

Wittgenstein's Writings

Ms-166



Ms-166

Ludwig
Wittgenstein

1r[1] &
1v[1]

Notes for the ‘Philosophical Lecture’.

Privacy of experiences. This privacy a super privacy. *Something like* privacy. What seems to be the essential characteristic of privacy? Nobody but I can see it, feel it, hear it; nobody except myself knows what it’s like. Nobody except I can get at it. Language game with the colour chart. Let us imagine each man has a private chart (perhaps *besides* having a public one). Imagine he points to green on his private chart when ‘red’ is said why should we say he means by ‘red’ the colour we mean by ‘green’? Privacy of feelings can mean: nobody can know them unless I show them; or: I can’t really show them. Or: if I don’t want to, I needn’t give any sign of my feeling but even if I want to I can only show a sign & not the feeling.

1v[2] & Meaning consisting of the word referring to an object. How a
2r[1] & kind of object is hypostasized for a technique of use. This word
2v[1] & refers to this→ object that word to that→ object. Explanation of
3r[1] the object referred to not by pointing but by explaining a
technique. Colour words, shape words, etc. Under what
circumstances pointing can explain i.e. convey the use of a
word. Not to a baby. *It* learns by being drilled. There is
therefore no occult act of *naming* an object that in itself can give
a word a meaning. Words for coloured shape. Word for colour
on one side of a line.

What does 'now' refer to or 'this' or 'I'. The private object. The
naming of the private object. The private language. The game
someone plays with himself. When do we call it a *game*. If it
resembles a public game. The diary of Robinson Crusoe.

So we mustn't think that we understand the working of a word
in language if we say it is a name which we give to some sort of
an experience which we have. The idea is here: we *have*
something it is as it were before the mind's eye (or some other
sense) & we give it a name. What could be simpler? One might
say: All ostensive definition explains the use of a word only
when it makes one last determination, removes one last
indeterminacy.

3r[2] & The relation between name & object. Language game of
3v[1] & builder. What is the relation between names & actions, names
4r[1] & shapes? The relation of ostensibly defining. That's to say in
order to establish a name relation we have to establish a
technique of use. And we are misled if we think, that it is a
peculiar process of christening an object which makes a word
the word for an object. This is a kind of superstition. So it's no
use saying that we have a private object before the mind & give
it a name. There is a name only where there is a technique of
using it & that technique can be private; but this only means
that nobody but I know about it in the sense in which I can
have a private sewing machine. But in order to be a private
sewing machine, it must be an object which deserves the name
sewing machine not in virtue of its privacy but in virtue of its
similarity to sewing machines private or otherwise.

4v[1] & Now why do we say: My feelings are my private property.
5r[1] & Because only I am directly aware of my pain. But what does
5v[1] that mean. I suppose to be aware of pain means to feel it, &
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) & 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.) We could of course use
the proposition 'A person is directly aware of his pain only &
indirectly aware of the other man's' as a grammatical rule
[Bestimmung] to the effect that if I say of N. "N. is directly
aware of pain" this means, 'N. has pain' whereas 'N. is
indirectly aware of pain' is to mean: 'N. is aware of the fact that
someone else has pain'. (And this I'm inclined to call the
healthy use of these phrases).

5v[2] & Here too however the expressions 'directly aware & indirectly
6r[1] & aware' are *extremely* misleading. What gives us the idea that the
6v[1] & person who feels pain is aware of an object, as it were, sees it,
7r[1] & whereas we are only told that it's there but can't see it? It is the
7v[1] & peculiar function of the verbs like feeling, seeing etc. But before
8r[1] & explaining what I mean I must make a preliminary remark. For
8v[1] & I know that some of you will think this is the worst kind of
9r[1] & verbalism. So I must make a general remark about grammar &
9v[1] & reality. Roughly speaking the relation of the grammar of
10r[1] & expressions to the facts which they are used to describe is that
10v[1] & between the description of methods & units of measurement &
11r[1] the measures of objects measured by those methods & units.
Now I could describe the shape & size of this room by giving
its length, breadth & height in feet & just as well by giving
them in metres. I could also give them in microns. In a way
therefore you might say that the choice of the units is arbitrary.
But in a most important sense it is not. It has a most important
reason lying both in the size & in the irregularity of shape & in
the use we make of a room that we don't measure its
dimension in μ . or even in mm. That is to say not only the
proposition which tells us the result of measurement but also
the description of the method & unit of measurement tells us
something about the world in which this measurement takes
place. And in this very way the technique of use of a word
gives us an idea of *very* general truths about the world in which
it is used; of truths in fact which are so general that they don't
strike people (& I'm sorry to say philosophers too). And so I
will turn to some points in the technique of use of expressions
like 'feeling pain'. The first point is this that this verbal

expression is in the first person used to replace an *expression* of pain. So that if some people say that 'having pain' in the end refers to pain behaviour we can answer them, that 'I have pain' does not refer to pain behaviour but *is* a pain behaviour. It corresponds to a cry of pain not to the statement I am crying. But surely you distinguish between my pain behaviour when I just behave that way & have no pain & my pain behaviour in the opposite case. If you mean do I admit the fact that people sometimes behave as though they had pain whereas they haven't, I do. But I wish to say that you can't explain that difference by saying that if he has pain there is behind his expression a certain something present which he expresses by his behaviour. If instead of 'a certain something' or some such phrase you're bold enough to say 'pain' then the statement becomes tautologous. If you want to avoid the mention of pain because this already presupposes that we know what is behind his expression then it doesn't help you to say 'a certain feeling' or 'a certain something' for how do you know that you are allowed to call it a feeling or even a something. For the word something has a public meaning if it means anything at all. And then if you risk saying that he *has something* you might as well say all you know & say that he has pain. The point is that a private object can't *justify* the use of a word, neither for the others *nor* for him. The private object does not only not enter the public game but it can't enter a private *game* either. You can see this e.g. if you replace the one private object which is to justify his use of a pain expression by a series of different objects which he *has* at different times when he says he has pain. 'But surely the use of the word pain is based on the fact

that he 'recognises' his private object as always being the same on those occasions!' What's he mean in this case by being the 'same', or 'recognising', neither he nor we have ever learnt to apply these words to his private object. Supposing instead of 'he recognises the object' we said more cautiously 'he believes he recognises' – but then we ought to say that he believes that he believes he recognises and so on ad inf. In other words: if this object is as private as we want it to be we have no reason to call it one object rather than 100 objects, we have no reason to apply the word object at all & no more has he.

11r[2] [This paper if it is in the least as I think it ought to be should at first sight be very confusing indeed. For in this case it apparently consists of a mixture of trivialities & paradoxes & why I should say them seems pretty unclear.]

11r[3] & For to say that he has a private object means that we shall
11v[1] & regard no description which he may give of it as really telling
12r[1] us what it's like. We assume that when he was taught our language the privacy of the object made it impossible to teach him the applications of language to this object. But what if he just had *guessed* the right application? But which *is* the right application? There is nothing to guess at. But couldn't he if only by chance have stumbled on the application analogous to the public one? But what are we in this case to call 'analogous'?

12r[2] If you cheat others at least don't cheat yourself; and if you don't cheat yourself – why should you cheat the others?

12r[3] In fact the private object is one about which neither he who has it nor he who hasn't got it can say anything to others or to himself.

12r[4] &
12v[1] &
13r[1] But what you say always sounds as though you wished to deny the existence of pain as opposed to that of pain behaviour. But what could it mean to deny the existence of pain except to deny that people have ever felt pain; or to deny that it makes sense to say that someone has pain? What I do deny is that we can construe the grammar of 'having pain' by hypostasising a private object. Or: The private object functions all right only as long as its grammar is entirely constructed to suit the grammar of the common objects in question. & it becomes an absurdity if its nature is supposed to explain that grammar.

13r[2] &
13v[1] We can express this as follows: There is no *justification* for an utterance of pain in the sense in which there is for my saying that someone else is in pain.

There is no essentially private justification for I couldn't know whether anything that is essentially private *is a justification*.

13v[2] There is something in front of me which justifies me in saying there is a table in front of me.

13v[3] As introduction:

Word referring to an object. Using a word analogously to certain cases. Equality & the criteria of equality. Imagining, making an image & making *use* of the image.

- 13v[4] & 14r[1] Recognising the object as the same you had before. But if we use the words 'recognise' & 'same' he must be *justified* in saying that he recognises the object as the same. Can his recognition be infallible? No; for he may be wrong in the use of the word 'same'.
- 14r[2] He recognises; but suppose he went wrong, would it make any difference? But what is it like to be right in this case?
- 14r[3] & 14v[1] We can't e.g. discuss the question whether he is justified to use the *same* utterance twice.
- 14v[2] & 15r[1] & 15v[1] If we imagine anything that we should call a justification, some private regularity, it must be something which, if we saw it, we should call a regularity. But what would in our case mean seeing his private regularity? We haven't given it any sense. That is, we have indeed given the expression to feel what he feels sense but with particular criteria for the identity. If we now talk of identity & don't wish to use *these* criteria we are left without any unless we give fresh ones. And of course I know perfectly well that we are thinking of criteria similar to the ones of physical objects only we can't apply any such criteria in our case & *that's* what we mean by talking of the privacy of the objects. Privacy here really means the absence of means of comparison. Only we mix up the state of affairs when we are prevented from comparing the objects with that of not having fixed a method of comparison. And in the moment we would fix such a way of comparing we would no longer talk of 'sensations'.

15v[2] & But suppose I say: 'I have the same sensations now as five
16r[1] minutes ago' – what criterion of identity am I using? – What
criterion am I using for determining that what I feel is pain, or
that what I see is red? None. There are criteria which can
convince me that I am using the word 'red' or 'pain' as they are
normally used in English. I can point to something & say: 'The
colour of this you do call 'mauve', don't you?' etc.

16r[2] & That's to say: In 'I feel what I felt 5 min. ago' I have no
16v[1] & justification analogous to the case ... for calling the sensations
17r[1] identical apart from my justification of my use of the words
employed in *other* contexts. And this means: I can't justify my
saying this either to others or to myself. Or rather it's better to
say that I can justify saying this in such & such a sense but not
in one analogous to It is as when we compare games & say:
in this ball game there is nothing corresponding to the net in
tennis.

17r[2] Memory can be compared with a storehouse only so far as it
fulfils the same purpose. Where it doesn't, we couldn't say
whether the things stored up may not constantly change their
nature & so couldn't be said to be stored at all.

17r[3] & But don't we say two sensations are equal when we find them
17v[1] equal & isn't finding them so the justification for saying it? But
how do we recognise 'finding two sensations equal'?

17v[2] He learns to use the word; & then, whenever ..., he says ' ...'
What are the circumstances under which he then says ...?
Could we say: ' ... & then whenever he feels pain he says ...'? or
' ... & then, whenever he has a certain feeling he says ...'? or ' ...
& then, whenever he has something particular he says ...'?

17v[3] & But if he is truthful, why shouldn't we take his word for it that
18r[1] he sees red? But we do! That's to say we believe that he is not
telling us a lie. – But if he is intelligent as well, why shouldn't
we believe that what he has before his mind's eye is red. We do,
– according to the method of comparison applicable in this
case. 'Then where do you disagree with us?' – When you talk
about something incommunicable, private.

18r[2] & You seem to deny the existence of something; on the other
18v[1] & hand you say you don't deny any existence: why should it *seem*
19r[1] as if you did? You seem to say: 'there is *only* ...' You deny, it
seems, the background of the expression of sensations. Doesn't
the expression point to something beyond itself? – If we see the
feeling as a background to the expression then we can always
assume that we are wrong in thinking that this background
doesn't change; we can assume that our memory at each instant
cheats us & that we use the expression *bona fide* to express
something different each time. So that one might say: it doesn't
matter *what* is behind the expression so long as it is a *bona fide*
expression of it.

- 19r[2] & 19v[1] Our answer is: Why do you think that a cry would be the *expression* of the background if there were one? In what sense would the cry *for me* point to such a background? Aren't you assuming a *language game* which in this case is not played? You bring in the idea of expression & background because you look at the game that's actually played through the schema of another game.
- 19v[2] 'A cry *with* something, & a cry *without* something.'
- 19v[3] & 20ar[1] The grammar of an expression can't be investigated by transforming the expressions, particularly when they all make use of the same picture. You have to remind yourself of the use to get out of the rut in which all these expressions tend to keep you.
- 20ar[2] The whole point of investigating the 'verification' e.g. is to stress the importance of the use as opposed to that of the picture.
- 20ar[3] & 20av[1] In this way we have to *investigate* the use of 'cry with ...' & 'cry without ...' although of course there are plenty of pictures ready taken from other uses of 'with' & 'without' but the picture which come most readily in our mind are just the ones which confuse us.
- 20av[2] Comparing measuring time with measuring lengths. To get rid of the confusing picture remind yourself exactly *how* we measure time.
- 20av[3] The difficulty here is that those pictures are terribly insistent, forcing us to see everything in their likeness.

- 20av[4] Words with & without sense.
- 20br[1] The application of a word (say 'with') compares *this* case with other cases. But we're just questioning how far this comparison holds. So we must remind ourselves of facts which these words don't suggest.
- 20br[2] & 20bv[1] "But surely, I know what pain is & that I always have just that when I say 'I have pain'". Doesn't it strike you as odd that you should know so well what pain is, now when you haven't got it?! This rather suggests that you don't need to recognise any private object to know the meaning of pain. Nor can you say: to understand the word pain it's necessary to recognise pain when it does come. For who is to say whether you do recognise it, unless recognising here means feeling (uttering) recognition, not recognising rightly. In this sense I could be said to recognise Smith as being Jones.
- 20bv[2] & 21r[1] 'But you can't *describe* the phenomenon of people feeling pain by describing their pain behaviour. You *do* know that there's more to it than that. In your own case you know that all that happens isn't that under certain *external* circumstances you do & say such & such things.' – In your own case you know that what's meant by feeling pain is entirely independent of external circumstances, & as to internal ones the only one that matters is *feeling pain*.
- 21v[1] How would I justify my pain-behaviour in order to show to someone that I wasn't just acting in this way? I would add more expressive behaviour.

- 21v[2] But when I in my own case distinguish between, say, pretending that I have pain & really having pain, surely I must make this distinction on some grounds! Oddly enough – no! – I do distinguish but not on any *grounds*.
- 21v[3] &
22r[1] .. But if you say this aren't you saying that all the phenomenon of human pain is a phenomenon of behaviour?
- 22r[2] If we assume a justification behind the expression of feeling & if we then try to describe this justification it turns out that it isn't a justification after all, that we have to say things about it which take away its character of justification.
- 22r[3] &
22v[1] It is as though I said: this man is N.'s guardian & then said things about the way he functions which are incompatible with his being a guardian to N.
- 22v[2] 'This feeling of mine, however you call it, justifies my behaviour'. – This already presupposes that you can use the word 'feeling'.

22v[3] & Common idea: a word has meaning by referring to something.
23r[1] & There is a connection between a word & an object. What sort of
23v[1] & connection? Is it something like this: the word reminds us of
24r[1] & the object? What happens when a thing reminds me of
24v[1] something? Seeing M reminds me of his father. Let's say
roughly seeing M produces in me thoughts about his father &
images of M^S father. (Remark) The sentence I imagine so & so
is not a *description* of a picture before my mind's eye. Ask
yourself do you recognise him from the picture before your
mind's eye? Would you say: I see a man with white hair etc. I
suppose I'm imagining M. but perhaps it's only someone who
looks very much like him. There is (however) a use we make of
pictures which resembles much more that which we make of
the product of our imagination: E.g. we describe the position of
objects in a street accident & say while drawing, this (line) is ...
street this (square) is the overturned car this (cross) the
policeman at the corner etc. Here too we are using sentences of
the same form as those which would describe what we believe
a picture represents whereas their use is to give a picture an
interpretation. – It is useful here to imagine that a man
imagines by means of drawing or painting, sketching or even
by producing a cartoon film. If you said that in order to draw
he must already have a mental picture which he copies, the
answer is, that the mode of projection used to copy his mental
picture is not determined & the latter therefore might be
anything, so that in fact all that gives us a right to speak about a
mental picture is the fact that we are under certain
circumstances inclined to call a (non-mental) picture a
representation of a mental one.

24v[2] & 'Is there then no such thing as a mental picture?' The proper
25r[1] & answer to a question thus worded would be: 'People at times
25v[1] & have mental pictures'. But this isn't really the sort of answer we
26r[1] & wanted. We meant to ask: have we a right, under the
26v[1] circumstances under which it's normally said that a person has
a mental image, to say that he has such an image or picture?
Have we a right to say that someone married money? This may
mean did he 'marry money' or is the expression an appropriate
one. Think of the ways in which such a question is decided? –
Suppose we ask the question: are people murdered in tragedies
or aren't they? One answer is: In *some* tragedies some people
are murdered. Another answer: 'people aren't *really* murdered
on the stage they only pretend to murder & to die'. But the use
of the word 'pretend' here is again ambiguous for it may be
used in the sense in which Edgar pretends to have led
Gloucester to the Cliff. We shall say the word 'really', 'pretend',
'die' etc. are used in a peculiar way when we talk of a play &
differently in ordinary life. Or: the criteria for a man dying in a
play aren't the same as those of his dying in reality. But are we
justified to say that Lear dies at the end of the play? Why not.
And, analogously, that there is no reason for objecting to saying
we have a mental picture does not mean that the criteria for the
existence of a non-mental picture are the same as those for the
existence of a mental picture. One may even say that the former
& the latter criteria need not even be similar as one may say
that the criteria for the death of a person in the play & outside a
play are utterly dissimilar though there is of course a
connection.

27r[1] & Back to the function of words! We could imagine a use of
27v[1] & language in which the words were used to bring images before
28r[1] & our minds, an image for each word, or some thought
28v[1] & concerning the object mentioned. As when we read a list of
29r[1] & names of people whom we know & reading imagine them or
29v[1] think various thoughts about them. And to amplify my idea I
can assume that the person who reads the list actually sketches
the people or writes down sentences about them. This is
obviously not the way the words in a sentence normally work.
For again we might imagine a particular use of sentences in
which their purpose is to make the reader draw a certain
picture. One is inclined to think that understanding a sentence
must consist in something at least *similar* to having a picture of
the 'fact the sentence refers to' before one's mind. What is true
in this is that there is a connection between the capability to
produce such a picture & understanding. But the idea that
understanding means producing such a picture of something
similar is quite wrong. When we philosophise we are
constantly bound to give an account of our technique of the
usage of words and this technique we know in the sense that
we master it & we don't know it in the sense that we have the
very greatest difficulty in surveying & describing it. Thus we
are inclined to look for an *activity* when we are to give an
account of the meaning of a verb. & if some activity is closely
connected with it we tend to think that the verb stands for this
activity. The use of the word understanding however is such
that it is very misleading to say it refers to an activity. Lots of
activities are signs that we have understood. The technique of
use of the verb 'understanding' is most similar to the technique

of use of the verb 'to be able to'. In particular in such cases as 'to be able to play chess'. Aren't you trying to make the distinction between understanding as a disposition & understanding as an action?

29v[2] & A philosophical problem can be solved only in the right
30r[1] surrounding. We must give the problem a new surrounding we
must compare it to cases we are not used to compare it with. –
– –

30r[2] If we describe the language game of fetching coloured things it
might seem that we only describe it superficially, because the
real game is played with impressions, & these we haven't
mentioned at all in our description. It seems as if we hadn't
really gone to the bottom of it.

30r[3] & We always forget that 'impressions' is a peculiar grammatical
30v[1] form, & that we could describe phenomena without using just
this form.

30v[2] Talking about impressions already means to look at
phenomena in one particular way, i.e., to *think* about them in
one particular fashion.

30v[3] 'What does green look like to me? – It looks like this → to me.' –

30v[4] & "This is the colour impression which I'm calling 'green'".
31r[1]

- 31r[2] Am I *sure* I'm talking about my private *impression*? And how can I be sure? Do I *feel* that I'm talking about the impression? What happens? I look at a green patch, I concentrate my attention on such a patch & I say these words. But on what kind of patch? Not on a green one. On one which seems to deserve the name green?
- 31v[1] It is not true that I see impressions before me & that they are the primary objects.
- 31v[2] In the sense in which I can't explain 'what green looks like to me' I can't say that I know what it looks like either.
- 31v[3] Swapping experiences.
- 31v[4] Having a particular use of the word in mind.
- 31v[5] &
32r[1] The difference between 'Now I know the formula' & 'Now I can go on'.
- 32r[2] The difference between saying the formula & saying 'Now I know the formula'
- 32r[3] The importance of the if-feeling.
- 32r[4] The 'conditional feeling' not unlike seeing a vowel coloured.
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- 47r[1] [Facsimile Ms-166,47r](#)
- 46v[1] [Facsimile Ms-166,46v](#)
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