patient who, at the end of session with his psychotherapist, comes to realise that it is fear that has been motivating his outbursts, not rage or sadness. The latter is the descriptive conclusion of a long period of self-observation. The former more closely resembles a cry for help. 'The English "I'm furious" is not an expression of self-observation. Similarly in German "Ich bin wütend"; but not "Ich bin zornig". (Terribly doth the rage within my bosom turn…". It is a trembling of rage.)' [*LWI* 13] So whether or not I observe my mental states depends on the type of activity I am involved in, and is not my default self-relation. My awareness of my state does not depend on self-observation. I can say that I am angry without looking into myself. 'If we call fear, sorrow, joy, anger, etc. mental states, then that means that the fearful, the sorrowful, etc. can report: "I am in a state of fear" etc., and that this information – just like the primitive utterance – is not based on observation.' [*RPPII* 177] Rather, it only becomes information, as such, once it has been uttered. I do not inform myself of anything by saying "I am in a state of fear."

The mistake of construing my self-relation as intrinsically observational is an easy one to make, according to Wittgenstein. When studying my own psychology, I naturally turn my attention towards my mental states, and the mistake then consists in considering mental states as that towards which my attention is always turned. As we have seen, it is only in particular instances that I observe my own mind. The trouble is that studying the mind in philosophy is one such instance. 'If I observe the course of my pains, which sense-impressions am I supposed to have had if I had not been observing? Would I have felt nothing? Or would I only have not remembered?'

[*LWII* p. 52] That is to say that when doing philosophy, it is very difficult to separate our own self-observation from the state that we are observing since self-observation is also a mental state after all. But in our everyday life, no such phenomenon comes into view. 'In order to get clear about the meaning of the word "think" we watch ourselves while we think; what we observe will be what that word means! – But this concept is not used like that.' [*PI* 316] The fact that, in this case, the very observation can modify the object observed shows, for Wittgenstein, that it is a peculiar kind of observation. If observation changes or produces the object observed then it cannot, properly speaking, be called observation. This, for Wittgenstein, is problematic. 'Then do you feel it *differently* when you are observing it? And what is the grief that you are observing – is it one which is there only while it is being observed? "Observing" does not produce what is observed. (That is a conceptual statement.)' [*PI* p. 187/160] On the other hand, the very fact that one *can* observe one's pain, helps our usual mode of being-in-relation-to-pain show up. If feeling pain and observing pain were the same thing, we would not distinguish between the two. Thus, if pain were only felt by an act of observation, there would not be any difference in our everyday language between observing pain and feeling it. '"I wouldn't have felt the pain if I hadn't observed the pain." But one can say after all "Observe your pain" and not "Feel pain!"' [*LWII* p. 52] Observation of a mental state naturally changes the mental state by making it a mental-state-under-observation, and it is misguided to perceive this as the natural mode of being. 'How can you *look at* your grief? By being grief-stricken? By not letting anything distract you from your grief? So are you observing the feeling by *having* it? And if you are holding every distraction at a distance, does that mean you are observing *this* condition? Or the other one, in which you were *before* the observation? So do you observe your own observing?' [*RPPI* 446] This concern of Wittgenstein's that self-observation has an impact on the object observed can be seen in the following: 'One of the principles of observation would surely have to be that I do not *disturb* the phenomenon that I observe by my observation of it. That is to say, my observation must be usable, must be applicable to the cases in which there is no observation.' [*RPPI* 690] Observing, for example, how a pride of lions behaves in a zoo is of no interest to the wildlife observer who wishes to say something about their natural behaviour and habitat. Similarly, my mind as it behaves under scrutiny is of no

interest to me if I am trying to say something about it as it usually is (in its natural habitat, so to speak). Here Wittgenstein is pointing to the fact that perceiving that one is conscious and being conscious are two different states, one introspective, the other not. It is by conflating the two notions that the Cartesian goes wrong, and makes my inner awareness of the state constitutive of the state itself.

This rejection of inner observation, however, does not, as some have claimed, favour a third-personal view. If we do not observe our own minds, but we do observe those of others through their behaviour, one might be tempted to consider our own minds as behaviour, the only access to which we have is an act of outer self-observation. But here, as discussed in Chapter 2, Wittgenstein sets up an asymmetry between the first and third persons. Of course, if I want to know what another person is thinking, or feeling, then I have to look at him, the way he behaves, pay close attention to his words, etc. But in my own case, I do not need to do this. My own intentions, feelings, thoughts, etc. seem to be given to me in an entirely different way. They are not given to me through an act of inner observation, but neither are they given to me through an act of outer observation: rather, they are immediately there for me, through no act at all. 'There is no ground for assuming that a man feels the facial movements that go with his expression, for example, or the alterations in his breathing that are characteristic of some emotion. Even if he feels them as soon as his attention is directed towards them.' [*PI* 321] My own facial expression can be completely unknown to me, while my emotion is felt very strongly. But I cannot be aware of another person's emotions without being aware of his behaviour. This asymmetry must be allowed for in any theory of the mind. 'Indeed, if I want to find out whether *he* believes that, then I must turn to him, I must observe him. And if I wanted to find out what I believe by observation, I should have to observe my *actions*, just as in the other I have to observe his. Now why don't I observe them? Don't they interest me? Apparently they do *not*.' [*RPPI* 715] The question as to why observing my actions is not of interest to me is of crucial importance here. Indeed, the very fact that they are *my* actions eliminates the need for me to observe them in order to be aware that I am performing them. Later, G. E. M. Anscombe, one of Wittgenstein's better known students and friend, based her definition of an intentional action on this very idea, giving as a necessary condition for an action to

be intentional the fact that I am aware of what I am doing without observation. [cf. Anscombe 1958] Observation, in this case is simply not needed. 'After all I know that when I am angry, I simply don't need to learn this from my behaviour. – But do I draw a conclusion from my anger to my probable actions? One might also put the matter, I think, like this: my relation to my *actions* is not one of observation.' [*RPPI* 712] Just like, in the case of inner observation, I seem to be aware of what mood I am in before any kind of observation takes place, it seems that my awareness of my behaviour is prior to, and independent of, any observation of it. This is not to say, of course, like in the case of the inner, that self-observation is impossible. I do observe my pantomime in the mirror, for example, whether I am trying to make my face inscrutable before a game of poker, or practicing what I am doing with my arms while presenting a paper. But my default relation to my own behaviour is not one of observation, and observation is not needed except under very specific circumstances. 'My own behaviour is sometimes – but *rarely* – the object of my own observation. And is connected with the fact that I intend my behaviour. Even if an actor observes his own expressions in a glass, or the musician pays close attention to every note he plays, and judges it, this is done so as to direct his action accordingly.' [*Z* 591] That is to say, in the rare cases in which I do observe my own behaviour, it is generally not, or at least not primarily, in order to find out what I am doing or thinking. It is in order that I may be able to get rid of bad bodily habits, modify the way I appear to people, or perfect a role for which I am practicing. I then take the place of a third-person observer in order to compare myself objectively to the person, or character, or ideal, which I am trying to imitate or become. But this is by no means how I relate to myself on a day-to-day basis. Again this gives us a marked distinction between the way I relate to myself and the way I relate to others. 'My words and my actions interest me in a completely different way than they do someone else. (My intonation also, for instance.) I do not relate to them as an observer.' [*LWII* p. 10] I am engaged in my own behaviour, in a way that I am not in that of someone else. I act, but I can only observe the actions of another. And when I do observe myself it is not in order to find out what I am doing or thinking but for other reasons altogether. As Wittgenstein says, 'I do not observe myself for the same purpose as I observe someone else.' [*Z* 592] In order to find out what I am doing or thinking, I have no need to rely on self-observation, or rather, I rarely need to "find out" what I am

doing or thinking at all. When relating to the other, however, I often do. 'I infer that he needs to go to the doctor from observation of his behaviour; but I do *not* make this inference in my own case from observation of my behaviour. Or rather: I do that too sometimes, but *not* in parallel cases.' [*Z* 539] Thus, the self and the other are not on the same level, in the way that the behaviourist would have it. There is indeed an asymmetry between my own mental states and those of others. But this asymmetry is not the one which the Cartesian tries to establish between, on the one hand, what is inner, private and which I can know for certain, and on the other, what is outer and doubtful. We have already seen the other's thoughts can often be said to be known. On the other hand, my own mental states are not *known* to me, not because I can doubt them, but precisely because, usually, I cannot. This is to say that doubt and knowledge do not come into question here. My relation to my own mental states is not usually an epistemic one. This is a theme which is weaved into the sections of the *Investigations* which are considered to form the private language argument, but which is often dismissed, or given less attention than the celebrated "S" diary and beetle-in-the-box.

Self-Knowledge

Section 246 of the *Philosophical Investigations* addresses the question of the epistemic status of my own mind in detail, and thus, despite its length, is worth quoting in full.

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

joke) that I *know* I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean – except perhaps that I *am* in pain?

Other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations *only* from my behaviour, – for *I* cannot be said to learn of them. I *have* them.

The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself.' [*PI* 246]

The beginning of this passage states the idea, by now familiar, that another person's pains are not hidden from me, but available in their words, gestures, bodily expressions, etc. But the latter part of this quote shows that I am not in an epistemic relation to pains. 'It can't be said of me at all […] that I *know* I am in pain.' To say "I know I am in pain" is a peculiar expression. Wittgenstein does not wish to exclude it from all possible uses. He gives the example of a joke, but we may further construct a situation, other than a philosophical discussion, in which I may utter these words meaningfully. For instance, if I go to the doctor with a pain in my back and he cannot find anything wrong with me. Eventually he suggests that I may be imagining it, due to stress or paranoia. In this case I may reply: "Don't be ridiculous, I *know* I am in pain!" Such situations may occur, then, but are uncommon to say the least, and require 'a great deal of stage-setting'. [*PI* 257] Under normal circumstances, if I approach my friend and say to her "I know I am in pain," her reply will often be one of confusion about my choice of words. "You mean you are in pain," she might respond. But what if I then insist: "Not only am I in pain, I also *know* it!"? It is difficult to find a meaning for these words here. The reason for this is that knowledge does not usually apply to one's own pain. Pain includes some kind of awareness of one's pain. The concept of knowledge entails the possibility of doubt, a possibility which, under normal circumstances, is lacking in the case of pain. [cf. *OC* 504] Knowledge involves observation of what is known, giving evidence, reasons for knowing, saying how one has come to learn such-and-such. But here, I have not learned anything, I cannot give any reasons for knowing: built into the concept of pain is an awareness of pain. And thus I seem closer to my pain that all this: '*I* cannot be said to learn of [my sensations]. I *have* them.' Wittgenstein's emphasis on the word "have" here is made to distinguish this from any kind of observational

awareness of pain, which seems to place me at a distance from my own pain, a distance which, when I am in pain, does not exist. I do not *know* that I am in pain, I *am* in pain. The relation is a much more intimate one. There may be cases in which I can make knowledge claims about my own mental states. But these must be cases in which it is also possible for me not to know, as in the case of conflicting desires: "Now I know what I really want," for example. 'It makes no sense to say "I know that I see" if it makes no sense to say "I don't know that I see".' [*PO* p. 300] But since the latter is being logically excluded here, so must the former. As we have seen, if I know something I must be able to give evidence for it. In the case of pain, I can give *someone else* evidence: for example, by showing him my injury, or telling him to watch me when I am in certain situations, but this evidence will not convince *me*. In my own case, nothing will count as evidence of my own pain. The pain itself is felt immediately. Thus I cannot say that I know or doubt it, because I cannot say *how* I know it. It lies outside of what can be called knowledge and doubt. '"But you aren't in doubt whether it is you or someone else who has the pain!" The proposition "I don't know whether I or someone else is in pain" would be a logical product, and one of its factors would be: "I don't know whether I am in pain or not" – and that is not a significant proposition.' [*PI* 408] Here, knowledge simply does not apply.

What has been shown so far in this chapter is how the subject is not in an observing relation to himself, be it inner observation or outer observation. Wittgenstein's discussion of outer observation is fairly limited, because he seems to be more concerned with the rejection of the kind of inner picture that we find in Cartesianism. But, as we have seen, there are several points at which he does address this issue, by saying that, although I do not discover my pain by introspection, I do not discover it by outer observation either. Rather, I do not discover my pain at all. I *have* it. My own mental states, therefore, do not have an epistemic status at all. They are indeed beyond doubt, but so much so that I could not say what counted as evidence for them. As we have seen, this grammatical lack of doubt also excludes knowledge. But far from placing me on the same level as others when it comes to my own pain, what Wittgenstein is arguing is that my own relation to my pain is much more intimate than even the Cartesian suggests. The traditional (Cartesian) asymmetry is based on the fact that you must rely on outer observation of my behaviour in order to access

my pain, whereas I can simply look inwards and there it is! What has become clear above is that this looking inwards, this introspection, does not take place at all. But far from dissolving the asymmetry between first and third person by making me an outside observer like anybody else, Wittgenstein gives us a stronger asymmetry, by claiming that I do not observe my mental states at all. The critique of introspection was not a critique of inner observation to which outer observation was to be favoured, but a critique of first-person observation *tout court*. Thus the Cartesian asymmetry has indeed been abolished; not, however, in favour of symmetry, but in favour of a deeper asymmetry. The asymmetry was between inner observation in my case and outer observation in yours. It is now between observation in your case and non-observation in mine. What this shows is that there is indeed a sense in which the first person is unique in this respect. There is something about the first person which is intrinsically different from the third person. It is this uniquely first-personal experience which will be under discussion for the rest of this chapter.

In what follows, I aim to argue for three points. First of all, I will discuss in more detail the notion of first-person/third-person asymmetry discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. I will show that for Wittgenstein, as has been shown by Merleau-Ponty, intersubjectivity rests upon the fact that the other and I are two distinct subjects. The discussions in the later works regarding other minds and whether or not they are "hidden" will uncover the necessary tension between first and second or third persons which gives rise to intersubjectivity, as opposed to simply implying one overarching super-subject. This will be shown to rest on the second point under discussion here, namely that there is indeed a sense in which sensations are "private," and that Wittgenstein, far from rejecting this point, embraces it. However, this "privacy" of experience is grammatical: it belongs to the very concepts of self and other, thought and sensation, etc. But to say that this privacy is grammatical is not, as has sometimes been argued, to say that it is merely linguistic, but on the contrary, as discussed in Chapter 1, it is to grant this privacy a particular status in these language-games, which are themselves embedded in a form of life. The third point I wish to discuss is the confusion made by both Cartesians and behaviourists between this kind of grammatical "privacy," and the formation of a private object or set of objects, which is defended by Cartesians and rejected by behaviourists. Thus I

will show that, in rejecting the first person, instead of limiting their attack to the private object, behaviourists have thrown away the baby with the bathwater. Wittgenstein, I argue, makes no such mistake.

<u>Wittgenstein and What Is Hidden</u>

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is a sense in which Wittgenstein rejects the notion that other minds are hidden from me. I have access to the other's thoughts, sensations and feelings through his words, gestures and outcries. Far from functioning as reports or descriptions, these function as expressions, more closely linked to the primitive cries of babies and animals than to Cartesian ratiocination. Thus in this sense, the proposition "My thoughts are hidden from him" is false. In another sense, however, Wittgenstein claims that this proposition is true, but that the word "hidden" misrepresents what is at stake here. The difficulty is that the concept of a thought already contains the idea that there is a sense in which it is unavailable to another. 'To say that my thoughts are inaccessible to him because they take place within my mind is a pleonasm.' [*LWI* 975] A pleonasm is a proposition which uses more words than are needed to express its meaning. In this case what seems to be at stake is the idea that, by saying that my thoughts are hidden away, that they take place within my mind, that others cannot access them, etc., one is merely saying that they are thoughts. This is to say that the concept of a thought already contains, in the way it is normally used, the notion that thoughts cannot be shared in certain ways. 'Only I know what I am thinking actually means nothing else than: only I *think* my own thoughts.' [*LWII* p. 56] What Wittgenstein is getting at here is that there is one sense in which thoughts are hidden, but it is not the sense in which I cannot make my thoughts available to the other, but the sense in which I cannot make them available to him *as I have them*. The other can indeed *know* my thoughts, and the only way we can make sense of the denial of this knowledge is if we understand thereby the denial of the possibility of him *thinking* my thoughts. But this latter point, for Wittgenstein,

is already built into the concept of thought. My sensations and thoughts are hidden if we mean that others cannot feel or think them for me or with me, without them being profoundly transformed: i.e. without them ceasing to be *my* sensations and thoughts at all. That each subject has his own pains belongs to the concept of pain. '"He screams when he is in pain, not I." Is that an empirical sentence?' [*LWII* p. 36] This question from Wittgenstein aims to oppose empirical sentences to grammatical sentences. "Only I can think my thoughts" is the latter. The concept of a thought includes the notion that others cannot think it as I do and *vice versa*. What would it mean to deny this? What would it mean to say that others can think my thoughts as I do? This would mean that I have told them, or that they can, in some way, read my mind. But if I want to say that they always share my experience, then our entire concept of what experience is breaks down. When I say that the other cannot know my thoughts, I must surely mean that he cannot under these particular circumstances, but under others he could, i.e. if I told him. But this is not what is meant by the Cartesian, when he claims that I cannot access the other's mind. '"Here I cannot…." – Well, where *can* I? In another game. (Here – that is in tennis – I cannot shoot the ball into goal.)' [*RPPI* 567] This is just the way that the concept of a thought is built. To say the opposite, i.e. to say that I can think someone else's thoughts as he does, is to play a different game entirely.

This is why Wittgenstein says that the word "hidden" is inappropriate here. To say that something is hidden from me must mean that it is possible for it to be revealed. And in many cases, that is what happens when I tell someone my thoughts. 'My thoughts are not hidden from him, but are just open to him in a different *way* than they are to me.' [*LWII* p. 34-35] It is just as absurd, for Wittgenstein, to deny that the other can access my thoughts as it is to deny that they can only access them in a different way than I do. Of course, my thoughts can be open to others if I tell them, or if they catch a glance, or a gesture and guess correctly. This openness to others forms the basis of the picture of intersubjectivity developed in the first sections of the previous chapter. But, of course, this does not mean that the other can think my thoughts as I do. My thoughts are not open to him in the same way as they are to me: He hears them, I *think* them. Thus, there is an asymmetry, as has been shown, between my own access to my thoughts and feelings, and the other's, and it is this

asymmetry which the behaviourist has difficulty accommodating. But it is not an asymmetry which might at some stage be overcome. It is a grammatical asymmetry, or as Wittgenstein calls it, an asymmetry of the game. And this is why the word "hidden" is not quite adequate here, though it may help get clear in certain contexts what is meant, as in the following quote. A person has a thought, '*he utters it* and we believe the utterance under certain conditions and there is no such thing as his making a mistake here. And this asymmetry of the game is brought out by saying that the inner is hidden from someone else.' [*LWII* p. 36] Here, the word "hidden" helps get clear on the fact that I cannot think another's thought in his stead, but, as Wittgenstein points out, it does not quite hit the mark because it makes it seem like there is a possibility of it not being hidden, of what is hidden being revealed. 'What am I hiding from him when he doesn't know what is going on inside me? How and in which way am I hiding it? Physically hidden – logically hidden.' [*LWII* p. 32] What is logically hidden, or grammatically hidden, is not really hidden at all, but nor is it open to view: it belongs to our very concept of a thought that there is an asymmetry between the other and myself. '"What I think silently to myself is hidden from him" can only mean that he cannot guess it, for this or that reason; but it does not mean that he cannot perceive it because it is in my soul.' [*LWI* 977] This is because the word hidden implies that it could also be shown, and in the case of my experience, this is impossible. This is not to say that I cannot reveal my experience to the other, but that I cannot make the other experience it in the same way that I do.

This is what Merleau-Ponty said about his friend Paul, in the previous chapter, in the example of grief or anger. It cannot be utterly shared, because at the end of the day Paul's grief is his own, no matter how much I can commiserate. But in these cases, it is merely the concept of the self which contains the idea that experience cannot be shared. 'Paul is Paul and I am myself.' [*PP*, p. 356/415] It is not the hiding away of something which someone could in principle have access to, but that we choose to hide. 'Nothing is hidden here; and if I were to assume that there is something hidden the knowledge of this hidden thing would be of no interest. But I can hide my thoughts from someone by hiding my diary. And in this case I'm hiding something that might interest him.' [*LWI* 974] That is to say, whatever is hidden can only be of interest to me if it is possible one day for it no longer to be hidden. But what is in

question here is of an entirely different kind. 'That what someone else says inwardly is hidden from me is part of the *concept* 'saying inwardly'. Only "hidden" is the wrong word here; for if it is hidden from me, it ought to be apparent to him, *he* would have to *know* it. But he does not "know" it; only, the doubt which exists for me does not exist for him.' [*PI*, p. 188] This is an extremely important passage. It is part of the concept of "inner speaking" or "thinking in one's head" or "to oneself" that this cannot be shared without it being spoken or written down. If I am thinking something then it is *I* who am thinking it. This means that the concept of "I" entails certain things, one of which is that my thoughts are indeed my own. But this is a grammatical proposition.

Wittgenstein says that these statements are revealed by the Cartesian as if they are profound and of philosophical interest. His reply to this is that we should consider in what context they are uttered. For Wittgenstein, we must stop our relentless search for metaphysical truths, for what I have called ontological necessities, and bring these kinds of claims back to the context of their utterance, to their everyday use. 'I am, however, disregarding forms of expression such as "Only you can know what's going on inside you". If you were to bring me up against the case of people's saying "But I must know whether I am in pain", "Only you can know what you are thinking", and other things, you should consider the occasion and purpose of such phrases.' [*LWI* 890] Yet Wittgenstein does not mean to deny them simply because they cannot be uttered in most circumstances. Rather, they form part of the practical background of all our concepts: they are things which we take for granted without ever putting them into propositional form. 'The opposite of my uncertainty as to what is going on inside him is not *his* certainty. For I *can* be sure of someone else's feelings, but that doesn't make them mine.' [*LWI* 963] Here we have a clear distinction between knowing someone's feelings and having them. In the case of the third person, knowing them is perfectly possible, having them is simply nonsense. This is part of our concept of the self. 'Usually it is I who am asked about the motives of my actions and not someone else. Likewise I am asked whether I feel pain. This is part of the language-game.' [*LWI* 183] Thus there is a sense in which my thoughts and feelings are hidden from others, but this only belongs to the grammar of the words "thoughts," "feelings," "self" and "other."

'Now why do we say: My feelings are my private property? Because only I am directly aware of my pain. But what does that mean. I suppose to be aware of pain means to feel it, and isn't it "my" pain because I feel it? So what does it mean to say only I feel my pain? We have, so far, not given any sense to the phrase "I feel his pain" (except in the sense I feel the same kind of pain, or perhaps I vividly imagine his pain) and therefore no use to the phrase "I feel my pain" either. (I don't say that we couldn't arrange for a sense for these phrases.)' [*PO* p. 448]

What Wittgenstein seems to be saying here is that the word "my" is at best superfluous. To say "I feel my pain" is to set this in opposition to "I feel his pain," but the latter being meaningless, so is the former. But it is the word "my" here which makes this proposition stand in opposition to the other: to say that I feel pain evokes no such opposition. Therefore "I feel my pain" can mean nothing more than "I feel pain," only the latter does not pretend to say more than it does. Of course when I feel pain it is *my* pain which I feel, but this is contained within the concept of pain, it belongs to the foundation of the language-game of expressing pain. But this is not to say, as many have, that this point is linguistic. This is not what Wittgenstein means to say when he claims that these points are grammatical.

Sensations are Private

Section 248 of the *Philosophical Investigations* helps shed light upon the role grammatical propositions play. 'The proposition "Sensations are private" is comparable to: "One plays patience by oneself".' [*PI* 248] This section comes a little after Wittgenstein has said that "Only I know I am in pain" is in one sense false and in another meaningless. [*PI* 246, cf. above] Thus he has eliminated epistemic privacy, on the grounds discussed above. But in this section he seems to be admitting that there is some kind of privacy in play here, that there is some sense in which sensations are indeed private: the grammatical sense discussed above. The

comparison with the proposition "One plays patience by oneself" is illuminating. On the one hand, it is clear that this proposition is not false. One does indeed play patience by oneself. Neither is it nonsensical. Wittgenstein's claim that "Sensations are private" is nonsensical only applies to the case in which we understand by this "Only I can know whether or not I am in pain," and is based on the fact that I do not in fact *know* that I am in pain, because this is not something which it is normally possible for me to doubt. Here, however, there is no question of "One plays patience by oneself" being meaningless. When we are teaching someone to play patience, this can indeed be the first thing we teach him, and it is perfectly understandable. What Wittgenstein is pointing at here is the fact that once one knows the rules of patience and plays it regularly, one does not stop midgame and remind oneself that one must play this game alone. Built into the very foundations of the game is the practice of playing by oneself. Situations in which one will explicitly utter this sentence are rare for the very reason that it belongs to the background against which one plays. Thus when deciding which of the two red queens I want to place upon my black king, I do not stop and say to myself "One plays patience by oneself." This proposition has no utility here, has no place within the game. But the fact that it has no place *within* the game does not make it *irrelevant to* the game. On the contrary, it appears, in a sense, to uphold it. It belongs to the foundations of what we call a game of patience. Similarly, sensations are indeed, in some sense, private, but the utility of this proposition is not within a particular language-game, but upholding a great many. It belongs to the very grammar of the various language-games which surround our talk of sensations (expressing my pain, complaining, comforting, etc.) Thus, while a certain kind of privacy seems indispensable to any talk of pain, this privacy is not something discovered or learned of by the subject in pain, but something which belongs to the concept of pain itself. And this helps reinstate the subjective experience of pain, without, as we shall see in the final section, falling back into the Cartesian picture. Pain is not private in the sense of it being a private object, thus I do not know that I am in pain; but this does not mean that it is not indeed *I* who am in pain. On the contrary, the fact that when I am in pain it is indeed *I* who feel it belongs to the grammar of the language-games surrounding pain. The fact that pain is mine in this sense belongs to the very foundations of the concept of pain. But to utter it under normal circumstances seems strange. Here, Wittgenstein is simply

attacking the use which is made of the idea that sensations are private. '"Yes, but there is *something* there all the same accompanying my cry of pain. And it is on account of that that I utter it. And this something is what is important – and frightful." – Only whom are we informing of this? And on what occasion?' [*PI* 296] If one were to say when one had hurt oneself: "I am in pain and only I can feel it" this would be a very strange expression. The reason for this is that since it is included in the concept of pain that it is felt by *some-one*, that it belongs only to the subject in pain, to say so on any particular occasion fails to get a foothold in meaning. Such grammatical expressions are, however, disguised as meaningful in situations in which they are not. '"This body has extension." To this we might reply: "Nonsense!" – but are inclined to reply "Of course!" – Why is this?' [*PI* 252] When teaching someone what a body is, we may say that all bodies have extension. But beyond this, i.e. once this has been acquired, to say that such-and-such a body has extension cannot possibly mean anything in a world in which all bodies have extension and everyone is aware of this. Thus, when I say that only I can have my pains, this struggles to get a grip in our language-games, not because it is false but, on the contrary, because it brings us no information. And again, this is not because it merely linguistic, but on the contrary, because it is anchored in the very concept of pain, 'so anchored that I cannot touch it.' [*OC* 103] We struggle to get an idea of what this means because we cannot imagine what the opposite would be like without transforming our picture of the world entirely.

> 'What does it mean when I say: "I can't imagine the opposite of this" or "What would it be like, if it were otherwise?" – For example, when someone has said that my images are private, or that only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain, and similar things.
>
> Of course, here "I can't imagine the opposite" doesn't mean: my powers of imagination are unequal to the task. These words are a defence against something whose form makes it look like an empirical proposition, but which is really a grammatical one.
>
> But why do we say: "I can't imagine the opposite"? Why not: "I can't imagine the thing itself"?' [*PI* 251]

Here, Wittgenstein is pointing out that we often take something as true if the opposite lacks sense to us. Thus, when we say that sensations are private, we tend to think that this is true, because we cannot imagine what it would be like otherwise. But, for Wittgenstein, this opposition is misguided. Not being able to imagine the opposite, for Wittgenstein, does not mean that we have reached a metaphysical truth, an ontological necessity. If there is necessity here, it is ontic necessity: and this means that it is deeply anchored in our form of life and preceded our concepts of truth and falsity. To put something into propositional form when the contrary is meaningless is to confuse something which belongs to the foundations of our language-games (a grammatical proposition), with something which we can discover through observation, which we can know and for which we can give evidence. The idea that sensations are private is not false, but it is not *true* either, if by this we mean that we have learned it and could defend it through reason. It is the use which is made of these grammatical propositions to which Wittgenstein is objecting. 'The picture is *there*; and I do not dispute its *correctness*. But *what* is its application?' [*PI* 424] Grammatical propositions are often dismissed by commentators as mere expressions of linguistic rules. But this is not what Wittgenstein is getting at here. His point, far from being to dismiss grammatical propositions, is to reinstate them in the appropriate form of life. For Wittgenstein, language is not a free-floating system with no relevance to the world, but on the contrary, it is very much embedded in our human form of life. Think of Wittgenstein's claims that his investigations concern the 'natural history of human beings,' for example. [*PI* 415; cf. 25] 'Wittgenstein's later philosophy gives us a strong impression of embodying some form of philosophical naturalism.' [McGinn 2010, p. 322] Far from claiming that our concepts should be cleared up in isolation from anything else, his point is to show how much they depend on "nature." Here Wittgenstein is stressing 'the importance, for our way of thinking about language, of recognizing the ways in which the language we speak is contingent on the circumstances of our lives.' [Hertzberg 2011, p. 351] For Hertzberg, there is an '*internal* relation between the concepts and the life in which they have a place.' [Hertzberg 2011, p. 353] Nature is at the very core of Wittgenstein's thinking. But this is not to be confused with the kind of reductionist naturalism which we find in much of the twentieth century's analytic philosophy. Wittgenstein is not in any sense a physicalist. He makes this abundantly clear when

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he states at the end of the *Investigations*, seemingly contradicting himself, that he is *not* 'doing natural science; nor yet natural history.' [*PI*, p. 195] Nevertheless, he claims, our concepts are very tightly linked with 'very general facts of nature.' There is, he claims, a 'correspondence' between our concepts and these facts of nature. [*PI*, p. 195] In this sense, it is possible to say that Wittgenstein was a naturalist, while being careful not to confuse this with the reductionist naturalism just mentioned. On the contrary, 'Wittgenstein's brand of naturalism must be understood in terms of a combination of embodiment, social practice, and interaction with the world.' [Brice & Bourgeois 2012, p. 80] Or as Marie McGinn puts it, Wittgenstein draws our attention to 'our life with language, to language as it is woven in with a multitude of activities.' [McGinn 2010, p. 322; cf. McGinn 2011, pp. 652-4] Thus, returning to the discussion at hand, Wittgenstein's purpose here is not to remove grammatical propositions from the discussion altogether, but, on the contrary, to show us that they can only function if they are anchored in our form of life. The point is not to show the Cartesian that he has been dealing with propositions which have no value, but on the contrary, that he has been dealing with propositions which cannot be removed from their natural habitat and considered in isolation. For then, of course, we could imagine sensations being private or public, and make up whatever rules we liked. But if we consider "Sensations are private" as a grammatical proposition, i.e. as the foundation of a language-game, then denying it has all sorts of consequences on the form of life in which the language-game is grounded. And this is why it "cannot be touched." But this does not mean it has no relevance in our picture of subjectivity. 'His claim that grammatical rules are neither true nor false does not yet imply that grammar tells us nothing about the world but only something about our conceptualization of it. That would perhaps follow on the added assumption that language and world are two separate entities entering only in a one-sided relationship, with language standing over and against the world and imposing its reign without the world having any say. Yet that is not an assumption Wittgenstein seems to make.' [Bax 2011, p. 25][29] For Wittgenstein, language is not an isolated set

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[29] Here, Chantal Bax speaks of 'grammatical rules, where I have generally preferred to speak of grammatical proposition. The two are not equivalent: a grammatical proposition is a grammatical rule put into propositional form. Thus "Sensations are private" is a grammatical proposition, it is a grammatical rule that sensations are private. Thus it would seem here that Bax is misusing the term "rule." Rules are never true or false, and thus to claim that grammatical rules are not seems out of place. Proposition, on the other hand, usually are true or false, and thus to say that grammatical

of rules detached from the world, but is, on the contrary, always embedded in a form of life. Thus, as Chantal Bax explains, Wittgenstein's concern with language is not to be seen as a concern *only* with language, and a refusal to treat anything at a deeper level. Language is itself intermingled with the form of life, so that there is no distinguishing a deeper level beneath a "merely" linguistic one. 'In other words, don't take language as standing over and against the world, but as always already practically engaging us with the things around us. From that perspective, attention to words does not imply a disregard of the world - on the contrary.' [Bax 2011, p. 26] Language-games cannot be disassociated from the form of life in the later Wittgenstein: the former are thoroughly embedded in the latter. As he famously writes in the *Investigations*, 'to imagine a language means to imagine a life-form.' [*PI* 19] Thus, to those who seek to confine Wittgenstein's insights to linguistic rules, with no deeper significance, it must be replied that the very distinction between language and world that this view upholds is one which Wittgenstein was trying to dissolve. 'The grammar-world relation as it is depicted in Wittgenstein's later writings is not one between two separate poles, one active and one passive; the picture painted is rather thoroughly dynamic and interactive.' [Bax 2011, p. 26] Thus, when Wittgenstein talks about grammatical propositions, he is not to be understood as talking about merely linguistic propositions which tell us nothing about the world or the form of life. The study of these grammatical propositions is intended to say something about the form of life in which they are embedded. 'And given Wittgenstein's view on the grammar-world relationship, trying to get a firmer grasp on our concepts can be said to be a way of coming to grips with the world as well. To insist that this is not the case is to adhere to a dichotomy he was trying to move away from.' [Bax 2011, p. 27] His claim that "Sensations are private" is a grammatical proposition, therefore, does not mean that it is a mere linguistic peculiarity, of no relevance to subjectivity, but, as we have seen, that it is something so anchored in our understanding of subjectivity that its denial makes no sense. This does not mean that it is true, nor yet that it is false. And this, we shall see, can be seen as the root of the Cartesian/behaviourist debate. On the one hand, Cartesians claim that the proposition "Sensations are private" is true. On the other,

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proposition are not, because they precede the very concepts of truth and falsity, seems to make more sense. This, therefore, is how I will understand Bax here.

behaviourists claim that it is false. But to Wittgenstein, both commit the mistake of treating it as a proposition of which the assertion, on the one hand, or denial, on the other, is meaningful. On his view, however, the latter being meaningless, we have no use for the former. The difficulties in imagining it being otherwise are not a sign of its truth, but a sign of its belonging to a region which precedes truth and falsity: grammatical propositions are seen as that which *upholds* a language-game, and it is for this reason that they should not *be a part of* that language-game. When he speaks of grammatical privacy, therefore, he does not mean that this sense of privacy is merely linguistic, but rather, he is opposing it to the kind privacy the Cartesian develops. The Cartesian holds that since we cannot possibly imagine sensations to be anything but private, the proposition "Sensations are private" is true. But Wittgenstein's grammatical privacy belongs to the very concept of a sensation, of a pain, of a thought, and of the subject which has them, and as such, cannot meaningfully be called true, nor yet false. Language-games being deeply enmeshed in our form of life, this grammatical privacy appears to belong to the very foundations of this form of life, and to imagine the opposite would be to imagine a life-form radically different from ours.

From Grammatical Privacy to Private Object

It is this confusion between grammatical privacy and Cartesian privacy which Wittgenstein is trying to highlight here: he is not, as the behaviourist reading suggests, trying to deny a certain kind of first-personal experience untranslatable into third-personal terms, rather he is asking, given the peculiar logical role that this grammatical privacy occupies, why, when, and in what context might I have the opportunity to say so, and denying that it can have the status which the Cartesian attributes to it. He is not opposing the idea that only I can feel my own feelings, and would consider such an opposition preposterous. But for this very reason, i.e. that denying this kind of privacy seems unimaginable within most of our language-

games, Wittgenstein is claiming that we cannot say that the proposition "Sensations are private" is *true*. Until we have given a meaning to the claim that it is false, its truth cannot be asserted either. But this is not, as has been said, a denial of its relevance to the concept of subjectivity: quite the contrary. It occupies a peculiar logical role in this concept. That my pain is felt by me and not by you, that pain is not merely reducible to pain behaviour, this grammatical privacy of experience, these are things which Wittgenstein takes great pain *not* to deny! And this is why, to his imaginary interlocutor's question as to whether he will or not admit that behaviour with and without pain are quite different, he replies in an outrage that of course there is such a difference. '"But you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain-behaviour accompanied by pain and pain-behaviour without any pain?" – Admit it? What greater difference could there be?' [*PI* 304] Only this does not mean that there is an inner object which accompanies the outer behaviour, and this step only seems justified because of the way in which language bewitches us. 'We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here.' [*PI* 304] Language leads us to believe that if we reject the private object as an observable entity, then we have rejected the first person altogether. It is this amalgamation of concepts, which we began to dissolve with Kant and Merleau-Ponty, with which Wittgenstein is unhappy.

> '"But you surely cannot deny that, for example, in remembering, an inner process takes place." – What gives the impression that we want to deny anything? When one says "Still, an inner process does take place here" – one wants to go on: "After all, you *see* it." And it is this inner process that one means by the word "remembering". – The impression that we wanted to deny something arises from our setting our faces against the picture of the "inner process". What we deny is that the picture of the inner process gives us the correct idea of the use of the word "to remember". We say that this picture with its ramifications stands in the way of our seeing the use of the word as it is.' [*PI* 305]

Of course, according to Wittgenstein, there is something that goes on which is not available to others in the same way that it is to me (grammatical privacy). But this kind of privacy does not entail that I have a privileged vantage point on the "real"

process of remembering (Cartesian privacy). This latter kind of privacy turns remembering into a private object for inner contemplation, whereas the former merely acknowledges the (obvious) point that when I remember something it is indeed *I* who remember it and not you. Thus, for Wittgenstein, as Marie McGinn points out, the problems associated with Cartesianism 'arise out of the temptation to misapply the picture of the inner, but Wittgenstein believes that what ends by producing confusion and paradox begins as an apt picture of a distinctive grammatical feature of our psychological language-game.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 53] Thus this grammatical feature should indeed be highlighted and not rejected. In rejecting the inner object, it has seemed to many like Wittgenstein has rejected any kind of privacy of mental states. But he has merely rejected the idea that I have a special kind of private vantage point on an inner object. He has not rejected the notion that there is anything going on which does not lie open to view. He is trying to show, 'not that we should abandon the distinction between inner and outer, but how this distinction is properly understood.' [McGinn, M., 1998, p. 53] He is not denying that there is a mental process. 'Why should I deny that there is a mental process?' [*PI* 306] But the fact that there is a mental process does not imply that this process is a private show which takes place before the subject's mind. It is, however, private in the grammatical sense of not belonging to anyone but the subject, of being part of that experience which is intrinsically first-personal. The step from the latter to the former is the step which, as Wittgenstein says, 'altogether escapes notice.' This conflation of grammatical privacy and private object which escapes notice is the 'decisive movement in the conjuring trick' and it is what gives the impression that Wittgenstein, in rejecting the latter, is also rejecting the former. 'And now it looks as if we had denied mental processes. And naturally we don't want to deny them.' [*PI* 308] Wittgenstein does not want to deny that there is something about experience which is intrinsically first-personal, that there are mental processes which do not manifest themselves in behaviour, nor that my sensations are felt by me and not by you. But since for Wittgenstein, this belongs to the grammar of the language-game and cannot be denied, it cannot be said to be true either. It precedes the region of truth and falsity: that is to say, it is not within, but rather upholds, the language-game in which there can be truth and falsity. There are no private objects to be discussed,

but an experience which *in principle* cannot be shared, and which thus belongs to the foundation of the form of life.[30]

Søren Overgaard's discussion of Wittgenstein and solipsism may help get a better grasp on the matter. For Overgaard, 'an implicit consequence of Wittgenstein's insistence on the fundamental difference between first-person and third-person uses of psychological concepts is that a first-person "givenness" or mode of presentation, irreducible to any third-person givenness, is an essential aspect of subjectivity.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 27] What is interesting here is that, according to Overgaard, the fact that experience is intrinsically first-personal (grammatical privacy) does not entail a hidden realm of private objects (Cartesian privacy). 'But again, we should not jump to the conclusion that subjectivity must, for that reason, be assigned to some inner, private realm, accessible only to one person.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 27] This, according to Overgaard, is the central problem at the root of this debate. He argues, as I have above, that at either end of the spectrum, solipsistic and third-personal accounts are making the same mistake. Both believe that claiming experience to be in any sense irreducibly first-personal immediately entails some form of solipsism. As he writes, 'both parties of the debate are precisely committed to something like the following conditional: If we adopt the view that the first-person perspective is in some sense irreducible and privileged, then we have to embrace some form of solipsism.'[31] [Overgaard 2007, p. 85] Thus, on the one hand, some philosophers embrace the first person and with it, embrace solipsism, and on the other hand, some philosophers 'seem to think that the only way to avoid landing ourselves in one of the varieties of this hopeless position is to eschew in our philosophy of mind any special emphasis on the first-person perspective.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 84] While the question of solipsism and the question of private mental objects do not coincide (though there is significant overlap), the problem Wittgenstein faces here is of a very similar kind. The difficulty commentators have had in interpreting Wittgenstein's remarks on subjectivity seems to be that it is

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[30] The phrase *in principle* is to be understood ontically, that is to say within the form of life.

[31] Overgaard speaks of the first-person perspective, while I have spoken of first-personal experience. The reason for this is that the former seems too narrow for my purposes and indeed for Overgaard's. While the notion of an irreducible first-person perspective can account for the fact that my sensations are not shareable, it seems odd to say that pain, love and abstract thought are part of an irreducible first-person perspective. I have thus preferred to speak of them being part of an intrinsically first-personal experience.

difficult to dissociate grammatical privacy, i.e. the mere fact that my sensations are not yours, and Cartesian privacy, i.e. my having a privileged vantage point over some private object. Those who uphold the former are believed to uphold the latter and are termed Cartesian, and those who reject the latter also reject the former. But it seems clear from the above discussion that Wittgenstein wishes to keep hold of the idea that experience is intrinsically first-personal, in the sense that my pain is indeed felt by *me*, without adhering to the Cartesian inner-object picture of the self. Overgaard continues by saying that for Wittgenstein 'my mental life has, for me, a very special status compared with the mental lives of others.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 92] But this is not the same kind of special status which the Cartesian attributes to my mental life. 'A Cartesian will want to say this as well, of course, but for Wittgenstein the point is not that my mental life is some array of objects and events that I am in a particularly good position to observe.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 92] The point here is one which should by now be familiar. Wittgenstein's claim is not that I am in a better position than others to observe the private objects before my mind. What Wittgenstein is getting at is that our very concept of subjectivity rests on the unspoken assumption that when I am in pain, this pain is not also had by others at the same time and in the same way. This grammatical privacy forms the basis of the concepts of pain, thought, self and other. It is grammatical, not because it is merely linguistic, but because it cannot be denied without serious consequences on the language-games in which it is used and thus on the form of life. The fact that we cannot get beyond this kind of privacy, i.e. that we cannot escape the first-personal nature of experience, is not some kind of failure on our part as the Cartesians and behaviourists seem to imply. It is not that we cannot *in fact* get beyond this first-personal nature of experience. Rather we cannot in principle get beyond it. As Overgaard says, 'the limit we have reached is *grammatical*, and that means that it does not make any sense to want to cross it. There is no wall here that it would be *meaningful* to scale…' [Overgaard 2007, p. 94] My own experience cannot become another's experience, nor can it merge with his. If it becomes his experience, then precisely, it is *his* experience and no longer mine: it cannot be both simultaneously. Or even if it was, as we may imagine in some science-fiction novel or film, then our concept of subjectivity would need serious rethinking. Two subjects sharing one and the same consciousness presents us with the problem of identifying whether they are

still in fact two distinct subjects, or whether they have now become one single subject. The point of this example is to show that even if the empirical barrier between my experience and yours is overcome, the grammatical limits of subjectivity still remain. It is not as simple as transferring an inner object from one private theatre to another, like it would be if the Cartesian picture held. Grammatical privacy holds that pain is always felt by a subject and cannot simultaneously be felt by another, short of seriously rethinking our concept of the self. 'The only thing I "cannot do" is to imagine that I would occupy the first-person perspective of another person without making it *my* first-person perspective – that I could have her phenomenal consciousness of pain without myself being the subject of this pain. And the reason I cannot do this is not that there is some metaphysical obstacle blocking my path, but rather that it simply *makes no sense*.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 95] Wittgenstein, therefore, is not denying that my experience is intrinsically first-personal, in the sense, for example, that when I feel pain it is indeed I who feel pain: he believes on the contrary that this cannot meaningfully be denied. This is what keeps it beyond the realm of truth and falsity, as a grammatical rule upholding this realm. What he is denying is that the subject is in a special position to observe a private object. For Overgaard, 'it is not part of Wittgenstein's agenda to deny that being a subjectivity involves having "a distinctively first-personal, 'inside take'" on one's mental life. If anything, Wittgenstein wants to complain that Cartesians have misconstrued this "inside take" in such a way as to make it look far too much like the kind of take we have on "external" objects.' [Overgaard 2007, p. 100] This is to say that the Cartesian, in putting me in an observational relation to my inner life, has reified my experience. It is this reified set of private objects on the stage of the inner theatre which Wittgenstein wishes to reject, not the first-personal nature of experience.

The position I have adopted with regard to Wittgenstein and the first person should by now have taken shape. Wittgenstein wishes to deny privacy of the Cartesian kind: i.e. that there is a set of inner mental objects which are arrayed before me and which I alone, being in a privileged observational position, can access. On the other hand, Wittgenstein sees grammatical privacy as constitutive of the concepts of pain, thought, sensation, self, other, etc. This grammatical privacy is merely the fact that

when I am in pain, for example, it is indeed *I* who am in pain, and this pain is not being had simultaneously by you, otherwise it would be your pain. And this boils down, as we have seen, to the fact that I am me and you are you. I have spoken of experience being intrinsically first-personal to capture what is meant by talk of grammatical privacy. The idea is that there is a consciousness which is intrinsically mine.

Conclusion

The importance of this chapter has been to make sure that, while rejecting the Cartesian inner subject, and discussing engagement in the world and intersubjectivity, Wittgenstein has not left out individual subjectivity and ended up with a third-personal account of the self. As was shown in Chapter 2, third-personal accounts of subjectivity are deeply unsatisfactory, because they ignore the intuitive asymmetry between my having pain and watching you have pain. The aim of this chapter was to reinstate this asymmetry without falling back into the pitfalls of Cartesianism discussed in Chapter 1. Of course, on the Cartesian view, there is indeed an asymmetry between first and third persons, but this asymmetry rests on the idea that the subject is in a privileged position to observe an inner object, whereas the other has only an indirect access to this object. This account of mental states as observable inner objects is highly problematic. But getting rid of this picture does not mean falling into a third-personal account. 'Rather than proclaiming the death of the subject, Wittgenstein positively tries to rethink this concept.' [Bax 2008, p. 104] Wittgenstein's goal is not to reject any reference to the irreducibility of the first person. And indeed, I have shown several places where he seems to defend some kind of privacy: grammatical privacy. This grammatical privacy is the conceptual remark that if we are going to talk about subjects at all, of course there has to be something about their experience which differentiates it from that of others. But this is not to say that I cannot know another person's thoughts, but merely that I cannot

think his thoughts, and this seems like it is simply part of the concept of a thought, and of a self. In this sense, it is grammatical. But this does not mean that it is merely linguistic and has no relevance to subjectivity. Our concepts and our language are grounded in a form of life. The fact that this grammatical privacy plays such a significant role in our language-games, far from being simply an aspect of language, reveals something important about our form of life too. There *is* something about my experience which is irreducible to yours, and the fact that grammar reveals this does not mean that it is only an aspect of language. But it does help guard against the temptation to make this privacy a privileged access to a private object. This latter picture, as I have said, is often conflated with the former. To defend the idea that experience is intrinsically first-personal is thought to be tantamount to defending a privileged access to a private object. And *vice-versa*, rejecting the latter often ends up, as we saw in Chapter 2, in a (counter-intuitive) rejection of the former. By discussing Kant and Merleau-Ponty, however, it became clear that this need not be the case. The first person plays an important role in both, while at the same time both reject the idea of a private, inner theatre. The first person, then, does not entail the Cartesian mind. Once the grip of this entailment had been loosened, it became possible to reintroduce the first person into Wittgenstein's account of subjectivity, and thus avoid the pitfalls of third-personal accounts, without falling back into a Cartesian inner-theatre.

There are, however, some important differences that should be pointed out at this stage. First of all, for Kant, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the unity of consciousness is a transcendental condition for the possibility of experience. It is *a priori*, it precedes all experience as the condition for such experience. This is not the case for Wittgenstein. On the one hand, for Wittgenstein, like for Kant, the fact that my sensations are felt by me and only me is not something I discover by paying close attention to my sensations. On the other hand, Wittgenstein resists the temptation to jump to the opposite extreme. He avoids the problem of the *a priori* by introducing, as we have seen, the notion of the grammatical, which, while it is not empirical, is nevertheless deeply embedded in our form of life. The distinction this draws between Kant and Wittgenstein is best expressed by returning to the distinction between the ontological and the ontic. For Kant, the unity of apperception

is an ontologically necessary condition for experience. This is to say that in order for there to be experience at all, it must be presented as unified. For Wittgenstein, a certain mineness of experience is necessary for there to be *what we call* experience. Thus, ontologically speaking, this is contingent. There is no telling how we would accommodate the case, for instance, of several people, connected by a machine, who always shared all their experience. For Kant, in this case, the unity of experience still holds despite it being shared in by several people. But for Wittgenstein, this throws up huge difficulties. It may well be the case that our concept of subjectivity could be extended to accommodate this case. It may also be the case, however, that we need a new concept, though perhaps a related one, like a super-subject or multi-subject. But this cannot be worked out *a priori* precisely because it would depend on how the form of life accommodated these changes. As things stand, it seems to be a condition within our human form of life that a subject's experience is his alone. Thus this is not a purely contingent fact. There is a grammatical privacy, which is *ontically* necessary. But for Wittgenstein, we cannot go further by saying that this would be the case in any form of life, and thus we do not have, as Kant believes we do, an *a priori* condition for experience.

The second point which must be made concerns the notion of an implicit and minimal self-consciousness which is part of both Kant and Merleau-Ponty's views. For Kant, the "I think" must accompany all my representation, as a kind of unity of consciousness. But, while this "I think" does not entail a self-observational subject, it does entail an awareness of one's own unity. Insofar as I have experience, for Kant, I am always implicitly self-aware, in the sense that I am aware that experience is mine. Merleau-Ponty, in a similar vein, introduces the tacit *cogito*, which underlies the explicit subject of experience, as an unspoken self-awareness which can never be fully articulated. This tacit *cogito* is 'pure feeling of the self,' [*PP*, p. 404/470] the 'presence of oneself to oneself,' [*PP*, p. 404/470] or 'myself experienced by myself.' [*PP*, p. 403/469] This, like for Kant, does not mean a subject introspectively given to itself, but an implicit awareness of my own being. He goes on immediately to explain this by saying that this is not a transparent experience of a fully formed subject, rather, 'this subjectivity, indeclinable, has upon itself and upon the world only a precarious hold.' [*PP*, p. 403-4/469-70] Thus for both Kant and Merleau-

Ponty, there is, upholding the intrinsic first-personality of experience, a minimal and implicit self-consciousness. This does not appear to be the case for Wittgenstein. What is present throughout Wittgenstein's later thoughts is an insistence on the difference between having pain or feeling pain, on the one hand, and seeing or hearing it, on the other. But this having pain, this intrinsically first-personal experience of pain, is not grounded in any kind of self-awareness. In this sense, Wittgenstein's view appears to be more minimal than the other accounts which have been discussed. For Wittgenstein, these accounts would appear to say too much. We should accept the fact that when I am in pain, there is something about this pain which is not felt by others and not try to go further in investigating how it is this can be the case. The language-games and the form of life in which they are embedded simply are that way.

These are rich topics of discussion and no doubt merit further attention. Is Wittgenstein missing a crucial aspect of experience by not attending to some kind of self-experience? If so, can his account accommodate something of the sort which does not go against its therapeutic, grammatical method of philosophical investigation? These are interesting questions which would be worthy of further research, but they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The goal of the Kantian and phenomenological accounts throughout has been to shed light on some of the difficulties which many readings of Wittgenstein present. Here, they helped steer us away from the idea that the intrinsic first-personality of experience was somehow tied up with the Cartesian subject. They showed how one could give an account of subjectivity as anchored in the first person which was not an introspective Cartesian account. The discussion of Wittgenstein on the first person which was then given profited from the removal of this picture, and was able to provide a Wittgensteinian account of the subject which rejected the Cartesian mind without denying that there is a sense in which experience is mine and mine alone. The first person has therefore been reinstated into Wittgenstein's account while avoiding some of the pitfalls with which it is usually associated, especially in Wittgenstein interpretation.

Conclusion

Summary

Uncovering a Wittgensteinian account of subjectivity is a tricky thing to do. What is evident from the start is that nowhere does Wittgenstein present his readers with such an account. His remarks on the matter do not form a systematic argument or set of arguments, but rather, appear to be scattered throughout his work, and not carried through to their fullest extent. On the other hand, it is quite clear that Wittgenstein did indeed have something to say about the questions which surround the notion of subjectivity. The privacy of the mind, the inner and the outer, our relations to others, etc. are but a few of the recurring themes of his later work. It is his concern with this type of questions which prompted this dissertation. The following concluding remarks will be an opportunity to summarise its central arguments and to show how they address the problematic with which it began, before introducing some other issues which, while related, were beyond the scope of this dissertation. I shall begin, therefore, by reiterating the problematic. When one first reads Wittgenstein on the philosophy of mind, and particularly the private language argument, and goes over the standard secondary literature, one is left with the question as to what mental states are and how they function. The private language argument is seen, "at first glance" as it were, as a strong rejection of the inner and private mind which the Cartesian presents, and yet Wittgenstein explicitly claims that he is not a behaviourist. Indeed, he seems to rubbish the latter suggestion, as though anyone who could believe such a thing had utterly misread his work. Many commentators have ignored these claims under the pretence that Wittgenstein may not have thought he was a behaviourist but was one nonetheless. But if the novice reader is more generous towards Wittgenstein and accepts his desire not to be associated with behaviourism, it is not clear what he – the reader – is left with once these two opposing trends, Cartesianism and behaviourism, have been cast aside. If

subjectivity is neither reducible to the inner mental life of a disembodied soul or to the outward behaviour of a body in space, what is it? Here, the secondary literature is remarkably less vocal. The goal of this dissertation, therefore, has been to give a Wittgensteinian account of subjectivity which avoids the pitfalls of the Cartesian and behaviourist views. In discussing these two views in Chapters 1 and 2, three aspects of subjectivity were brought forward with which they could not account.

I thus began in Chapter 3 by discussing the notion of a practical engagement in the world. The subject is not primarily a knowing subject, but an acting one. Knowledge is a second order abstraction from the more primordial practical involvement with the world. Wittgenstein argues that we do not *know* propositions such as "I have two hands," but not because they are doubtful, nor because they are pre-epistemic propositions, but because they are only very rarely formulated as propositions at all. My having two hands is not primarily a proposition. Using *On Certainty* as the basis of this chapter, I showed how Wittgenstein is very much concerned with this notion of a practical involvement in the world. We do things, we go places, say things, etc. This is the basis of any possible propositional knowledge, and yet, it is of an entirely different kind. The parallel with phenomenology was intended to highlight this fundamental difference between being-in-the-world and propositional knowledge. For Heidegger, one of the key things to understand is that our primary grasp of the world is not a thetic cognising of objects set out before us, given as what he calls the present-at-hand. On the contrary, objects have always already been taken up by me as tools or equipment, things which I use, which are in-order-to. The latter is what he calls the ready-to-hand. It is this relation to things which gives us an understanding of what is meant by the term being-in-the-world. This does not mean being in the world in the sense of being contained in it, as an object among objects, but a kind of dwelling in the world, which involves a practical engagement with it. The subject's relation to the world is not primarily the thetic relation of a knowing subject to a world of propositions about objects, but a practical engagement with objects which have always already gone beyond any mere propositional properties which they may have, to become useful pieces of equipment for an embodied subject. These phenomenological descriptions of the subject's involvement in a world allowed Wittgenstein's idea that knowledge is only possible once all sorts of practices are in

place to take on more depth. It is not simply that, in order to understand knowledge, we must posit a form of life. Rather, the point here is to show the primordial importance of the form of life which takes precedent over knowledge. The most important thing is this ungrounded way of acting in which we all engage, this practice, this form of life, because this is our primary manner of relating to the world.

As well as being always already practically engaged with the physical world around us, we are also always already engaged with the social world. Other selves and the interaction between us play a central role in Wittgenstein's discussion of subjectivity, and, therefore, constitute the second aspect of subjectivity which I discussed here. After outlining the traditional problem of other minds and some of its intellectual descendents, it was shown how Wittgenstein, far from providing a solution to the problem, provides a reformulation of the question. There are two issues of importance here for Wittgenstein. First of all, he sees a lack of phenomenological accuracy here. For him, it is not right to say that when I see a man, hit by a car, writhing in pain, I have any need to look into myself and say: "Once I was hit by a bicycle and displayed certain kinds of behaviour, and this situation appears to be similar in certain respects, etc.: therefore, this man is in pain." This is, of course, an exaggeration of the traditional position. But if the response is that all this happens "in a flash" and "imperceptibly," the answer is that there is no reason to posit it given no phenomenological evidence. According to Wittgenstein, I am immediately, not only aware of his pain, but shocked by it, fearful for him, etc. I can see in his gestures and hear in his cries that he is in pain, and this, not as an uninvolved observer, but in such a way that I am drawn in by his pain. I am always already intersubjectively linked with the other, and thus his gestures are always meaningful to me immediately, always soliciting some kind of response. When we attend to our everyday experience, the fact that others have minds is not something which we doubt. Furthermore, says Wittgenstein, and this is his second concern, the existence of other minds is something which we *cannot* doubt, if we understand this practically. Of course, intellectually, the sceptic can always come in and claim that others could in fact be automata or zombies, but for Wittgenstein, this doubt is not one which can be lived in practice. As shown in *On Certainty*, doubt is not merely an

intellectual process, but must be something which is lived through. If I say "Perhaps I do not have two hands" but keep living my life in exactly the same way, including continuing to use my hands for all their usual purposes, then for Wittgenstein, I do not really doubt that I have two hands. The same goes for the other-mind sceptic. Of course, at an intellectual level, it is possible to construct arguments against the certainty of the other's having a mind. But this doubt cannot be lived through, cannot be cashed out in practice. In order to go through with this doubt I would have to give up too much, including the very concepts of doubt and knowledge, which stem from intersubjective exchanges. Strikingly similar conclusions are reached by Merleau-Ponty and Scheler. Like Wittgenstein, Scheler claims that I am already acquainted with the other's subjectivity in his gestures and outcries and this is why I can draw an analogy between his behaviour and mine in the first place. Far from helping us prove the existence of other minds, the argument from analogy takes as its premise a resemblance which is not merely physical, but the resemblance of one living human being to another. For Merleau-Ponty too, the other is always already part of my life, before any kind of reasoning can take place. Shared being between subjects is the starting point. We engage with others by talking, laughing, playing, etc. These familiar practices are not something which depends on some kind of thetic grasp of the other, but on the contrary, for Merleau-Ponty, on the embodied being-in-the-world upon which any thetic grasp itself depends. Being-with-others is one aspect of being-in-the-world and cannot be distinguished from it. Thus, any kind of doubt about other minds requires an abstraction from the lived experience. This abstraction is of course possible, but only insofar as I am already, on a more primordial level, acquainted with the other. Just like for Wittgenstein, the lived, practical, engaged involvement with others which permeates our day-to-day life forms the basis of any kind of other-mind scepticism, which is therefore, self-defeating.

This picture of intersubjectivity helped the final aspect of subjectivity show up. The problem with a picture in which access to other minds is unproblematic is that it may appear not to account for the intuitive idea that experience is intrinsically first-personal. This intuitive first-personality needed to be restored into Wittgenstein's account. To begin with, it had to be made clear that the fact that experience is first-personal does not entail anything like the Cartesian private object, which I am in a

privileged position to observe. It is in believing that there is such an entailment that both behaviourists and Cartesians go wrong. The Cartesian believes that since experience is first-personal and cannot be reduced to anything else, he must be in a particularly good position to observe the private inner objects which he takes to constitute experience. On the other hand, the behaviourist, who wishes to deny that I am in any privileged position to observe my mental states, believes that this must mean denying the first person altogether. And thus we are left with two opposing views, each of which seems to deny something fairly intuitive: on the one hand, the Cartesian denies my access to other minds; on the other hand, the behaviourist denies that my pain is felt in a different way by me than it is by you. Both Kant and Merleau-Ponty helped loosen the grip of this picture of entailment between the first person and the Cartesian mind. One can, they showed, reject the former while retaining the latter. This idea that experience is intrinsically first-personal without being Cartesian was carried through to my reading of Wittgenstein. For him, when I am in pain, this pain is intrinsically mine. He discusses at great length the notions of mental states being "hidden" and "private." These discussions are usually read as a stern rejection of any kind of first-person experience. But this goes against Wittgenstein's explicit claims. Far from saying that there is no sense in which sensations are private, and thus leaning towards a behaviourist view, Wittgenstein explicitly says that there is a sense in which sensations are private. It is not however the sense in which private objects are arrayed before me, but the grammatical sense. This claim is all too often dismissed or misunderstood. In interpreting Wittgenstein as rejecting the inner mind, commentators are reluctant to grant any kind of privacy to sensations. Thus, claims that sensations are private, but only grammatically so, are taken to mean that they are not "really" private. This privacy is merely a trap which our language sets us. Thus, on this view, the sense in which my sensations are private is merely a linguistic sense, and occupies a minor position on the fringe of Wittgenstein's work. Here, I aimed to show that, far from being confined to the domain of language, this grammatical sense of "private" is crucial to maintaining the first-personality of experience to which an account of subjectivity must attend. When Wittgenstein claims that "Sensations are private" is a grammatical proposition, it must not be forgotten that grammatical propositions play a peculiar logical role in the various language-games we play, and that these language-games are themselves

embedded in the form of life. Thus Wittgenstein is perfectly willing to accept the fairly obvious fact that my experience is indeed *my* experience and not yours. But this is built into our very concept of subjectivity.

Directions for Further Research

A crucial aspect of the above dissertation has been its methodology. In the introduction, we saw how our thinking is often misled by pre-conceptions, and existing theories with which we begin our investigations. To avoid being misled in this way, the therapeutic method which was put to work here guards against making generalisations and thinking that our results in one area can be applied to others. As such, the task which was undertaken here would benefit from vast amounts of further discussion. This dissertation narrowed its focus in order to discuss aspects of subjectivity which were seen to be problematic in relation to the so-called "private language argument." As such, many of the example used revolve around pain, and occasionally perception. But they may form the basis for further questioning around other examples, other language-games, and their relation to subjectivity. Wittgenstein speaks at great length of what it is like to expect someone or something, to see colours or aspects. Do these language-games function in the same way as the ones discussed above? What about love, happiness, anger? The methodology at work in this dissertation does not allow us to give answers to these questions without an exploration in depth of each one of them. Part of the task here was to reject the idea that "mental states" must all function in the same way, an idea toward which we seem naturally tempted. Thus the results of this dissertation should not be taken to apply *eo ipso* to the other example given here. However, they may provide a useful starting point, and lay some groundwork for a similar exploration of e.g. love, happiness or expectation.

Furthermore, the method employed above was not merely therapeutic, but in a sense, phenomenological too. Wittgenstein is well known for trying to show his readers

how to avoid getting lost in theoretical discussions which end up contradicting our everyday experience and causing all sorts of needless difficulties. It was argued that his approach was similar in many ways to that developed throughout the phenomenological tradition and that this tradition could help put forth a positive therapeutic interpretation of some of Wittgenstein's more difficult texts. When discussing the three aspects of subjectivity summarised above, phenomenological ways of looking at the issues often helped them to appear in a new light. This method could perhaps be productively extended to other areas of Wittgenstein's thought.

When discussing language, for instance, and trying to get clear on the link Wittgenstein draws between words and non-verbal forms of expression such as cries, gesture, facial expressions and so on, it may be interesting to turn to Merleau-Ponty's description of speech as a 'linguistic gesture.' [*PP* p. 186/216] His analysis of language is preceded by a detailed discussion of gestures, which he sees as directly conveying meaning. Since the body is not merely the mechanistic body controlled by a thinking mind, but the embodied being-in-the-world of a subject incarnate, gestures are not the empty conveyors of a hidden meaning, but delineate their own meaning. This was, to an extent, discussed in Chapter 4. An angry gesture does not convey anger, it *is* anger. 'I do not see anger or a threatening attitude as a psychic fact hidden behind the gesture, I read anger in it. The gesture *does not make me think* of anger, it is anger itself.' [*PP*, p. 184/214] And for Merleau-Ponty, this gestural meaning which my body delineates is always present within speech. Language always has, prior to its conceptual meaning, a gestural meaning which gives it its life. Wittgenstein's claim that a child may learn to use the word "pain" as a new kind of pain behaviour which replaces the more natural and primitive expressions, and that the sentence "I am in pain" bears more resemblance to outcries and gestures than it does to an e.g. epistemic sentence, may perhaps be usefully read in the light of Merleau-Ponty's account of the linguistic gesture.

This, in turn, points towards the notion of embodiment which could again be an interesting area of research. As is well known, Merleau-Ponty provides a thorough description of the body and the embodied subject. For him, the subject is not primarily the thinking subject which Descartes discussed, but the corporeal being

embedded in the world. There is no distinguishing a thinking consciousness and a mechanistic body which only contingently interrelate. For Merleau-Ponty, we are not the pure for-itself nor merely a body in-itself, but we belong to a third genus of being, the subject incarnate, the embodied consciousness. This is an area where Wittgenstein says very little, but his picture seems to imply many things about the body. The account, given in Chapter 3, of the subject as not being primarily a knowing subject but an involved and engaged one seems similarly to break down the dichotomy between mind and body. This is appears to be confirmed by the discussion of expression and intersubjectivity. Language is seen as a better way of doing what we are always already doing with our bodies: expressing ourselves. The natural and primitive expressions of pain of which Wittgenstein speaks are surely no less than the embodiment of what is generally thought of as a mental state. Thus, here too, phenomenology, and particularly that of Merleau-Ponty, may help to cash out some of Wittgenstein's thoughts. Thus it would indeed seem that beyond the scope of this dissertation, the dialogue between the Wittgensteinian and phenomenological traditions can be the source of much productive research in the future.

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