

Title of the Thesis:

PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT: A CRITICAL OBSERVATION
AFTER LATER WITTGENSTEIN

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts
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Dedicated to my Parents

Preface

When I started to think over the issue on private language, my only source of knowledge was the familiarity, although not in a great extent in terms of literature, with the *Private Language Argument* in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. I studied the *Investigations* in my P.G. classes as one of the texts of Wittgenstein along with the *Tractatus* as a special paper. In those days I got interested in Wittgenstein, later on when I decided to do research on Wittgenstein, I consulted with Dr. Kantilal Das who was to be my supervisor later on. We thought that private language problem has a lot to offer in terms of its scope. Although there is extensive literature with regard to the problem, we could find that it is still a viable issue, because the interpretations have opened the door to a new level. One has to ponder over the issue in the light of the received interpretations and look for the new road. The interpretations have shed light on the issue, but many of them are misleading, like Wittgenstein's text is apparently misleading to many.

We have divided the thesis into six chapters including the introductory and the concluding chapters. The chapters discuss the various facets of the famous private language problem. As there are so many things related to the thesis, we have tried to focus on the key issues in a new light, with the backdrop of the interpretations of the leading scholars in the field. Two chapters have been made to examine the arguments for and against the possibility of private language. Chapter 2 is mainly about the position of Descartes, Ayer, Fodor and Chomsky who are in favour of the possibility of private language, whereas, Chapter 3 studies the position of Wittgenstein and his followers on the rejection of the possibility of private language. Chapter 4 inspects how the Private

Language Argument is related with the problem of other minds. The other minds problem is an age-old concern in the philosophy of mind, and private language argument relates the philosophy of language with the problem in a way that can hardly be overlooked if we investigate it properly. The fifth chapter highlights a very crucial issue of language and thought and their relationship. The dimensions of language and thought have been critically looked after as the issue is after all about the problem of meaning. We have tried to locate the intention of Wittgenstein and assess the problem in a contemporary perspective. Our aim is to unveil the real impact of the private language argument and to evaluate the worth of Wittgenstein's textual remarks and their relevance in the worldview. However, one thesis is not enough to do the justice and I do not claim it anyway. This is my humble attempt to explore the immense scope that the argument offers as far as I could observe and I have tried to carry out the mission with utmost sincerity and honesty.

It becomes my earnest duty to acknowledge those who have stood by me right through the journey, contributed directly or indirectly to my research and the making of the thesis. First and foremost there is my supervisor Dr. Kantilal Das, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, who with all his insight and enthusiasm initiated the key ideas of the project and persuaded me to take the task. He kept me on my toes throughout the endeavour and never allowed any complacency in my thinking. He has always been there to help me whenever I faced difficulties in sorting out the arguments. His constant encouragement and scholarly guidance played an instrumental role in developing my thesis. If there is any imperfection in my thesis, the responsibility solely lies on me. I am grateful to the entire faculty of the Philosophy Department, North Bengal University for inspiring me right

through my journey. I acknowledge the contribution of Professor Raghunath Ghosh, Dr. Jyotish Chandra Basak, Dr. Debika Saha, Dr. Anirban Mukherjee, Dr. Koushik Joardar, Dr. Nirmal Roy, Dr. Laxmi Kanta Padhi and Mr. N. Ramthing. They have always been very kind and erudite every time I needed a consultation with them. My heartfelt gratitude to the beloved Professors Manjulika Ghosh and Bhaswati Bhattacharya Chakrabarti who might have retired from this department but continue to be residing in my heart.

I must acknowledge the contribution of the Junior Research Fellowship given by the University of North Bengal which gave me the impetus to start my research without worrying about financial obstruction. The fellowship was healthy enough to keep the momentum as well as maintain my living; my sincere gratitude to the University authority in this regard. I duly admit the cooperation from the officials and the colleagues of the Directorate of Distance Education, University of North Bengal, where I am working as a Lecturer in Philosophy since February, 2011. The fact that I am still in the same institution where I started my research has surely helped my progress. I also acknowledge the influential contribution of the Central Library of North Bengal University for providing me the required help in terms of the books, journals, internet and Xerox as well as printing facilities. I specially thank the Library authority for affording such useful online links as JSTOR, Project Muse and INFLIBNET which enable me and so many researchers to access a large number of valuable research journals. I also thank Mr. Mayukh Dutta, for being so generous in issuing books from the prosperous collection of the departmental library. I take this opportunity to thank the authority of the Academic Centre of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research in Lucknow. I got a great number of photocopied

materials from the ICPR library that has played a crucial role in my doctoral research. It would be an injustice if I do not acknowledge the research inputs given by the learned faculty members of the Centre for Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru University where I did a semester of M.Phil. before joining here at N.B.U. as a JRF. I also managed to take some materials related with my research from the rich JNU library, my honest due to that premiere institution where I have some beautiful memories with my friends.

Gauranga, Anup, Buddhiswar, Nabanita, Juhi, Monalisadi and other scholar friends have formed a great group and made my journey wonderful. No appreciation is enough for Sonali, my beloved friend, who had to tolerate my anxiety and frustration at the times of despair in my route towards completion of the thesis. I don't want to thank my parents, it would belittle them, I think. They are beyond any thanks and acknowledgements as they are the ones who have made me whatever little I could achieve today. My family, including my elder sister, my brother-in-law, and their little son have kept me joyous when I needed that feeling, as pursuing Ph.D. is an arduous task to accomplish. I acknowledge their enormous contribution and dedicate the thesis to my parents from the core of my heart.

Purbayan Jha
(Purbayan Jha)

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List of abbreviations:

PLA: Private Language Argument

PI: *Philosophical Investigations*

LOT: Language of Thought

List of Illustrations:

Illustration 4.1: The 1st person perspective: p. 97

Illustration 4.2: Justification from behavioural criteria: p. 107



Ludwig Wittgenstein (26.04.1889 - 29.04.1951)

Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (Philosophical Investigations, § 109)

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction

The objective of the research project is to analyse and examine the possibility of private language argument after later Wittgenstein. Whether language is private or public is a long-standing debate among philosophers. It has been a recurrent theme since Descartes and it deserves equal philosophical interest in present contemporary philosophy as well. Historically, there are two divergent of opinions regarding private language of which one view holds that private language is possible and another view just denies it. Those who stick to the view that private language is possible would like to say that one's sensations and feelings are exclusively personal. Here we remember the view of Descartes. The most kernel point of the *Cartesian* view is that sensations and feelings are only contingently related to the manifest behaviours and circumstances of the person who has the experience in question. The observation of the workings of the person's own mind is immune from doubt, illusion and confusion. The present thinking, feeling, willing, perceiving, remembering and imaginings of a person are intrinsically phosphorescent. Since the inner life of a person is a stream of consciousness, it would be absurd to suggest that the mind would be

unaware. Descartes has given a sketch of a mental reality that gives the primacy to our thoughts; our language has to be driven by the thoughts, there is an inner world of being in us. This idea has given a rise to the possibility of private language.

Professor A. J. Ayer also supports some sort of private language. In his essay "Can there be a private language?"¹ Ayer has imagined a Robinson Crusoe who lives in an island with the creatures that are non-human. In spite of being in such a state, Crusoe formulates his ideas and expresses in a language that is unique to him. In fact, Ayer thinks that Crusoe invents a language. His language is private in the sense of its level of incommunicability to the general persons.

Contrary to the above view, we can equally notice the impossibility of private language after later Wittgenstein. The private language argument is found in Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work, especially in his *Philosophical Investigations* and in his *The Blue and Brown Books*. The argument of private language was central to philosophical discussion at the end of the last century, and it continues even in today's philosophical

¹ A.J. Ayer, "Can There Be A Private Language?" *Aristotelian Society Proceedings*, Supplementary Volume 28. In this essay Professor Ayer has given an example of private language that can be understood only by its speaker, e.g. Robinson Crusoe uses a language which is unfamiliar with the common usage, even then he is able to communicate his feelings.

discussion. The argument is supposed to show that the idea of a language understood by only a single individual is incoherent. The *Investigations* notoriously does not present its arguments in a succinct and linear fashion. Wittgenstein instead chooses to describe particular uses of language, and then to ask the reader to reflect on the implications of that use. As a result, there is a considerable dispute about both the nature of the argument and its import. Indeed, it has become common to talk of private language arguments. Archaeologists of philosophy have located precursors of the private language in a variety of sources prior to Wittgenstein. Locke is also a prominent exponent of the view targeted by the argument, since he proposed in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that the meaning of a word is the idea it stands for.

The origin of the private language problem:

(i) What is a private language and why does its possibility matter?

Wittgenstein would say a private language is that whose words “refer to what can only be known to the person speaking, to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.”² But he denies the possibility of private language as he conceives that ‘obeying a

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), §243.

rule' is a practice. For him language is rule following. So to follow a rule is to conform to a practice, i.e. to act in the generally acknowledged way.

(ii) Different senses of privacy: By and large, one could find at least three different senses of privacy that language can talk about. These are:

⇒ A language is private in the sense that only the speaker can speak of it, though the language could be taught to others in any of the various normal ways we have. One can teach a new language to someone who does not know it already. Two questions may arise at this juncture: first, the question whether I can keep a diary in ordinary English to record my pains, moods and so on; secondly, the question whether there could be a language in fact used by only one person but capable of being understood by any explorer clever enough to see the connection between certain marks and certain circumstances. The second prospect always remains as an objection against the private language.

⇒ A language is private in the sense that no one other than the speaker could understand it even if all experiences of the speaker were available to others. One can reject this type of private language by claiming that such type of language does not qualify as a language at all.

⇒ One might consider the possibility of a language which cannot be taught or learnt by anyone other than the speaker because it is a language

which is used to talk about objects that are private in the sense that no one other than the speaker is directly acquainted with them.

(iii) How is the problem of other minds related with the private language argument?

It is said that the problem of private language is intimately connected with the problem of other minds. The problem of other minds was found in Plato's *Theaetetus*. Here it is asked, "Are you quite certain that the several colours appear to a dog or to any animal whatever they appear to you? ... Or that anything appears the same to you as another man?" The sceptical position, however, can be framed with the help of the following models:

P₁: I can't experience another person's thoughts or feelings, and vice-versa. The way I have access to my own mind, is not the same with knowing other minds.

P₂: A necessary condition for knowing what another person is thinking or feeling is experiencing his thoughts or feelings. For this to happen, one has to have the access to the mind of the other.

P₃: I can never know what another person is really thinking or feeling, and vice-versa.

Therefore, everyone's mental contents (thoughts and feelings) are self-experiencing and hence private to himself. The above propositions raise the problem of other minds that will be discussed in detail in the Fourth Chapter of the thesis.

The origin of the private language argument actually hinges on the following two claims:

- ◇ The meaning of a word is the object the word stands for. (*PI* §1)
- ◇ Sensations are private. (*PI* §248)

Hence a language that refers to the private objects could only be understood by the owner of the sensations. Nobody else could understand it, because he has no access to the inner world of another person.

The origin of the confusion derives from the typical way philosophers tend to approach the problem, e.g. by introspection, the headache-approach, or by falling victims to the picture offered by our language. Wittgenstein does not want to deny that there are sensations, but only that the picture of an inner process could give us the right idea for the use of a word. He is not interested in ontology but in grammar, because grammar reveals the nature of our sensations. If someone wants to know

what pain is, he should not introspect himself, but examine the meaning of the word and its use.

The rationale of my approach adopted in this research will be to unveil the problematic interpretations of the private language argument. Saul Kripke conceives that the core of private-language discussion already lies in the preceding treatment of rule-following; a rule only adds content to illustrate the rule-follower as part of a wider community. From Hume to Russell and virtually in the case of all philosophers the problem appears as a tricky issue. Gilbert Ryle conceives of a private world of all experiences parallel to the public world because there is a soul in each of us. He calls it the 'para-mechanical world' of the mind as a substance. John V. Canfield thinks of a possibility of the notion of a private rule. For example, we might show that 'red' has a private meaning, in addition to its public significance, pointing within that what 'red' means to me, or really means.³ So the debate on the possibility of private language will proceed and take a more interesting shape. The interesting thing with the PLA is its variety of examples that have created a larger liberty for the commentators and interpreters to put them in shape and thus the PLA has become a masterpiece of a literature.

³ John V. Canfield, "Private Language: The Diary Case", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 79, No. 3 (September, 2001), pp. 377-394.

The significance of the private language problem:

The importance of the private language argument derives from its centrality in debates about the nature of language. One compelling theory about language has it that words map to ideas, concepts or representations in each person's mind. On this account, the concepts in my head are distinct from the concepts in another one's head. But I can match my concepts to a word in our common language, and then speak the word. Another person matches the word to a concept in his mind. So our concepts in effect form a private language which we translate into our common language and so share. This account is found, for example in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and more recently in Jerry Fodor's *Language of Thought* theory.

Wittgenstein's argument seeks to show that this sort of account is incoherent. If the idea of a private language argument is incoherent, then it would follow that language is essentially public: that language is at its core a social phenomenon. This would have profound implications for other areas of philosophical study. For instance, if one cannot have a private language, it might not make any sense to talk of private sensations such as qualia; nor might it make sense to talk of a word as referring to a concept, where a concept is understood to be a private mental representation.

Apart from the theoretical and methodological significance, the research can have a practical importance also which cannot be ignored either. Language is a social phenomenon for Wittgenstein. He explores the picture of persons as immaterial souls seated in physical bodies. He focuses on our attention upon the persons as living human beings, existing in a shared, public, inter-subjective, spatio-temporal world. Language is the most predominant resource in the public forms of life and psychological concepts are inextricably interconnected with concepts relating to the human body and to naturally expressive human behaviour. Therefore, an intensive study in this area could open many new possibilities in terms of social and behavioural aspects of human beings.

Human beings are essentially social. They are always on the verge to express their feelings, and expressions are mediated by means of language. Language has the capacity to motivate a person to manifest their innermost feelings, as language functions like a tool to express the sensations. But the question arises: Can language be private? Is there any language that can be understood only by its speaker? Language is shared between persons of different locality in different forms of life. Even when the persons of different dialects talk with each other, there is every possibility of their dialects being shared. This is the same with decoding

possibility of their dialects being shared. This is the same with decoding certain codes which are private, used by a particular group of people.

The codes are essentially sharable and can be known by others too provided that they master the technique of the language used in the codes. This is the most important thing in the PLA - mastery of a technique or practising the use of the language.

The practice of spoken language is a public activity. It is not possible to practise a language privately, as it is not possible either to obey a rule privately. To carry out the task of letting the others know about my pain I have to master the technique of linguistic practice. Children cry to inform the elders about their pain, they do not speak until they are able to do so. Elders show certain indications to the children, and they follow those while being in pain. Wittgenstein has discussed about the exclamations of the children when expressing their pain at the start of the *Investigations*. He cites from Augustine's *Confessions* to show that the individual words name objects, the meaning is correlated with the word and the word stands for the object.⁴ It is the origin of the confusion we guess, as it paves the way for ostensive definition. Here Wittgenstein has been able to grasp the root cause of the problem. The reason he might have thought is the general tendency of a human being to point inwardly

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §1.

to describe his pain. Pointing towards an inner object is an act of ostention that one makes to convince others about his sensation. But it is not an act of language-game, since language is spoken when there is something sharable between persons. An essentially shared language is what Wittgenstein is asking for. The debate about the possibility of a private language stands on the possibility of a private rule. Now the question is whether there can be a private rule or not. If it were so, then anyone could employ a rule that is unique only to him and thereby could speak a private language. However, this seems to be a distant possibility since a rule is not kept in a secret place, it is 'in principle' possible to know the rule and apply it according to the use of the language.

We speak in ordinary language to put across our thoughts to other persons. In order to communicate, we generally use the language in a conventional way, so that others can follow it too. Wittgenstein has regarded conventions, customs, rituals etc. as intimately related to our mode of being. His notions of 'rule-following', 'language-game', 'form of life' are taken from the daily life of human beings. If we look at the human life from this point of view, we will find that a human life is a lived experience; it is not something hidden in a metaphysical world. Having said that, one has to admit that an individual has existence independent of others, and therefore, he has some sort of privacy

attached to his personality. We may assume that there are persons who have a special way of communicating, as they could employ certain techniques like building codes secretly within a few persons. For example, there could be e-mail communications between two sisters using particular sibling codes which are even lesser known than family codes.⁵ In e-mail communications, there is text visibility and people can develop in-group solidarity which is required for humour or linguistic performance also.⁶ The possibility of a private language is a much debated issue, although developing codes in e-mail is one of those options. Question remains, whether the codes can be broken or not. There is every possibility of decoding codes as this is also a case of expertise in a particular field and one can logically break the codes into formal language.

An overview of the thesis:

The following chapters critically aim to discuss about the *Private Language Argument*. The historical significance of the argument and the history of the problem have been discussed. The Second Chapter

⁵ Charley Rowe, "Building "Code": Development, Maintenance, and Change in a Private Language", *American Speech*, Vol. 82, No. 3, Fall 2007 (Available online @ <http://americanspeech.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/82/3/235.pdf>).

⁶ Nancy K. Baym, "The Performance of Humor in Computer-Mediated Communication", *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication* Vol.1. Issue2 (Available online @ <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol1/issue2/baym.html>).

discusses the origin of the private language argument. PLA dates back to the time of Descartes, when the *Cartesian Meditations* tried to prove that the human existence comes from the thinking, and therefore it has the maximum importance. Man is a thinking being as he can believe, introspect, evaluate his actions and all these are done with the supremacy of mind. For Descartes, mind is better known than the body. Here his position is completely opposite of Wittgenstein and this very notion of the mind has been severely attacked by Wittgenstein. This is the source of the privacy, if not the private language. But this proportionately makes the private language problem an issue of philosophical discourse. The representational role of mind has been given importance by Descartes and the innatism has even been able to inspire Chomsky's view on language. On the other, the *Cartesian* doctrine has been criticised by Gilbert Ryle as a "ghost in the machine." The doctrine has taken a form of myth in the sense that it has been able to grip the minds of both rationalist and empiricist philosophers.

In the contemporary period, Professor A.J. Ayer has talked about the issue on private language. Ayer is one of the foremost logical positivists and a central figure of the philosophical discussions on private language in post-Wittgenstein era in the British philosophy. According to Ayer, there is no reason to believe that there could not be a private language, in

principle. He thinks that a private code can be broken, and in the same way a private language which is spoken or understood only by a single speaker or a group of speakers, can be widely understood. Ayer has criticised Wittgenstein for not taking memory seriously as a criterion of truth, as memory can be cross-checked with others in the event of some incidents. In his view one can invent a language and develop this even though it is an idiosyncratic, private language.

Chomsky and Fodor are the ones who support the possibility of private language to a considerable extent. Chomsky was inspired by Descartes; Descartes's innatism has motivated Chomsky to develop his view of language that led to form his internalist structure of language. For Chomsky, the 'I-language' is an internal property of an individual when it is in use. He takes language as the mirror of the human mind. Fodor is famous for his 'Language of Thought' (LOT) hypothesis. He thinks that his LOT does not confront with Wittgenstein's view of language, because LOT is not necessarily determined by public events, neither it is determined by private events. The term signifies that one learns a language only when he has a language. He gives importance to the internal representations that unless someone is aware of the representation he is not in a position to express his thoughts, neither can he speak the language that is understood by others.

In the Third Chapter we examine the views of Wittgenstein and his followers in evaluating language as a social phenomenon. Language is a driving force that enables our thoughts to be expressed. The main function of language lies in its expression. The sometimes inexplicable remarks of Wittgenstein in his later period have given a view of language that is totally associated with our thoughts. From a Wittgensteinian standpoint one can say that language is like a game; like games are determined by the rules, language also is governed by certain rules. Rules, according to Wittgenstein, are public. One cannot dream to follow a rule, if he wants to obey a rule he has to practise it. Practice is something related with technique or skill, and technique or skill cannot be mastered unless and until one tests himself out in the public zone. It is similar with the game, when a performer in a game wants to improve on his technique he goes to the coach to get the guidance. This is a testimony to the public stage-setting or standard of meaning where there is a need of criterion based approach toward meaning. Wittgenstein has given so much emphasis on an independent criterion that he has rejected memory as a criterion of identity, because memory cannot be independent due to its dependence on the previous one to check whether the incident is remembered correctly or not. Therefore, a person is not able to privately remember his sensation and give them names. This approach toward meaning has made Wittgenstein distinguished among his

contemporaries and we consider this as a greater achievement in the philosophy of language than even his refutation of the *Cartesian* dualism of mind and body and the *Cartesian* conception of mental model. Wittgenstein has not taken any mystical approach regarding his view on language, neither was he a behaviourist, rather he has made his position clear that the meaning of a language cannot be confirmed if we look to our mind and sensation; instead it would be established only when it is in use. As the use is always public, therefore language also cannot be private.

One of the most crucial factors related with the private language problem, is the knowledge of other minds. This is a problem that talks about our self-centred perspective of persons. This problem is observed in the Fourth Chapter of the thesis. The problem of 'pain' has been discussed in the *PI* extensively and thus leaving a space for the problem of other minds. The problem starts with the sceptical perception of knowing the mind of other persons. The sceptic never believes that the other can think in the same way as he can. When he takes the position that only he can know about his pain and others can only surmise it, he is inviting a gap between him and the rest. This comes as an inference and at the same time it presumes that there is a private entity in a person that encourages him to fortify the claim that the way he knows his own pain

cannot be compared with the way others can know it. What Wittgenstein does is to search for a criterial justification to resolve the matter. Although, it is very difficult to deny that the intensity of pain is entirely private, but the communicatory level of pain is public and that can be known by other persons. Here again Wittgenstein's notion of grammar comes as the most handy option since grammar reveals the sensation and makes the other know about someone else being in pain. It is language that can bridge the gulf between the persons by the power of communication.

An intertwining between language, thought and meaning is being discussed in the Fifth Chapter. This is a vital portion of the thesis as it tends to unlock various interesting channels related with the PLA. At the end of the day the query is: What is the relation between language and thought? Another point that we would like to make about the chapter is that it connects both the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind in the spirit of the PLA. We have to turn up to the transition from the *Tractatus* to the *PI* to see the methodological difference and the thread as well between the two phases. His later phase cannot be properly appraised if we overlook certain parts of his *Tractatus*. The picture theory of *Tractatus* might be seen as the groundwork of his philosophy in the later parts of his life as it talks about the meaningfulness of language. The

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difference is in his approach – the earlier one was more atomistic, whilst the later one is more holistic. It is because in the later half of his thoughts there are provisions of various sectors of human work, and because he has gone for a communitarian view of language, the aesthetics has got the opportunity to participate in his philosophy. The layers of language are not only confined to the verbal interpersonal communication, they expand to the artistic and musical aspects of meaning. Language itself has art and musicality when it comes to the human cognition, and consciousness is something closely allied to the human use of language. Therefore, when an artist makes a painting or when a composer tunes the musical notes in a chord, their consciousness drives them into the perfection of their work. Then it relates to the audience who would assess the merit of their work and recognise the creative talent in them. The whole process is a gamut of activities or use of language. The foundation of language, thought and meaning lies in their understanding as a whole, not in isolation. The language may have applications that are private, but it does not make the language necessarily private. Thought is there to be expressed by language, but whether there can be thought independent of language is a critical question that has also been dealt with in this chapter.

The issue is whether one can employ a language that is private in nature. So far as Wittgenstein is concerned, that is not possible. PLA starts with an imaginary idea of a private language, but logically it is not possible to have a private language. The present thesis ventures into the broad areas of the problem that are stemmed from the discussions of a large number of philosophers. It is almost futile to prove that there is any sort of private language, rather the attempt is to disentangle the intricacies related with the problem. Since it is about the foundation of language and thought where one is looking for the meaning and how to establish that within the framework of a broad spectrum, it was due for us to plan the research into the scheme of the prescribed chapters.

CHAPTER 2:

Philosophers' Views in Favour of the Possibility of Private Language

The issue of private language has been a fascinating debate among the philosophers. There have been many philosophers who would consider that there is a possibility of privacy in our linguistic dispositions or behaviours. Quite often we fail to describe something in a language, be it a beautiful place or a pain. Especially in the case of pain it is very much possible that we are unable to properly articulate the nature of it to another person. John Locke in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* emphasises on the relation between word and its signifying object as correspondence. One persuasive theory about language has it that words map to ideas, concepts or representations in each person's mind. On this version, the concepts in my head are diverse from the concepts in another one's head. But my concepts can be counterpart to a word in our common language, and then I can speak the word. Another person matches the word to a concept in his mind. So our concepts consequentially form a private language which we convert into our common language and so share. This account is found, for example in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and more recently in Jerry Fodor's Language of thought theory. There are innumerable

interpretations of private language argument and these have invoked a great debate. It has pertinent impact in two fields of philosophical study, the first is philosophy of mind or philosophical psychology as it is often called, the second is philosophy of language.

Wittgenstein was primarily concerned with the first of the two themes, his concern with the second theme i.e. philosophy of mind came as an outcome of his reflections on his philosophy of language when the larger picture arrived before his investigation. O.R. Jones points out, "His concern with philosophy of mind is a part of his wider concern with the philosophy of language. It was as a result of his reflection on language that he came to question a well-established and widely held view about such things as sensations, feelings, and thoughts."⁷

The implication of private language problem has surely wider significance in terms of its impact on post *Investigations* philosophical analysis. The amount of debate it has generated is simply unmatched. Even if there has been a domination of Wittgenstein's views on this topic, one cannot deny that he has opened a new interest in *Cartesian* dualism. Chomsky for example, was inspired by Descartes' doctrine of innate capacity to formulate the ideas and apply them into language. Fodor was

⁷ O.R. Jones (ed.), *The Private Language Argument* (Macmillan: St Martin's Press, 1971), p. 13.

further motivated by Chomsky to propagate the language of thought where *Mentalese* could produce the required foundation to create linguistic ability. All these can be taken in the light of the famous private language problem as it has aroused a greater curiosity among philosophers regarding the application or implications of the famous passages of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Twentieth century philosophy has witnessed the wider allusion of PLA, still the problem persists and continues to baffle a scholar. This chapter is about the arguments that are in favour of the possibility of private language. The following sections will take up the discussion further about the study.

Descartes' view:

The history of the private language problem could be found in Descartes. Although if we trace the origin nowhere we would find the *Cartesian* argument stating explicitly about the term 'private language'. But his *cogito* poses with a specific problem which the philosophers cannot deny either. By establishing the existence of oneself as a thinking being, Descartes wants to prove that mind is a substance which is independent of language and the world. He establishes the fact that the thinking substance exists by itself, it requires nothing else in order to exist. Therefore, mind is regarded as an autonomous being which not only

thinks about the world but is also aware that it has representations of the world.⁸ That makes the origin of the private language problem. According to the *Cartesian* view, the present thinking, feeling, willing, perceiving, remembering and imaginings of a person are intrinsically phosphorescent. Since the inner life of a person is a stream of consciousness, it would be absurd to suggest that the mind would be unaware. In the *Cartesian* perspective, the mind is supposed to be the store-house of ideas that represent things in the world. Descartes gives primacy to the mental representations as he believes that the self is the metaphysical reality par excellence,⁹ and therefore, it must have an autonomous existence as the agent of the mental activities like thinking, perceiving etc. The hallmark of the *Cartesian* mind is the self-validating character of the mental representations.

Descartes employs a remarkable approach to ensure that mind is more easily known than body. In his *Meditation II* Descartes raises a fundamental problem that sets the tone of modern philosophy. There he argues for a doubt that is not merely scepticism but a search for a

⁸David Weissman(ed.), *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy: René Descartes* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 66.

⁹ R. C. Pradhan, "Descartes and Wittgenstein: Two Philosophical Models of Mind", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Special Number: Rene Descartes, Vol. No. XXIII Nos. 1-2 (Jan - Apr. 1996), p.122.

certainty. He is famous forever since he began doubting for the certainty, although it has created a wide range of debate and discussions mostly criticizing his process. But we cannot ignore the fact that his “cogito ergo sum” has enormous importance in the history of philosophy.

Descartes begins to doubt in everything that he perceives in the external world that he cannot resolve them. He thinks that there must be a deceiver or other, very powerful and cunning, like a demon, whoever employs his ingenuity in deceiving him.¹⁰ Every act he does, every object he sees, he supposes to be false. Nothing has ever existed which his fallacious memory represents to him. He even considers that he possesses no senses, his body, figure, extension, movement and place are nothing but fictions of his mind which is created by a demon. Only one aspect he feels belongs to him is thought. Thought is an attribute which cannot be separated from him; “I am, I exist, that is certain”, Descartes affirms. He inspects that what is a thing which thinks, that which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, imagines and feels. These are all mental acts which confirm that I have a mind that stores these. That I doubt of all that deceive me, indicates the fact of the existence of myself as a minded-being that has the ability of thinking.

¹⁰ David Weissman(ed.), *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy; René Descartes, Ibid.*

Even if I see light, hear noise, feel heat while I am dreaming, it cannot be denied that it is my feeling which is no other than thinking.¹¹ Therefore, my existence as a thinking being proves that what goes inside me is a picture that depicts my mind is more easily known than body. Because even body is not known by the senses or by the faculty of imagination; it is known by the understanding only and it follows that there is nothing easier for than to know my own mind, according to Descartes. What is evident here is that Descartes assumes of a being that introspects to know him existing as an autonomous person.

Descartes' writings on language are comparatively little than his thoughts on the aspects of mind. His comments on the significance of language somehow parallel the critical remarks he made about the senses and circumstances which can mislead the sensory information. His philosophy of language states that ordinary language shares the ambiguities and misleading character of sensory information. Even though language is necessary for communication, it is no substitute of clear and distinct ideas of which it is only an external, corporeal and inadequate expression.¹² Therefore, it is the thoughts or ideas that could

¹¹ David Weissman(ed.), *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy; René Descartes*, p. 67.

¹² Desmond M. Clarke, *Descartes's Theory of Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), p.158.

be regarded as the only reliable guide of knowledge. Descartes always stresses that language is the secondary or dependent phenomenon that adds nothing to what is already provided by thought. Hans Aarsleff argued in this respect that "Descartes was determined to conduct his thinking in a silent and wordless world that would allow undisturbed reliance on intuition". Descartes was seeking for the truth which is provided by intuition. Intuition, here understood as a direct inspection by the mind of its own ideas—provides a reliable access to the seeds of truth that are naturally implanted in the human mind and can be further developed by pure reasoning.¹³ Human beings would be able to reflect on the content of their own minds and this wordless process and to avoid the accumulated misrepresentations of traditional learning that cling to the well-worn words of language. Descartes lays importance on the innateness and word free discourse of the mind to attain the true knowledge. Human language lacks clarity and distinctness of the senses. Therefore, Descartes went on to find a unique path to scientific knowledge. Descartes wrote very little about language and that gives one the opportunity to interpret his relatively infrequent comments on the subject in the light of his more comprehensive view of his epistemology,

¹³ Hans Aarsleff, "Descartes and Augustine on Genesis, Language, and the Angels", in M. Dascal and E. Yakira (eds.), *Leibniz and Adam*. (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1993), pp.169-95.

theory of ideas, and his significant scientific work for understanding his theory of knowledge.

When Descartes says that he clearly and distinctly conceives himself as merely a thinking thing, following two propositions may be considered relevant:

- I can clearly distinctly conceive myself as a pure understanding, while excluding any corporeal attributes;
- I can clearly and distinctly conceive myself as having all the conscious experiences I do, in exclusion of any corporeal attributes.¹⁴

We can see that Descartes has a clear and distinct conception of himself in so far as he is 'only a thinking thing, not extended,' that presents two probabilities before us, that the concept of himself as a thinking thing must not comprise any notion of extension, and that in conceiving himself as a thinking thing he clearly and distinctly conceives of himself as a complete being.¹⁵ There lies the root of *Cartesian* privacy that is associated with his epistemological argument. It assumes that just as one can have public acquaintance with a public object, so also one can have a

¹⁴ Margaret Dauler Wilson, *Descartes: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 200.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

private acquaintance with a private object such as toothache. Everything that is associated with toothache is assumed to be private and whatever is manifested publicly is contingent.¹⁶ The pain counted as toothache is regarded private by Descartes. The Cartesian view holds that all sensations, feelings and other psychological states are private in the sense that toothache is a private object. When Descartes talks about toothache as a private object, we assume it as a mental property that has an owner. This owner is the 'I' of the *Meditations*, the first person as defined by Descartes. With the help of the first person he transits from darkness and vain philosophy into the new light of modern, anti-Aristotelian, philosophy and science.¹⁷

Descartes finally tries to establish that mind is really distinct from body in his *Meditation VI*, and thereby gives rise to his Epistemological Argument. His method of 'doubt' does not extend to his own existence. The summary of his *Second Meditation* is that human mind is more easily known than the body. As far as he is concerned he is only a thinking thing, thought pertains to his nature and cannot be separated. He says:

¹⁶ O. R. Jones (ed.), *The Private Language Argument*, p. 15.

¹⁷ Margaret Dauler Wilson, *Descartes: The Arguments of the Philosophers*, p. 5.

But what then am I? A thing which thinks. What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels.¹⁸

The reasoning concerning the indubitability of his own existence brings Descartes to the conclusion that he alone is a *true and truly existing thing*.¹⁹ Descartes is always in the search for certainty, the self-evident truth. Right through his *Meditations* he tries to prove that mind and body are really distinct if it is possible for them to exist in separation, here actual *distinctness* does not entail actual *separateness*.²⁰ Descartes conceives that nothing can be perceived more distinctly or evidently by me than my mind. There is nothing in my mind that I am not aware of, I can know my mind more distinctly than any material. Mind is perceived crystal clear, as it has no hidden constitution, nothing chemical or otherwise.

In the sense that mind is epistemically transparent, immediately known to itself, *Cartesian* privacy captures the frame. Descartes' most fundamental belief is the belief in the self-transparency of mind.²¹ When we say something, we mean something; our ideas are ideas of something. These meaning and aboutness, or intentionality are known directly and

¹⁸ David Weissman (ed.), *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First philosophy; René Descartes*, p. 66.

¹⁹ Margaret Dauler Wilson, *Descartes: The Arguments of the Philosophers*, p. 187.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

²¹ John F. Post, "Epistemology", in *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy: René Descartes*, David Weissman [ed.], (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 236.

this feature of mind is regarded essential by Descartes. Because when we use language, we have an apriori understanding of meaning and our capacity for reason also necessarily involves language. Descartes exempts our understanding of the meanings from the scope of general doubt as we have internal awareness of what we mean. Here we are not in a chance of being deceived by an evil demon or a malign god, we can clearly perceive and conceive of the meaning. Every idea is an idea of something, even if the object of the idea does not exist. I cannot be mistaken about the object of the idea. It correlates with the intentionality thesis of Husserl which states that consciousness is always of something, it always intends something irrespective of the thing existing or not.

Descartes thinks that the 'I' of *cogito* is not any kind of body. "The first-person character of Descartes's argument means that each person must administer it to himself in the first person", observes G. E. M. Anscombe.²² "I" or "the mind" implies naming something such that the knowledge of its existence in all the various modes which is a knowledge of itself. Here the "I" does not sound like proper name referring the person himself, rather we have to understand self-consciousness by the use of "I". Descartes prefers to say that mind is better known than the

²² G.E.M. Anscombe, "The First Person", in *Mind and Language: Wolfson College Lectures 1974*, Samuel Guttenplan [ed.], (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 45.

body since my certainty as an existing person is proved by being conscious of me as a thinking being. He thinks that even body is not known by the senses or by the faculty of imagination, but by the understanding only (Meditation II). This method led Descartes to formulate his *cogito ergo sum* theory which is a source of attack in Wittgenstein's famous private language argument. The reason that it comes into the content is because of its introspective nature of looking into the first person account of a conscious human being.

Descartes's theory of *cogito* has a huge impact in the field of philosophy, psychology and other parts of the social sciences and it continues to do so even though his theory is hardly accepted in modern times. The chief reason could be in the division of two different observations of a person in terms of the mechanisms in his mind and in his body. Professor Gilbert Ryle formulates it in this way:

The workings of one mind are not witnessable by other observers; its career is private. Only I can take direct cognisance of the states and processes of my own mind. A person therefore lives through two collateral histories, one consisting of what happens in and to his body, the other consisting of what happens in and to his mind. The first is public, the second private. The events in the first history are events in the physical world, those in the second are events in the mental world.²³

²³ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1990; first published by Hutchinson in 1949), p. 13.

Descartes thinks that most of our thoughts originate in sensation or imagination, and the imagination ought to form a true idea of the thing so that the intellect can turn to other conditions that are not expressed by the word. He uses the term 'true idea' to suggest that abstraction is both necessary and possibly misleading and the words often camouflage the extent to which they are based on a familiar but unacknowledged abstraction.²⁴ Descartes believes that normally we associate all our words to concepts and store them both in memory together. But he gives primacy to concepts as words may often be confused in gaining knowledge but the concepts cannot be mistaken. Descartes calls for a thinking that is not linguistically dependent because our language may confuse us with the familiarity of words in which the concepts are expressed. Descartes gives so much importance to thought that he uses it in different ways, sometimes as an action, sometimes as a faculty and even sometimes as the thing of which it is a faculty.²⁵ There are many different kinds of thinking and when we identify those thinking, those come under one particular enterprise or mental activity pertaining to thought. The mental privacy comes into the content when Descartes claims that we are always aware of the workings of our mind not necessarily being aware of faculties or powers of which we become

²⁴ Desmond M. Clarke, *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, p.161.

²⁵ Desmond M. Clarke, *Descartes's Theory of Mind*, p. 185.

conscious when using them. His process is an introspective one, because it demands the transparency to my consciousness as to accept them as descriptions of my perception when I reflect on my own experience of thinking.²⁶ My understanding is an act of my mind whenever I come into contact with a thing; it is also an evidence of the conclusion that I am thinking of something. I must be aware of the experience of thinking. This is the way in which Descartes's view resembles the question of privacy that we are concerned with.

Cartesian view holds that sensations and feelings are only contingently related to the manifest behaviour of the person. An animal is defined in terms of a certain characteristic which it possesses and without which we would not name a particular animal as we know them. For example, a certain kind of animal which we call 'rat' would not mean to us what it does now if it did not have incisor teeth. But the behavior which we normally relate with toothache is not comparable to the rat's incisor teeth. According to the *Cartesian* view, a toothache is a toothache irrespective of the divergence in suffering at different times. A rat's incisor teeth are public features as we can see it or even X-ray it. It is a rule to have incisor teeth for a rat if it is to be recognised and called as a rat. This could be called a criterion as to specify a rat as a public object.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 188.

On the other hand, the *Cartesian* position holds that the same cannot be said about the toothache. There is no public feature associated with a toothache, as all public symptoms of toothache are purely contingent. Everything that is related with toothache, or causes a pain is understood to be private to the individual who has it. Toothache can be expressed as a private mental object too. All sensations, feelings and other psychological states are private according to the *Cartesian* view.²⁷

Anthony Kenny thinks that Descartes created a new philosophy of mind by making epistemology the centre of philosophical inquiry. His thought on the relationship between mental and physical lays the foundation of a new breed of knowledge, where his dictum is that mind is better known than body. His theory has played an influential role among philosophers even outside the *Cartesian* tradition. Descartes feels that pain is in its most stringent sense, a spiritual realisation. Impressions, sense-data have been known as mental entities by *Cartesian* standards.²⁸ The internal is more certain than the external, the mental realm is more authentic than the physical and the private is prior than public. For Descartes, as Anthony Kenny observes, *thought* is an umbrella term which includes everything that we are immediately conscious of. However, Descartes

²⁷ O.R. Jones (ed.), *The Private Language Argument*, p. 15.

²⁸ Anthony Kenny, "Cartesian Privacy", in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, G. Pitcher [ed.], (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 353.

excludes the consequences of thought, such as voluntary movements, which depend upon thoughts but are not themselves thoughts.

Descartes believes that sensation is a thought capable of founding the certainty of one's own existence. He gives mind the primary focus to be aware of its sensation because only mind has the ability to sense or experience itself and sensation is a thought in this regard. The *Cartesian* doctrine can be seen as the basement of the private language problem. Descartes has laid importance on the understanding of our thoughts which generate from our mind. A person always has the ability to reflect on his own ideas, perceptions of events; he introspects to his own inner sense. This reflective methodology is a private enterprise according to him. If I have toothache, the *Cartesian* would say that all public manifestations of toothache are purely contingent in the sense that they need never be accompanied by any public feature as we normally correlate with toothache.

Ryle has detected an error in Descartes' theory of relation between mind and body. He thinks that there are serious theoretical difficulties if we accept 'inner' and 'outer' as two separate entities. Since the actual relation between private history and public history remains baffling, it is very difficult to establish that mind influences bodily behaviour. When a

person reflects on his own individual nature it is not like involving within oneself as a purely private entity. Because the individual always has a social reality, otherwise he could not locate himself as an individual.

Cartesian theory of mind leaves space for psychoanalysis. *Cartesian* dualism separates mind from its context, it has distinct existence from the body, and therefore we are able to distinguish the activities and symptoms pertinent to mind from the symptoms which are related to our circumstances or bodies.²⁹ Mind relates to the body associated with it directly and indirectly to the body of others. Mind's relation to any other material object including its own body, as far as Descartes is concerned, is rather problematic. He brings in the concept of God with the belief that he would not sabotage in mind's control of its body.³⁰ We shall not go into detail of that account. But we can notice from his *Meditations*, as Weissman assumes, "Cartesian self-identity is formed from the inside out, never from empathic intrusions that are incorporated as part of oneself."³¹

²⁹ David Weissman, "Psychoanalysis", in *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy: René Descartes*, David Weissman, [ed.], (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 330.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Descartes and Lacan somehow have similar viewpoints about communication. Descartes finds perceiving essences between each thinker as a condition for communication who considers the same radiant ideas. Very similar to Descartes, Lacan makes the point that the psychoanalyst helps the patient to trace his singular *parole* in the background of a universal *langue*.³² Ultimately Descartes' *cogito* is located at the heart of a philosophical assumption of private language where self-reference is made as a feasible option for an individual to look at his own sensation. Here privacy is seen as a self-locating affair and thereby breeding a problem in the philosophy of mind.

Ayer's view:

Professor A.J. Ayer has been one of the proponents of the possibility of private language. Though he was not a radical supporter of private language, he did not eschew to propagate that there could be a language of the person who invents it, and that language could also be communicated like a public language. He has a different approach with regard to the Wittgensteinian one that treats words as tools rather than treating words as pictures. Although Wittgenstein's approach of treating words as pictures could be found in the *Tractatus*, Ayer finds a shift of

³² Cf. David Weissman, *Ibid.*, p. 336.

metaphor in later Wittgenstein. Instead of taking care of words as tools that are governed and become meaningful in terms of use, Ayer questions the fruitfulness of the identification of meaning with use. Ayer observes that Wittgenstein's treatment of language discards G.E. Moore's view of meaning which states that a philosopher's command of language is just a necessary means to investigate the objective properties of concepts, *ala* a mathematician who is not concerned with the numerals but the numbers they represented.³³ In Wittgenstein's view, linguistic signs are not themselves meaningful, we cannot ascribe meaning only by looking upon them, and they are to be meaningful only by the way they are used in the form of life. Wittgenstein thought that people make difficulties for themselves by failing to understand how their language worked. They raised problems where there was no issue, and thought philosophical problems are with such dilemmas; they relapsed into talking such nonsense from which they could not go out.³⁴ Wittgenstein wanted to take them out from the bewilderment by exposing the linguistic confusions and false impressions from which it cropped up.

Ayer, on the other hand, takes another road to the use of language and its meaning. He believes that there is a possibility of a private language even

³³ A.J. Ayer, *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, New York: St Martin's Press, 1963), p. 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

though one might believe that a private language is not alive. In Ayer's point of view, there is no reason in believing that a private language, in principle, should not become alive. He says that a private language is contingent in the sense that only a single individual or a group of few speakers are able to understand it. A person can keep a diary, use certain codes which no one else is meant to understand. A private code is not a private language, but as Ayer says, it is rather a "private method of transcribing some given language".³⁵ Just like this private code is, in principle, should be broken, so can a private language, in theory, could be widely understood. Ayer says:

Such private languages are in general derived from public languages, and even if there are any which are not so derived, they will still be translated into public languages.³⁶

It is a language which is potentially understood by enough people and making it possible to be communicated. But philosophers have taken private language in a somewhat different sense. Usually they think that private language is something that refers to a person's immediate private experiences. Professor Ayer in his essay "Can there be a private language?" speaks about the possibility of a private language. He thinks that the problem has a prototype in Carnap's concept of protocol

³⁵ A.J. Ayer, "Can There Be A Private Language?", *Aristotelian Society Proceedings*, Supplementary Volume 28, p. 69. Reprinted in *The Private Language Argument*, John V. Canfield [ed.], (Garland Publishing Inc.: New York & London, 1986).

³⁶ Ibid.

language. The protocol language was to consist of bare sensation remarks e.g. 'blue now, 'cold now' etc. and they refer to the sense experiences of the concerned individual only. Ayer quotes a passage from Carnap's *The Unity of Science* (p. 80):

In general every statement in any person's protocol language would have sense for that person alone... Even when the same words and sentences occur in various protocol languages, their sense would be different, they could not even be compared. Every protocol language could therefore be applied only solipsistically: there would be no intersubjective protocol language.

Carnap went on to reject this thesis by following that this solipsistic mechanism can be avoided by common understanding at the level of basic sensation -utterances. There is no way of believing that every individual would talk about his own private experiences within his own little world of experiences, which is entirely private to him. But Ayer takes a different stance in the private language problem. Ayer examines the argument given by Wittgenstein about the ostensive definition or gesturing towards an object. Pointing to an object is generally done in making someone trace the object or it is made for successful communication. The object to which I point is one that can be observed by other persons.³⁷ This is one thing to point to an object that is publicly observable, quite another in gesturing a private sensation to another person. How can I give an ostensive definition of the word which I like to

³⁷ A.J. Ayer, "Can There Be A Private Language?", p. 69.

stand for a particular sensation? I cannot define it in words which are publicly understood. No matter how much gesture I make to get their attention to my private sensation, which they cannot *ex hypothesi* observe, I fail to assume that this sensation has "natural expression".³⁸

Ayer gives the example of Robinson Crusoe who is left alone in an island as an infant and still to learn to speak. Ayer argues that even though we accept that language is a social phenomenon, the development of language cannot be done by a solitary individual, it is possible for a person like Crusoe to make up a language for himself. Here is what Ayer says about this example:

- Imagine a Robinson Crusoe left alone on his island while still an infant, having not yet learned to speak. Let him, like Romulus and Remus, be nurtured by a wolf, or some other animal, until he can fend for himself; and so let him grow to manhood. He will certainly be able to recognize many things upon the island, in the sense that he adapts his behaviour to them. Is it inconceivable that he should also name them? There may be psychological grounds for doubting whether such a solitary being would in fact invent a language. The development of language, it may be argued, is a social phenomenon. But surely it is not self-contradictory to suppose that someone, uninstructed in the use of any existing language, makes up a language for himself. After all, some human being must have been the first to use a symbol.³⁹

Crusoe communicates only with himself with the principal distinction he keeps in mind between 'external' objects and 'inner' experiences, that his

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

experiences are transient whereas the external objects are not. But he will be able to use it for himself, only thing is that he will not be able to teach it to anyone. Ayer believes that the ability to teach to someone cannot be a qualification for understanding as one can teach only what one already understands.

Ayer has criticised Wittgenstein for not taking memory as a serious criterion of correctness. In Ayer's point of view, memory need not be confined with a single present to a single past sensation. It could be an activity of a group where one memory could be checked by another. Wittgenstein rejects this option by giving the example of several copies of morning paper to assure himself about the truth of his belief. But Ayer affirms that unless the person concerned does not trust his eyesight, as well as his memory, he will continue to make mistake. At least he needs to consult with other people and cross-check his memory and his current sensation.⁴⁰ Another vital point Ayer makes in favour of private language by saying that there is no object given as public or private; this distinction comes into function only then when a sense is attached in different person's experience of objects in similar ways, "but no sense is attached to saying that they similarly inspect one another's thoughts and

⁴⁰ A.J. Ayer, *Wittgenstein* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), p. 76.

feelings and sensations."⁴¹ In these ways Professor Ayer defends the possibility of private language which is rather unusual but he has differed from Wittgenstein in many respects. He has tried to prove that even if someone uses an idiosyncratic language, it has a meaning to the person himself for which he does not need any criterion of correctness. By giving the example of Robinson Crusoe, Ayer also demonstrates the fact that the knowledge that one acquires has its base in his own experiences.

PLA in the contemporary times: Chomsky and Fodor

Noam Chomsky is one of the most influential thinkers of our time. His theory of linguistics has been motivated from Descartes and he has also done extensive research work on seventeenth-to-mid-nineteenth-century philosophers and linguists. He has developed a rationalist conception of language that bolsters the power of mind. Chomsky thinks that Descartes identified the basic issues and data that initiated a revolution in the philosophy of mind.⁴² Chomsky has incorporated biological and computational structures into the study of mind that would have pleased the rationalists, but was surely beyond their anticipation. The biggest

⁴¹ A.J. Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy* (London: Penguin Books, 1991; first published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in 1973), p. 97.

⁴² James McGilvray, *Chomsky: Language, Mind, and Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999), p. 2.

success of Chomsky lies in his intellectual acumen in emerging the significance of the philosophy of mind. On the other, he explains the use of 'I-language', an internal property of an individual. Chomsky has given an 'internalist' interpretation of the human language faculty. He broadly defends, with all his imaginative linguistic analyses, that knowledge of human language is individualistic, internal to the human mind.⁴³ According to him, human language is a 'biological object'.⁴⁴

Chomsky thinks that language is a mirror of human mind. Whatever we physicalise into language is nothing but a reflection of the thought in human mind. He has given a naturalistic view of language. In his view, expressions of a natural language are at times 'unparseable', and even if they are parsed and interpreted, they may be utterly incomprehensible.⁴⁵ Chomsky draws inspiration from Descartes in so far as he wanted to construct a unified view of the world. Descartes argued that certain aspects of the world go beyond the limitation of mechanism and many a time mind prepares the ground for the language to interact with the world. There is a deep structure of language which has mind at its foundation and it also gets the creativity from mind. The performance and computational aspects of language are generated internally in a

⁴³ Neil Smith (Foreword), in Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. vii.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*, p. 108.

person. What we observe in the utterances is surface structure of language, but the innate structure we cannot see, we see only the natural properties of the object outside. Chomsky has given a beautiful allegory of vision of cave through a tunnel in this respect. Here he says:

If I look through a tunnel in a mountain and see a lighted cave within, I do not see the mountain; only if I see its exterior surface (say, from inside the cave, looking through the tunnel at a mirror outside that reflects the surface).⁴⁶

Chomsky differs from Putnam with regard to the cultural aspect of language. While he agrees with Putnam that in terms of power, monuments, flags and other institutional aspects language has cultural reality, but this does not contribute in understanding the acquisition, understanding, use of language, the constitution and change in language, how it is related to mental faculties and human action etc. The internalist view of language gives 'content' or 'representation' of something, it may be related to visual perception, mapping of ideas, interface with other systems, and all kinds of individuation that take place; these cannot be accomplished in a 'shared public language' according to Chomsky.

Jerry Fodor is one philosopher who is the proponent of the possibility of private language. Chomsky has given a theory of the internalist view of language where language acquisition and creativity of language are

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

generated from the mental faculty; it is a cognitive process that is governed by mind. Fodor, inspired by this account goes further to say that there is a language of thought. In his account, learning the first language requires the learning of the meaning of the predicate that language accounts for. There is an internal representation of language that determines the extension of a predicate, for that they have to fall under certain rules.⁴⁷ The conceptual structure provided to language comes from the mind. Language learning is a matter of testing and confirming hypotheses, the learner must hypothesise and confirm the generalisations which determine the extensions of the predicate. Fodor, in this regard, makes three assumptions which are as follows:

- (1) That learning a first language is a matter of hypothesis formation and confirmation; (2) that learning a first language involves at least learning the semantic properties of its predicates; (3) that S learns the semantic properties of P only if S learns some generalization which determine the extension of P (i.e. the set of things that P is true of).⁴⁸

Fodor gives an example in support of his thesis. If it is true that 'chair' means 'portable seat for one', then plausibly it may be the case that no one has mastered 'is a chair' unless he has learned that it falls under the truth rule "'y is a chair' is true iff x is a portable seat for one".⁴⁹ Someone might well know about 'is a chair' and even then he might still not be

⁴⁷ Jerry Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (USA: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Inc. 1975), p. 64.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

able to tell about a given object. Fodor arrives at the conclusion that one cannot learn a language unless one already has a language. If he does not know about the representation he cannot formulate it in expressions. According to Fodor, his LOT (language of thought) hypothesis does not confront with Wittgenstein's private language argument. Fodor thinks that Wittgenstein characterises private language in two ways: either as something whose terms refers to something that is unique to the speaker's experience of things or as a language for application where there exist no public criteria. The way Fodor characterises an internal representation conforms to the second test if not the first one. In his language of thought the applicability of terms is not determined by public conventions, although it is not necessary that they are applied only in private events. The language of thought, in Fodor's terms, is "presumably innate". There is an obligation to make sense of it in a coherent way, but he points out that there is no obligation to show how it could be taught or learned. Secondly, the evidence of its being used coherently must be empirical but not neurological. He believes that it might be the best offered account of the overall coherence of the organism's mental life.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 70.

Fodor's view can be a platform of *holism* which is exhibited both by language and thought. It is an approach that is taken by the inner saying theory.⁵¹ Thoughts may be of many types conceptually and they may be connected with one another. Although the way Fodor's language of thought supports private language can be scrutinised, one cannot deny that it has a profound implication in the psycholinguistics study. It opens the provision to the instances where creature's suffering of pain can be non-linguistic, even perception may be allowed to be a non-linguistic affair.⁵² There might be instances when my experiences are not always expressed in linguistic terms, e.g. Georges Rey says that he often seems to have experiences which are entirely non-sentential – they are musical, 'imagistic', colourful, 'somatic'.⁵³ This confirms that there is always a mental process and many times they are not physicalised into language. The propositional attitudes can fall into this category. We can say that the followers of private language would classify the language of thought in many ways like privileged access to one's own thoughts, propositional attitudes, qualitative experiences etc. But to what amount these arguments succeed in establishing the possibility of private language is remained to be seen.

⁵¹ Colin McGinn, *The Character of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 88.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵³ Georges Rey, "Sensations in a language of thought", *Philosophical Issues*, Vol. 1. *Consciousness*, 1991.

CHAPTER 3:

The Impossibility of Private Language after Later Wittgenstein

The 'private language argument' is a complex set of analyses and arguments sparked by the question of whether an individual can speak in his own words, which is understandable to his own private sensation. This sort of language can be used as a tool to reflect on one's own experiences, his private thoughts. But the question remains, is such a language possible?

Wittgenstein sets out to prove that this sort of private language is not possible. According to him a private language is non-sensical or incoherent. Language is always a social institution and it cannot be excluded for privacy. When we use language, we use it as a medium of communication of our thoughts to others. If a speaker is supposed to use a language which is only understandable to his own private self, and no one else, it is hardly accepted as language. In that sense a mere utterance is not a language in Wittgensteinian sense. But the main objection that Wittgenstein has raised against this privacy of language is that a private language, if there is any, cannot be taken for granted to say that it is intelligible to the concerned speaker alone. Rather, this sort of language can be learned and translated to other speakers too. Therefore, private

language in the true sense of the term is not possible and Wittgenstein is sure about this. Language is a means to communicate our thoughts, and therefore it cannot remain private in the core sense of the term.

Even though Wittgenstein is against the possibility of a private language, he has sketched an idea of private language. A private language can be seen meaningful if its words acquire meaning as a result of an inner definition or inner association of sign and concept, as Brendan Wilson points out.⁵⁴ Basically, a private language is a language of sensations. There have been innumerable interpretation of the private language argument and it has become almost a legend in the philosophy of language. We would like to investigate the motivation behind Wittgenstein's famous passages between §243 to §315 as it is commonly held as the private language argument. There is a methodology in this argument that is supposed to be followed by his interpreters. The basic assumption is the rejection of *Cartesian* line of mental model by Wittgenstein. Meaning and understanding are not mental acts and it is not possible to recognise private sign-making as a language. If someone puts a language from private mental decisions or acts of thought, it is presumed that he lacks some necessary abilities for language use. By a

⁵⁴ Brendan Wilson, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: A Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 7.

private mental object one cannot explain language use.⁵⁵ If we carefully examine *Philosophical Investigations*, we will observe that Wittgenstein succeeds in establishing ordinary language as solving philosophical problems by *showing the fly the way out of the bottle*.⁵⁶

Coming back to the motivation, Descartes' position has been widely regarded as a foundation stone of epistemology. His *cogito ergo sum* demonstrates the fact that to prove our existence we must first set up a platform where we could remain sure about the job at hand. In this venture, Descartes had to be sure that it is devoid of any role played by demon or it is found on a strong foundation. He comes to the conclusion that when we think everything about this matter, there is an entity that is witnessing my thinking activity. So, if I exist, that must be the result of my thinking, then comes his remark, "I think, therefore I am." This way of establishing my existence is a kind of methodology which supports a sort of private language at its base. Here privacy is sensed as a source of authenticity in identifying a man's own existence, because it ascertains man as a thinking being.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), §309.

What we get to know from Wittgenstein is that this type of looking inwards and believing the privacy as authentic is hardly a trustworthy source of knowledge. If we introspect to our own sensations, we normally give the feelings particular names. This way of naming things is a linguistic activity, and therefore if we are to believe Wittgenstein, we will accept that there is a grammar of a sensation too. We must examine Wittgenstein's arguments given in his *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter as *PI*) to be in a better position. His famous passages between sections §243 to §315 in *PI* have been interpreted in numerous ways and those interpretations gave a newer understanding of what we call *private language argument*. PLA offers its readers such divergent and multifaceted paths that one finds new outlook every time he understands the text and tries to bring his insights. This is the reason why the PLA has become a milestone in the contemporary philosophy. The significance of PLA has to be understood in the light of its origin and its diverse interpretations. We can also say that private language problem is often seen as the soul of *Philosophical Investigations* because of its intriguing nature and pervasive outlook towards philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. It nurtures many aspects of philosophy, makes the readers perplexed and at the same time engrossed in thoughts which later become fresh insights in carrying out the task ahead. Now we will discuss some salient features of the private language argument.

Wittgenstein's imaginary idea of a private language:

We find in Wittgenstein interpreting a 'private language' in *PI* §243 as followed:

But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and the rest – for his private use? – Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? – But that is not what I mean. The individual words of his language are to refer to what can be known only to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.⁵⁷

It certainly talks about a language of sensation which is unintelligible, at least in principle, to anyone except me. It refers to an unmediated primary sensation, my innermost experience, and independent of my mastery of the public language.⁵⁸ This sort of language is understood only by its speaker, not shared by anyone else. In *Investigations* we can see that Wittgenstein has an interlocutor who urges him to answer the possibilities of private language. Having introduced the idea of private language in *PI* §243, Wittgenstein immediately takes on the job of naming sensations. In *PI* §244 he asks, "There doesn't seem to be any problem here: don't we talk about sensations everyday, and give them names?" This is very significant as it shows the spirit of Wittgenstein's investigation of revealing the grammar of sensations. It indicates to the fact that it is a philosophers' prejudice to first point to the sensation

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, §243.

⁵⁸ Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 84.

inwardly and giving it a name. In this sense, 'pain', 'anger', 'imagining' etc. are to be explained by virtue of their being associated with something 'mental'; it demonstrates that there is an inner being which insists us to use a private language. When I say, "I am in pain", it is taken as the description of my feeling, and also a depiction of the screaming or moaning with pain. We can observe that the proposition "I am in pain" persuades the belief that I designate my sensations inwardly prior to my utterance, but there is no scope for description relating the sensation and the expression of the sensation if I learn to describe sensations growing out of screaming or moaning.⁵⁹ There is a sense of private observation of my sensation before I manifest them in public. But for a better understanding, let us have a look at the following argument given by Wittgenstein:

Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. – In one way this is false, and in another non-sense... 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.⁶⁰

The above argument illustrates *privacy* in two senses; (i) I *am* in pain, (ii) I *have* pain. In the first term, pain is seen as a feeling identical with my sensation, there is no point in saying that I know whether I am in pain or

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §246.

not. Whereas, in the second, pain is thought to be a property I have. We may say that, here the term *pain* is delicately poised from both the epistemological and the ontological point of view. From the epistemic viewpoint, it is very difficult to deny that the sensation 'pain' I am feeling is a private one which no one else knows better than me. But from an ontological point of view, when I have 'pain', I am always inclined to show it in my behaviour irrespective of my pretending to be in pain at times. Because pretending is also a part of language game. In Anthony Kenny's view, if a private language is to be considered possible, then the meaning of its words must be linked to the private experiences of the individual. The meaning would have to be acquired by an essentially private process for each individual, by an internal ostensive definition.⁶¹ Kenny has related the PLA to the scepticism pointed out in *Tractatus* (§6.51) saying that private language arises from the scepticism where nothing can be said and no questions can be asked. He clarifies the problem in the following words:

Wittgenstein considered that the notion of a private language rested on two fundamental mistakes, one about the nature of experience, and one about the nature of language. The mistake about experience was the belief that experience is private; the mistake about language was the belief that words can acquire meaning by bare ostensive definition.⁶²

⁶¹ Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 179.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

It is nonsense, according to Wittgenstein, to believe that the self is a metaphysically hidden object; he insists that this vagueness needs to be bared. According to him, it is a philosophically clumsy notion that has been going on for a long time since Descartes. We can learn the meaning of the name of sensations in this way, as Wittgenstein prescribes in *PI* §244, "...words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place."

In *PI* §246 Wittgenstein asks, "In what sense are my sensations private?" and he answers this question in *PI* §248, "The proposition "Sensations are private" is comparable to: "One plays patience by oneself"". This is an attention-grabbing location in the private language argument because it unveils Wittgenstein's aim in solving a grammatical difference between concepts of sensation and concepts of behaviour.⁶³ We are now in a position to be sure that we have to deal with two distinct entities, e.g. 'pain' and 'pain-behaviour'. Anyone can be tempted to think that Wittgenstein is following a philosophical theory called behaviourism in formulating his hypothesis. But we will see that it is not so when we delve into this matter.

⁶³ Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 123.

The objective that comes out of the argument is to reveal a fact which has been a dominating force in the philosophy of mind. We are tended mostly to use the word 'privacy' in a way that encourages us to isolate the person from others who cannot enter the private mental world of that concerned person. Normally we introspect about our feelings, moods, and thoughts and construct a mental reality. But Wittgenstein denies it although he accepts the existence of sensations; he says that we achieve the clarity of sensations by describing the use of the words 'pain' or 'to think'. Therefore, it goes against the supremacy of introspection that we discern the core of phenomena.⁶⁴ It is to be noted that Wittgenstein defines 'sensation' as 'the kind of statement we make about phenomena'.⁶⁵ He does not recognise introspection as a means by which we discover the nature of sensations, thoughts, images etc., as it fails to define a psychological term.⁶⁶ This is a crucial feature of Wittgenstein's later philosophy because it forms the essence of his *Investigations* and puts a strong objection against the *Cartesian* method of bringing mind as a superior entity before language. It also lays the foundation of the revolt against philosophy's metaphysical superstitions and brings in a significant turning point both in the *philosophy of language* and the

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

⁶⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §90.

⁶⁶ Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, G.E.M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (eds.), tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), §212.

philosophy of mind. The private language argument becomes a champion of 20th century philosophy in this regard.

The method of the private language argument:

There are innumerable interpretations of *private language argument* and those interpretations have made it a famous and highly debatable issue. As far as we are concerned, it is itself such a notorious illustration of Wittgenstein's philosophy that irrespective of the amount of analysis it still remains an object of interest and still offers numerous questions. There are diverse incongruous ways in which his PLA is received and a wide variety of substantially divergent interpretations exist about the intention of the argument. However, his views on rule-following make an essential part of the conceptual framework of the PLA. It is very hard to deny that language is a rule-governed activity. For Wittgenstein, a rule stands like a sign-post; it is customary for a person to follow a sign-post so far as there is a regular use of sign posts.⁶⁷

The objective is to see whether a person using language is being in accord with a rule or whether he is following a rule. Wittgenstein's conception of following a rule is essential as it is central to the question of whether it

⁶⁷ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §198.

is possible to follow a rule privately.⁶⁸ Wittgenstein thought that private rule-following is not possible, if a rule is particular to that individual alone and no one else then it becomes problematic to observe whether he is obeying a rule at all. Because obeying a rule, according to Wittgenstein, is a practice. This practice is a social activity and hence a private rule is incompatible with the idea of being in accord with a rule. A person alone cannot decide whether he is following a rule as it is set by a public standard, consequently in a linguistic community one has to conform to a public set of rules. It is in this connection that Saul Kripke thinks that the origin of PLA starts in *PI* §202 which states:

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And 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.

Kripke is quite sure that Wittgenstein has taken the original form of scepticism. He believes that although Wittgenstein does not stop on posing the problem before his readers but goes on to solve it, it turns out to be an insane solution. Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox, according to Kripke, resembles to the classical scepticism of Hume, as both are based

⁶⁸ Mark Addis, *Wittgenstein: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), p. 125.

on questioning a certain nexus from past to future.⁶⁹ We learn from Kripke:

Wittgenstein questions the nexus between past 'intention' or 'meanings' and present practice: for example, between my past 'intentions' with regard to 'plus' and my present computation '68+57= 125'. Hume questions two other nexuses, related to each other: the causal nexus whereby a past event necessitates a future one, and the inductive inferential nexus from the past to the future.⁷⁰

Kripke's interpretation gives a new insight to PLA, it makes Wittgenstein's attempt more viable. Although Kripke criticizes Wittgenstein for allegedly making a sceptical paradox, he misunderstands Wittgenstein in resembling his argument with Humean scepticism. For Wittgenstein, 'following a rule' is a practice, a custom. On the other, 'being in accord with a rule' can never be fully justified by any interpretation as Baker and Hacker points out that each interpretation generates the same problem about its application.⁷¹ G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker both strongly disagree with Kripke about his claim that *PI* §202 forms the essence of private language problem. *PI* §202 stands on the platform given by *PI* §198 which states "I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it". Here 'sign' is regarded as a rule, it makes sense to say that understanding a rule is a

⁶⁹ Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 62.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ G.P. Baker & P.M.S. Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 13.

mastery of a technique. This technique does not come in isolation, it is manifest in practice and in its application to a variety of cases; it may be 'following the rule' or even 'going against it' as Baker and Hacker put it.⁷² Following a rule is a movement, it is an action. To quote Baker and Hacker:

Hence following a rule is an activity, a *Praxis*. It is a misinterpretation to take 'Praxis' here to signify a social practice. The contrast here is not between an aria and a chorus, but between looking at a core 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'.⁷³

Here we can easily see that the PLA stands in support of the communitarian view of language and substantiates Wittgenstein's legacy in bringing out the meaning in terms of its use. The objective of *Philosophical Investigations* is primarily to establish the use theory, though it is not confined within this boundary. It is sometimes taken for granted that Wittgenstein's arguments against private language go against the *Cartesian* conception of mind. One main reason may be that there is substantial range of different positions in his *Investigations* that is distinctive from Descartes' position. But could we claim that this is the intended target of his argument? The answer is probably no. Another opinion about his argument is that there is no strict target intended to be

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

taken. The *Cartesian* conception of the mind could be related to the question of the existence of a private mental object. What is the nature of a private object? Is it any private sensation or a private emotion? Here also we could examine that the important feature of a private object is that the object concerned is employed in private rule-following.⁷⁴ The rule has to be applied conforming to the private object, if there is a private mental object at all. But this is not possible in terms of Wittgenstein's words as the verbal manifestation of a state e.g. pain, is itself an articulation of a pain.⁷⁵ He takes the position to answer how the meaning of the sensation-words needs to be learned. His imaginary private language is a language that refers to what can only be known to the speaker, to his immediate private sensations.⁷⁶ But on the contrary, one has to learn the meaning of the word 'pain', for that he has to grasp the grammar of the sensation, and then the sensation is to be replaced by the behaviour.

Till now we have seen that the idea of a private language is characterized as a body of words referring to its speaker's immediate private sensations, or 'reference' in terms of locating the private sensation, or the relation between pain and its expression, which is not mediated by

⁷⁴ Mark Addis, *Wittgenstein: A Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 127.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Cf. *PI* §244.

⁷⁶ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §243.

anything. *PI* §246 then interrogates the conception of sensations as 'private'. In the *Investigations* §246 to §252 is an extension of the idea that propagates Wittgenstein's views on private object that a private object is not private when this is taken as claiming that the words of the private language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking.⁷⁷

We can take an important note from Gordon Baker regarding the method of the *private language argument*. He considers a difference in approach between Gilbert Ryle and Wittgenstein. While Ryle refuted the *Cartesian* dualism of keeping two realms parallel to one another, viz. physical objects and mental objects as 'myth of the ghost in the machine' in his magnum opus *The Concept of Mind*, Wittgenstein took a different method. Ryle claimed that dualism is really a myth arising out of a series of category-mistakes from Descartes' myth. According to Ryle, there is no question of a person's immediate and infallible knowledge of his own private mental properties about which no one else could know. He also opposed the causal connection between the mind and the body. In this way Ryle rejected both the alleged myth of introspection and the paramechanical hypothesis.

⁷⁷ Mark Addis, *Wittgenstein: A Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 128.

Was Wittgenstein a behaviourist?

If we venture into the private language argument, we will see that Wittgenstein never uses the label 'PLA', as we normally use it. Rather it is a *reductio ad absurdum* in terms of the intention of Wittgenstein. He is in search of the criterion of our inner mental states which is the basis of his arguments against the possibility of private language. Private language problem is inherently related with the problem of pain in the sense that pain is a prolific sensation and it symbolizes different ascriptions. One of the highlights of the PLA is that here ostensive definition is not regarded as a method of knowing the nature of a particular private sensation. He demonstrates that if we want to know the meaning of the sensation we have to look for its grammar, not the correspondence between the sensation and its referring name. Gordon Baker rightly observes that Wittgenstein advises us to pay attention to the use of words and to report about our findings.⁷⁸ He always emphasizes that an inner state stands in need of outward criteria. The hypothesis behind this formulation is the soul of his *Investigations* and continues to be the guideline for the reader to interpret the PLA. Wittgenstein insists that there is nothing like "my pain" which cannot be associated with another person's pain, because we have the possibility to know the grammar of a sensation like pain by the

⁷⁸ Katherine J. Morris (ed. and introduced), *Wittgenstein's Method: Neglected Aspects -- Essays on Wittgenstein by Gordon Baker* (Malden, USA: Blackwell, 2004; 2006), p. 124.

use of the word. If my words are tied up with my natural expressions of sensation then my language cannot be a 'private' one, and very easily someone else might understand what it is all about.⁷⁹ The grammar is the use of the word in the proper way to convey the meaning of the outward sign to perfection. This process is not an individual enterprise; it requires a public stage-setting, a community standard criterion. This is the reason why Wittgenstein states 'When one says "He gave a name to his sensation" one forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense.' He asserts that what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word 'pain'.⁸⁰

In *PI* §248 Wittgenstein says, "The proposition "Sensations are private" is comparable to: "One plays patience by oneself".' It is in a way meant as "No one can have another person's sensations."⁸¹ Here the pain is taken as a possessive sense that points to the owner of the sensation. But this type of private enterprise does not belong to the language game as pointed out by Wittgenstein.

⁷⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §256.

⁸⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §257.

⁸¹ John Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 3, (Jul. 1965), p. 297. Reprinted in John V. Canfield (ed.), *The Private Language Argument* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986).

According to Baker, Wittgenstein concerns himself with the grammar of words such as 'pain', 'fear', 'thinking', '(mental) image', etc.⁸² He clarifies, "The therapy that Wittgenstein envisages consists entirely in correcting actual mistakes in logical grammar and in ensuring that the future use of words sticks to the rules determining their 'combinatorial possibilities'."⁸³ It is one kind of 'sickness in intellect' which dissuades a person to cure him from the disorder that would have both theoretical and practical ramifications. That reminds us the value of philosophy which Wittgenstein mentions in *PI* §255 "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness."

Language is a way of living; it is a dynamic tool for communication. An invented language, Rush Rhees says, is nothing but a wallpaper pattern.⁸⁴ For Wittgenstein, to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life. Language is never isolated from the human way of living, rather it is the primary source of reaction to everything that a man faces in his society. Man being a social animal is helpless but to use language to communicate his thoughts.

⁸² Katherine J. Morris (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Method: Neglected Aspects--Essays on Wittgenstein by Gordon Baker*, p. 131.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ O.R. Jones (ed.), *The Private Language Argument* (Macmillan: St Martin's Press, 1971), p. 69.

Let us ponder over some of Wittgenstein's arguments in *Philosophical Investigations* between §256 to §264. His interlocutor is asking him (§256) about the language describing my inner experiences and only understood to myself. How to use the words that stand for my sensations? What we can find in the following paragraphs is that there is a natural expression to every sensation. There is no point in denying the existence of sensations and Wittgenstein does not do it either, but the focal point is sensation is not itself an criterion to decide whether the meaning has been conveyed or not. It is the use of the words that define the meaningfulness of content. For example, 'pain' is meaningful only when we learn it by the physical demonstration or outward expression of it, it is not an internal act of acquiring meaning nor does it have an internal representation. Unless we know the adequate usage of the external criteria we will not be able to distinguish between the correct and the incorrect usage of words.

The interesting point in Wittgenstein's arguments lies in the counterpart in his interlocutor as he forces Wittgenstein to bring out the true picture of his investigation. He asks the question that how a person gives a name to his sensation. Wittgenstein answers by saying that there is already a great deal of stage-setting presupposed if the mere act of naming is to

make sense.⁸⁵ It has risen due to the Cartesian assumption that since nobody can display his sensations to anybody else, sensations cannot be given names by public ostensive definition.⁸⁶ An utterance like "I am in pain" is not merely an utterance replacing crying, it can describe a sensation which a mere cry cannot. The presupposition of grammar is what Wittgenstein brings in to explain the nature of the sensation. The use of sensation words is not private affairs; rather it is a purely public enterprise, part of our common language. He searches for the justification which cannot be done privately, because there should always be public check on meaning in the language-game. He explains it this way in *PI* §261:

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 stands in need of a justification which everybody understands.

Whether the mind can supply the proper stage is the controversial question in dealing with the private language problem. Wittgenstein introduces the example of a private diary to exhibit the unintelligibility of a private ostensive definition. This shows the unavoidable circumstance of the failure to recognize the distinction between remembering the private sign 'S' that defines the sensation and seeming

⁸⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Sec. §257.

⁸⁶ Alan Donagan, "Wittgenstein on Sensation" in G. Pitcher (ed.), *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1966), p. 325. Reprinted in John V. Canfield (ed.), *The Private Language Argument* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986).

to remember it. But the rules of a private language cannot be merely impressions of rules whilst one cannot make the distinction between what is right and what seems to be right. Here we can trace back to §202, where Wittgenstein states that obeying a rule is a practice and thinking that one is obeying a rule is not to follow a rule. Wittgenstein raises the concern about authenticating the source of my remembering the sensation correctly. Hence the scope of the memory comes into the scheme. Wittgenstein has significantly challenged about memory's being a reliable source of knowledge while dealing with a particular sign 'S' that records a particular sensation. He formulates this in a very important passage in *Philosophical Investigations*:

Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. – I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. – But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. – How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation – and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. – But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. – Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. – But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §258.

The above argument explores two things, first, whether someone can point to his sensation in an ostensive way, and second, whether memory gives me the correct impression. The passage is quite decisive in making the course of the PLA in right direction. The first object is that of a definition, whether a rule for the correct use can be devised, the answer is negative here.⁸⁸ Because 'S' is supposed to be the name of one's own sensation, that another person cannot have or cannot know about. Naturally the usage of 'S' in private ostensive mode cannot guarantee the correctness, hence it cannot be a private enterprise. Hacker comments, "Admittedly, it is a peculiar ostensive definition in as much as there is no such thing as pointing privately to the sensation itself, any more than one can point at a visual image of a red."⁸⁹ The function of a definition is to establish the meaning of a sign; it also needs to provide a standard for the correctness of a subsequent use.⁹⁰ The standardization cannot be provided by memory, according to Wittgenstein. Memory is a kind of impression, impression of rules which is governing the usage of my language. But this impression is rather an illusion, it just cannot convince someone about the correctness or incorrectness of the rule applied. The criteria for the correct application of words for sensation are taught and learned in public set of rules; therefore, a private language can never give

⁸⁸ P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 118.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

the criteria for distinguishing the correct from the incorrect use of language. The distinction that Wittgenstein wants to make is between 'is right' and 'seeming to be right', this can only be done by the public language.

The main application of his investigation lies in his understanding of language in terms of its use. We cannot take language as being a metaphysical entity, it is a tool for expressing our ideas, thoughts, wills, desires etc. What we can do is to formulate the linguistic device to explore the world or form of life as Wittgenstein says. Language is a dynamic vehicle for comprehending the reality. The communication cannot be possible without the proper usage of language. The sensations which we feel have specific words describing the nature of those sensations. Here a private 'ostensive' definition of 'pain' must presuppose that it is the name of the sensation, it is a public language and we can perceive expression of the concerned sensation in the behaviours of the people. This is why Hacker indicates that a private ostensive definition cannot serve the purpose of identifying the definition of a sensation. Wittgenstein asks can I use such a language which describes my own inner experiences on the basis of my experiences being 'epistemologically private' or privately owned. He problematizes the issue and finds that it is not that others cannot

understand this sort of radically private language, and hence it is of no importance, but rather I myself cannot understand such a putative language. He makes a deviation from the *Cartesian* doctrine of mental domination over linguistic communication and establishes the supremacy of public language which is translatable and learnable for anyone. In Hacker's language, there is no such thing as a private language, it is nothing but a phantasmagoria of philosophy.⁹¹

The philosophical prejudice has been attacked in this way by Wittgenstein in his *Investigations* where he places the use of the word at its optimum level. This can best be found in his remark, "Once you know *what* the word stands for, you understand it, you know its whole use."⁹² The use of the words in Wittgenstein's language game takes an essential part in devising the nature of his philosophy by ordinary language. If the use is limited only to the speaker who speaks a clandestine sort of language then nobody else would be in a position to verify it whether it has been used correctly or not. There will be no criterion of correctness. This verifiability or criterion based meaning is very much the soul of the private language argument. In fact, our realization of being in pain is sufficient criterion for our knowing that we are in pain. Wittgenstein

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁹² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §264.

would even contest the skeptics about their claim of never passing correct judgements about the 'inner states' of others. Actually the PLA is a kind of medicine which could be used for removing certain preconceived notions of philosophy; it is an approach to reconsider those arguments from empiricist philosophers who have been inspired by *Cartesian* dualism. The diarist who has a private code to symbolize his sensation is always possible for someone to translate and use according to his need. The private ostensive definition cannot give me the criterion of correctness, as it is like my right hand's giving money to my left hand but having no further consequences of being richer by a gift. If I imagine a table and look for the justification of a word X by a word Y and justify it then it will be a subjective justification. But justification, as Wittgenstein says, consists in something independent. Here he opens another option, the option of memory being a criterion. He says:

"But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don't know if I have remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn't it the same here?" — No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually *correct*. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be *tested* for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true.)⁹³

⁹³ Ibid., §265.

The memory can be helpful for deciding the truth or falsity of the previous incident, but to check the identity of its preceding incidents if memory is the only criterion of correctness, then there is every possibility of its being fallible and it also brings an infinite regress. The thing is that memory is not a reliable source of knowledge and it cannot satisfy the criterion of correctness as it lacks independence. In my private cases of recording sensation and giving it a name, e.g. discovering whenever I have a particular sensation, a manometer indicates about the rise of my blood-pressure.⁹⁴ Even if I recognize it rightly every time I use the manometer, it does not matter because here the supposition of misidentification is vacuous, basically it does not arise at all. We are not talking about the fallibility of human memory, rather it is a collapse of any distinction between remembering correctly and remembering incorrectly.⁹⁵ The question of a private object is not important to Wittgenstein's method of knowing whether language constructs the meaning or not; it is the use of words that is in question. He advises us to get rid of the idea of a private object by assuming that it is constantly changing. But we usually do not notice the change because our memory frequently misleads us.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, §270.

⁹⁵ P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, p. 109.

Private language argument has a verificationist implication too, it stands on some verificationist premises. The above remark can be taken as an analysis which has a verificationist ring. But on the other hand, Anthony Kenny believes that the PLA depends on premises that are not derived from the verificationism of the 1930s but from the picture theory of the proposition in the 1910s. Kenny maintains that a description of a state of affairs like pain is a picture in the sense of the *Tractatus*, whether such a picture is true or false can be compared with what it depicts. Kenny observes, “‘His eye is black’ is a picture in this sense: it is compared with the real eye to see whether it is correct. Now ‘He is in pain’ – let us leave aside ‘I am in pain’ for the moment – is not a picture in this sense. It can be compared with reality, and checked for truth and falsehood, certainly; but what it is compared with is not his pain, but the criteria of his pain, e.g. what he says and does.”⁹⁶

Pain has played a remarkable role in *Philosophical Investigations*. We often have some kinds of pain which we can easily express to anyone else, but there are certain pains which are not easy to describe. Wittgenstein takes a stand in *PI* in favour of the criterion based meaning of pain and other feelings. He believes that even if a person cannot always successfully memorize the meaning of ‘pain’ he uses the word in a very customary

⁹⁶ O.R. Jones (ed.), *The Private Language Argument*, p. 222.

sense as we all do with the usual symptoms and presuppositions of pain.⁹⁷ Here pain and pain-behaviour both come into terms. The sensation of colour could have been different to different sections of people if private experience is accepted. When I take 'red' as something private experience, it "refers to" something private, but in a quite unverifiable way. Wittgenstein mentions, "It is as if when I uttered the word I cast a sidelong glance at the private sensation, as it were in order to say to myself: I know all right what I mean by it."⁹⁸ This problem has a relation to the problem of other minds as experience, if it is private, produces something unique data in a person which is different from another person. Wittgenstein brings out the problem in this manner:

The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have *this* or something else. The assumption would thus be possible - though unverifiable - that one section of mankind had one sensation of red and another section another.⁹⁹

What Wittgenstein asserts is that one does not have the feeling of pointing-into-oneself which often accompanies 'naming the sensation' when one is thinking about 'private language'.¹⁰⁰ One does not develop the meaning of a sensation by pointing ostensively to the sensation itself or having an attention towards it.

⁹⁷ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §271.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, §274.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, §272.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, §275.

The therapeutic role of the PLA:

There is a temptation to interpret Wittgenstein as a behaviourist because he ascribes pain-behaviour to make us understand the expression of pain. His PLA can be seen as a *reductio ad absurdum* but to say that it has taken a form of behaviourism would be an injustice. He did not deny for a moment that there is sensation, but insists that we won't be able to unplug the meaning of the sensation only by pointing inwards, we have to know the grammar of the sensation, -- the grammar of 'pain'. The behaviourist tries to eliminate the pain, but Wittgenstein does not. He tries to get rid of pain that is conceptualized as something completely detached from all physical criteria. He diagnoses the problem like a physician is out to cure an illness, his PLA is a therapy. What we observe in many passages of *Investigations* that there is an interlocutor who can be compared with a patient asking several questions to his doctor from opponent perspectives. The job Wittgenstein has of the doctor who takes the patient (here interlocutor) out of his comfort zone and understand the real question and its probable solutions. The problem with the text is that it never comes in a succinct and linear fashion, thus giving space to divergent interpretations often bringing misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's purpose. The language by which we report bodily sensations does not clearly express its origin. In Wittgensteinian outlook it operates with an independence from the external world and strikes us

as the paradigm of an internalized sector of language after being mastered.¹⁰¹ But there must be a connection with the external world to achieve the independent linguistic competence. David Pears elucidates, “The truth is that this impressively independent linguistic competence can be achieved only by someone who starts by exploiting the connections between sensations and the external world. It is a language with an internal field of application but though it is not learned at the interface between body and external world, it does owe its development to something that happens there.”¹⁰²

If Wittgenstein would pursue a philosophical theory like behaviourism he could not unravel the nature of our sensations like he did in his *Investigations*. His take on sensation is that it is not a *something*, but not a *nothing* either.¹⁰³ To understand the intention of his argument we need to start from the scratch and look for certain clues which are placed here and there in the passages of *PI*. That is why it is very easy to go in a bewildering way about the goal of the argument and the temptation is always there. He wanted to take us away from the dominating feature of *Cartesian* legacy where we look upon mind to get the meaning of the word. If I accept that a stone has soul and it also has pain after I imagine

¹⁰¹ David Pears, *The False Prison: A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy* [Vol. II] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 344.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §304.

myself into a stone what would happen? What is it that that makes me recognize that there is something there (in me) which I can call "pain" without getting into conflict with the way other people use this word?¹⁰⁴ He answers that only of a living human being can one say that it has pains. The recognition of facial expressions makes someone realize that the person in front of him has pain or not.¹⁰⁵ In this way he leaps forward against solipsism or classical phenomenism or some other restrictive theory of perception. Pears thinks that Wittgenstein's strategy is to argue on two fronts, first about the subject, second about the objects of experience. One is to show that solipsism is incoherent, another to show that even if it could be set up coherently, as Pears says, "There are two essential linguistic devices available in the macrocosm, which the solipsist cannot take with him when he retreats into his microcosm – discriminating references to individuals and to types."¹⁰⁶

Another important feature of his PLA is his "beetle-in-the-box" argument. The word 'beetle' has a public use but the referred object is private to each individual. In this argument we are asked to consider a language game in which the word 'beetle' refers to something known and knowable to the subject alone while at the same time having public

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., §283.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., §285.

¹⁰⁶ David Pears, *The False Prison* (Vol. II), p. 362.

use. The “beetle-in-the-box” argument displays the self-defeating character of *Cartesian* position; the *Cartesian* theory of consciousness, as pointed out by Wittgenstein has the ‘paradox’ in giving pre-eminence to the private sensation, and thus eliminates sensations. Let us have a look at the beetle’s example:

Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a “beetle”. No one can look into anyone else’s box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. – But suppose the word “beetle” had a use in these people’s language? – If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a *something*: for the box might even be empty. – No, one can ‘divide through’ by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.

That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of ‘object and designation’ the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.¹⁰⁷

The above argument depicts Wittgenstein’s rejection of the idea that sensation plays a crucial role in the language-game. The ‘beetle’ here is knowable only to the subject, yet it does have a public use. Apparently it has a similarity to the ‘object and designation’ model in the sense that the beetle is an object in its own right separately from the state of affairs of which it is only accidentally a part.¹⁰⁸ But if we look at it closely, we can see that this model cannot be applied to the beetle case. Because

¹⁰⁷ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §293.

¹⁰⁸ Meredith Williams, *Wittgenstein, Mind and meaning: Toward a social conception of mind* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999; 2002), p. 32.

Wittgenstein says that the beetle is completely disassociated from the use of the word 'beetle', it does not matter at all whether the beetle is there in the box or not, it does not affect the use of the word nor does it play any role in the language game. This argument actually demonstrates the collapse of the *Cartesian* theory of mind and its dominance in playing a major role in constructing language. 'Pain, like 'beetle' has a public or social use, while the pain itself is known to the subject alone. That does not mean that when someone's pain is expressed in a language, that would be incomprehensible for another person to grasp its meaning. Pain becomes irrelevant just like the beetle once it is expressed through language, it drops out of consideration. Pain is nothing but a sensation which is always in the look out to be expressed; therefore, there is no point in saying that sensation can be inwardly understood and a private language could be formed by inwardly pointing toward the sensation. This 'beetle' argument proves that there is no case of "object and designation" model in terms of the relation between pain and "pain". This argument further proves the scope for Wittgenstein's claim that an inward process always stand in need of outward criteria. There must be a standard criterion, an isolated act of mental concentration cannot set the standard in Wittgensteinian standpoint. When we cannot express appropriately about our mental feelings, it does not mean that we will be able to say it by an act of reflection. An internal act of reflection can only

be fruitful in contemplating about one's own ambitions, his future plans etc. But it does not make any difference to the language game we have discussed about.

The job of philosophy is to disclose the confusions or perplexities one confronts and in that sense a number of commentators argue that the later Wittgenstein gives us a subtle and imaginative form of Kantian critical philosophy.¹⁰⁹ The only difference is in the method – Kant propagated that the method of transcendental argument where all experience and all knowledge are conditioned by the very constitution of the mind, but for Wittgenstein these boundaries are to be found within language, but not within the mind.¹¹⁰ Surely, the PLA acts as a kind of medicine to those philosophical problems which have been dominating the picture for a very long time. The total argument aims at solving a philosophical puzzle, to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.¹¹¹ He does not defy mental process as it would be a denial of remembering. He clarifies:

Why should I deny that there is a mental process? But “There has just taken place in me the mental process of remembering...” means nothing more than: “I have just remembered...”. To deny the mental process would mean to deny the remembering; to deny that anyone ever remembers anything.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

¹¹¹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §309.

¹¹² Ibid., §306.

If we revisit §243 to §315 of *Philosophical Investigations* we can find that §265 supports the stage-setting of §258, again §270 forming the same for §293. There is always a temptation to combine more than one argument in a single one. One of the necessary foundations are given by Memory-Criteria Argument (§258), as 'criterion' plays a decisive role in the PLA. But Wittgenstein hardly explains about the applicability of criteria and thus providing ample scope for divergent interpretations. Another important stage is found in his Beetles Argument (§293). These two constitute the foundation for his *private language argument*. He invoked the notion of the language-game to establish that we are constantly moving towards the public realm of activity from the private phenomenological realm.¹¹³ Even when a person plays a game in completely private zone, following private rules, it is something parasitic on the public games.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Merrill B. Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 242.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

CHAPTER 4:

Private Language Argument and the Problem of Other Minds

The problem of other minds is an age old predicament in the history of philosophy. It existed during the time of Plato and still remains a quandary in philosophical discussions at length. We find in Plato's *Theaetetus* the question: "Are you quite certain that the several colours appear to a dog or to any animal whatever as they appear to you? ... Or that anything appears the same to you as to another man?"¹¹⁵ This problem is a kind of other minds dilemma.

The problem of other minds is found in Wittgenstein's philosophy too. As far as Wittgenstein is concerned, the problem arises due to the self-centred perception of knowledge. When one thinks that he can have knowledge of his own psychological states and on that basis he constructs the world from his own private experiences or sense data, problem of other minds take place. This is a major issue which Wittgenstein strikes to resolve. This issue originally came up from the *Cartesian Meditations* where Descartes takes his own self as the being to doubt, by his method arrives at the conclusion that one has the best possible access to his own private self. Wittgenstein believes that it is a

¹¹⁵ Benjamin Jowett (tr.), *Plato's Theaetetus: With Introduction and Analysis* (Rockville, Maryland: Serenity Publishers, 2009), p. 102.

false idea to construct the world view in this way. His private language argument is related to the problem of other minds in a quite integrated way. Norman Malcolm says, "The idea of a private language is presupposed by every program of inferring or constructing the 'external world' and 'other minds'. It is contained in the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical British empiricism, as well as in recent and contemporary phenomenism and sense-datum theory."¹¹⁶ The problem basically takes its course in the realm of one's own sensation and its outward expression. When I have a pain, I express it to others, but at the same time I have a feeling that other person is not really able to understand the pain I am having. On the other side of the coin, I can only believe that someone else is in pain, but I *know* it if I am in pain.¹¹⁷ The other minds problem starts from an egocentric predicament that encourages one to employ private rules. When I have a pain I go through certain experiences, experiences which lead me in future to assume how another person would feel when he has the same kind of pain that I have. But the notion 'same' is something of which I am the sole arbiter, only I have the authority to proclaim whether the pain is same as mine or not. But Wittgenstein would say, the meaning of 'same'

¹¹⁶ Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*", in Harold Morick (ed.), *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Other Minds* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 46.

¹¹⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), §303.

can be taught to someone else. If he has mastered the technique of the rules to understand the 'same' colour for example, then the conceptualisation of private practice of rules will be annihilated. Wittgenstein establishes in his argument that there can be nothing like a private rule as language is governed by a rule which is always under public check and it must have the criteria that is publicly observable to convey meaning. The significance in Wittgenstein's criterion based approach to meaning is that he contrasts 'criterion' with 'symptom' taking up both words in technical perspective.¹¹⁸ The falling barometer is a 'symptom' of raining, its looking like *that* outdoors is the 'criterion' of rain. This relation between 'symptom' and 'criterion' can be learnt by experience and it can also be taught.

In Wittgenstein's language, there is no point on saying that "I know that I am in pain" or "I am not sure whether I am in pain or not" because pain is bodily felt and one has to look into the grammar of the sensation. There is no 'ego' when one has toothache and another person also has the same. The development of Wittgenstein's philosophy and his transition has a lot to do with his dealing with the problem of other minds. He has given a theory of language that comes before a challenge from the world of phenomena. In both his *Philosophical Investigations* and *Zettel*, he has

¹¹⁸ Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*", p. 63.

maintained that it is stupid for someone to suggest that the content of experience is incommunicable. In his period of philosophical transition he had some sort of association, although not entirely a close one, with the *Vienna Circle*. Wittgenstein at this point tried to explain how A and B achieve communication between them about their bodily sensations with keeping the idea that all these languages can be translated into one another, it was a kind of intercommunication between at least two persons. The second assumption he made was that each of them started by making context-free references to his own bodily sensations and their types. It also made their achievement of intercommunication inexplicable.¹¹⁹ Schlick and Carnap shared the idea with Wittgenstein that language must be a single system of communication correlated with an integrated field of phenomena. Carnap and Schlick were more fundamental than Wittgenstein as they believed that the split between language and correlated phenomena need to be unified, they have imposed a more radical unification process from both the internal and external perception. They chose physical objects and the physicalistic language to explain that it was the only way to epitomize the communication between one another.¹²⁰ But the problem with Schlick-Carnap's theory is that they have adopted such a radical use of scientific

¹¹⁹ David Pears, *The False Prison: A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy* [Vol. II] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 305.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

language that has given a mutilated picture of human life. Wittgenstein was never at home with this over-preoccupation of factual language, he was looking for a more humanised form of description of the world.

Wittgenstein had to face an intellectual dilemma about private language in the early 1930s when he did not accept the radical physicalisation of language promulgated by Carnap and Schlick. His context-free reference to experience could have given rise for a private language had he not reject it later. He was even optimistic about the possibility of a private language when he began to search for a non-hypothetical, phenomenological language from which our conceptual journey could start.¹²¹ His motivation was driven by the general agenda of looking for the words and their reference while his picture theory of meaning was still as a framework. His transition in philosophy mainly took its course when he thought that the philosophical confusions lie not in the metaphysical trajectory, but elsewhere. It arises when the linguistic misrepresentations occur due to the presupposition that we look for the sensation to transfer meaning to the language. The question "Do I know other selves?" is retaliated by Wittgenstein in the form: When I look at another person, do I look at his soul? Do I need to look at all? Whatever I

¹²¹ Keld Stehr Nielsen, *The Evolution of the Private Language Argument* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2008), p. 40.

perceive is from his expressions, his facial and bodily gestures. If only I have the access to my pain, others only surmise it, and then in whatever way I express they won't understand it. But Wittgenstein is convinced enough that under no circumstances I can claim that the other person cannot know about my pain.

How do I know that there are other minds? There are other persons who cry, laugh, think about objects, if there was no mind except of myself then how could we believe in their behavioural dispositions? The intricacy between private language with the problem of other minds is stretched out to the claim that "I know the sensation only from my own case", the own experiences of a private linguist, and others knowing about pain only from their own experiences, gives rise to the issue where no one would be able to know what 'pain' stands for. As a result, there will be a failure of communication.¹²² But I cannot know 'pain' as the name of a sensation, otherwise I would have been able to teach the use of 'pain' by an ostensive method, just like I teach someone in the case of 'red'.¹²³ 'Pain' is not the name of a sensation, as when I feel it, I express in utterances like 'Ouch!' or 'Oh!' and these utterances make another person understood about my pain.

¹²² Ashok Vohra, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mind* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 56.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

The scepticism about other minds:

The other minds problem starts from the assumption that whether I believe in the existence of mind in another person or not. It is not possible in common sense belief to assert that there is no mind other than me. It cannot be said of me at all that I am the only sufferer of pain and no others as every person in the world has suffered pain. But let us suppose, someone is inside a park watching children play. But if he thinks that only he has the mind and not the children, because children are mentally vacuous automatons as he thinks or like robots who behave like they have mind, but their mindlike behaviour does not come from the state of mind, but from something else. But Thomas is convinced that only he has one genuine mind in the whole world. From a common sense attitude Thomas's belief about the non-existence of other minds is completely unacceptable.¹²⁴ We will easily dismiss Thomas as crazy, absurd sort of person. But at the same time, it unveils another question, how much we know about other minds? Do we know it at all or presume the existence of other minds? Do we human beings only have minds, or there are animals that have minds? Or does a computer believe? Many questions arise in the philosophy of mind and most of them still remain unsolved. The problem is a complicated one which needs to be addressed

¹²⁴ George Graham, *Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* [2nd ed.] (Malden, USA: Blackwell, 1993; 1998), p. 43.

with a greater philosophical investigation and it really has contributed a great deal to the philosophy of mind.

While we do any research or study or analysis in depth we must use our mind to a very concentrated level, otherwise the job at hand will not be possible to accomplish. It is the mind which directs us to various tracks and which make us aware of our past, present and also make us conscious about our future course of actions. Philosophy of mind is a branch which has many parts and ramifications that lead us to think over different areas of philosophy, e.g. philosophy of action, philosophy of language, cognitive science etc. Philosophy of language is totally a different branch of study but it has a close association with philosophy of mind as both of them are, in many respects, complimentary with each other. Philosophy is a subject which makes a comprehensive and systematic study of the most fundamental areas of human experience. It is comprehensive in the sense of its width of a broad area and covering of a huge ground of study. When it comes to the depth, philosophy makes its way into the ground which it covers.¹²⁵ Philosophy may probe deeply into matters beyond the experimental and clinical data. It does not necessarily mean that philosophy confronts with the physical data given by scientists or psychologists; it adds to their study and reopens some

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

areas with the probability of fresh insights. Philosophy offers a broad spectrum of fundamental human concerns with the aim for systematic and comprehensive understanding.

Now let us ponder over mind. A person who has mind must be feeling pain when he is hit by an iron rod; pain is often classified as a 'sensation'. He must be angry when someone talks to him in a malicious language continuously; Anger is classified as 'emotion' by many philosophers. When I talk to someone with a conviction about the mistake he has made to me, I must have a belief; belief is something also very close to mental occurrence and is classified as 'thought' or 'propositional attitude' in a more technical sense of the term.¹²⁶ If someone is not a minded being, he cannot have those feelings like 'pain', 'anger' or 'belief'; it does not mean that creatures having pain, anger, belief are the only who have minds, but such capabilities and events are only possible for minded creatures.¹²⁷ Therefore, philosophy of mind can be defined, as far as George graham proposes it, in this way:

*Philosophy of mind is the area of philosophy which strives for comprehensive and systematic understanding of that which thinks and experiences, namely the mind.*¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

The mind has wide implications in terms of its activities. Mental acts are not always philosophically defined. But one theory which has a great philosophical attraction is scepticism about other minds. It poses a basic question, "Do other persons have mind?", and a radical sceptic would answer that there is no mind except my own. But is it philosophically feasible? This question challenges about the knowledge of other selves. It is a basic characteristic of our life that we know there are other figures with human shape that can talk, walk, think, and have minds. They have sensations, feelings, thoughts and they can interact like me. In the common sense, there is no reason to believe that they are not minded beings. But in the philosophical nous, the complexity and pervasive character of mind poses a great challenge. Let us assume certain propositions:

- (a) Only I can know about my own sensations. Because I have a direct access to my sensations.
- (b) Our experiences are always named by a private ostensive definition. They appear in certain conditions and 'stand for' some particular behaviour, e.g. pain-behaviour.
- (c) The pain which happens in my body is a necessary and sufficient condition for knowing of my pain.
- (d) Another person cannot be directly aware of my pain.

The above assumptions bring out the traditional problem of other minds. It reminds us that the way I know my mind, another person cannot know. The sensation which refers to my body cannot remain in another body in the same way. We will examine about the potential of being correct about these propositions. It is a kind of scepticism about other minds. To solve this problem we have to discover the criteria or verification process which could carry out the task. Either we can make it through the 'direct discovery' like sensory perception or some sort of intuition. Otherwise we can take the channel of 'indirect discovery' meant by inference.¹²⁹ Assumption (a) takes it for granted that I have direct access to my sensations, therefore the level of knowledge about my sensation cannot be matched by someone else. Assumption (d) is the obvious outcome of assumption (a). Assumption (c) talks about the condition of the knowledge of pain, also states that one must have the private mental object i.e. pain to know whether he has the immediate knowledge of that object, i.e. pain. Assumption (c) in a way also fulfils the condition of (b), as to say that if I do not know about the private object then how I can give it a name by private ostensive method. Going by the virtue of these assumptions we can clearly expect that it is not possible to have a direct knowledge about other person's sensation, thoughts and feelings nor can we know it by intuition; because if direct

¹²⁹ Ashok Vohra, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mind*, p. 96.

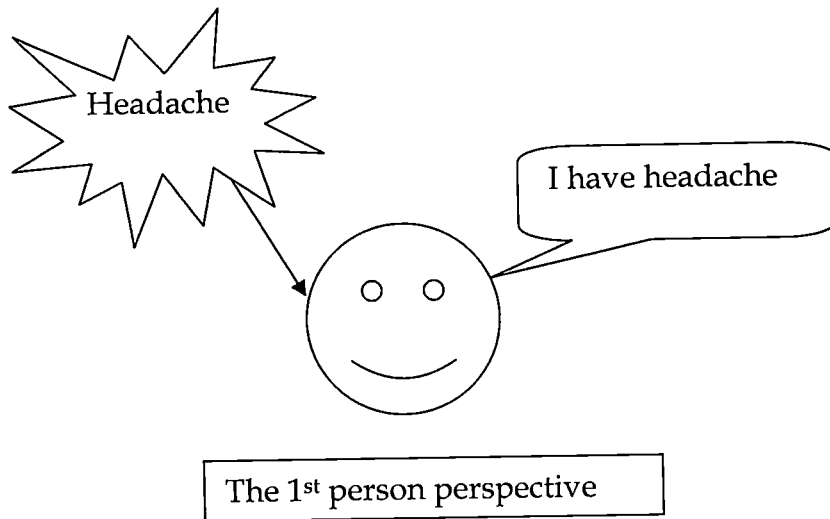
knowledge is not enough then intuitive faculty also cannot work. So the only option left is inference about the existence of other minds, their feelings and sensations etc. What we can do is to infer from their behaviour and expressions of their bodies, whatever they exhibit is in front of us. Descartes and other empiricist philosophers have supported the plausibility of such inferences, which state that I can know from my experiences what sort of feelings or sensations others might have when they have a particular pain. This is called the 'argument from analogy'.¹³⁰ The problem of other minds tells about the subjective justification about our own mental terms. The source of the claim about the knowledge of one's own mental events comes from the egoistic attitude towards the sensations in a person. The person starts to think that because he has it, he only can know it; it becomes a privileged access for the person in the epistemic sense of the term. When it goes to the extreme level, it creates the possibility of solipsism as one is never ever sure about the happenings of other persons' mental images. Coming back to the 'argument from analogy', A.J. Ayer remarks that even if we accept that there is the problem of the knowledge of other minds, some philosophers may admit the argument from analogy. They may say that when I observe certain features of my own behaviour that are associated with certain experiences, we may apply the same features upon seeing other

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 97.

persons behaving in similar ways, and by analogy we may be able to infer that they are having the same experiences.¹³¹ But the argument from analogy is not so strong to solve the problem of other minds. The four assumptions we made few paragraphs back shows that the argument from analogy fails to meet the justification. Since the assumptions have claimed about the direct access to our sensations, it is not sufficient to infer about the behaviour of some other persons. If another person does not have the access to my mental incidents, then how can I claim to have the same about another person? Others cannot be in a position to claim knowledge about my mental behaviours, they are exclusively my own. X is not warranted to make a statement about the experiences of Y, as Y has the knowledge of its own mind from the first person perspective. X only has the third person perspective, X cannot directly know the experiences of Y plainly because X does not have them.¹³² The figure in the following page depicts that it is the person who is having headache can say that I have headache because he has the first person perspective, another person is not in the position as he is. Let us have a glance at the following figure about the first person perspective:

¹³¹ A.J. Ayer, *Philosophical Essays* (London: Macmillan & NY: St Martin's Press, 1954; 1969), p. 192.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

Illustration 4.1:

It is about the possession of the experiences that matter. Then one may question, does telepathy have the character to link the gap between the first person and another? Because telepathy is something by means of which a message is transmitted without any physical attributes. But to say that telepathy is a communication in which two persons share the same experiences is not right. Ayer in his essay "One's knowledge of other minds" makes the point that although telepathy is a transmission of message from one person to another, it is not the sharing of experiences between them. Ayer believes that telepathy therefore does not fulfil the condition to solve the problem of other minds. He says:

There is the experience of the person who makes the communication and the experience of the person who receives it. These experiences are necessarily different, since they are the experiences of different persons, and this remains

true no matter how the communication is made. In this respect telepathy is no better than the telephone.¹³³

It is very much evident that we are still not able to solve the problem. The problem is quite a persistent one as it does not leave room for the philosophers to offer a solution neither by the argument from analogy, nor by telepathy. It is because the two persons are always different, in terms of their mental images, propositional attitudes, sensations, feelings, in every respect. Their personalities are different; their experiences must also be different. It is hardly possible for anyone to presuppose about the mental states of other persons, the difference in the properties of pain will always be different, irrespective of my guess about someone else. The qualitative character of experiences, i.e. the qualia remains as the differentiating point between two persons as far as the feeling is concerned. 'Qualia' is the plural form of 'quale'. Qualia is the built-in quality of experience, it is the how-it-is-like facet of phenomenal consciousness. If we want to have the knowledge of phenomenal properties, we need to have *irreducible, propositional, phenomenal information*.¹³⁴ 'Qualia' is often used to name properties like redness and painfulness. Qualia itself is a sticky issue as it seems indisputable that we

¹³³ Ibid., p. 196.

¹³⁴ Jesper Kallestrup, "Private Language and Mind-Body Dualism." (<http://www.wittgenstein-network.dk/home/papers/PrivateLanguageandM-BDualis.pdf>).

have experiences with properties like redness and painfulness. It means that qualia exist. But, what are qualia? If they are physical properties of the brain, then what sort of physical properties are they? Even qualia may be non-physical properties caused by the brain but which do not themselves cause anything. Therefore, the possibility of their being epiphenomenal properties also brings in more problems to the issue.¹³⁵ If we believe in qualia then the possibility of knowing other minds become even more distant. We must be feeling the crisis in resolving the problem.

Human beings are always cognising some thing or the other. While cognizing they refer to objects and mean them by their own understanding. Their reflection on the object helps them in making judgements and while doing so they are more often or not in some conceptual confusions. Philosophy of mind deals with these confusions, and time and again we succumb to certain metaphysical intricacies, and the problem becomes a profound one instead of being resolved. Hence we need to look for the solution which would enable us to have a better understanding of the problem and take a proper route. Wittgenstein very rightly observes that philosophers do not look to get solution, rather they

¹³⁵ Ian Ravenscroft, *Philosophy of Mind: A Beginner's Guide* (NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 161.

make it more problematic. He says that once the confusion is rooted out, the problem disappears. But we bring in metaphysical inputs to cover up our own conceptual confusions. Wittgenstein thinks that the whole 'cloud of metaphysics' is squashed into a 'drop of grammar'. The conceptual confusions, according to Wittgenstein, become a philosophical problem, when language goes on holiday. The entire issue lies at the heart of human presupposition that (i) only I have the direct access to my mind, (ii) I have an exclusive mental realm that is beyond the reach for other persons, (iii) therefore the mental activities which occur in me cannot be known by someone else.

We have already mentioned that this attitude invariably leads to the solipsism. The other minds' problem can never be solved if we stick to this position. It is still a problematic issue because of its intrinsic characteristic of inviting temptation not to become convinced about the mental acts of a person. The probable solution to the problem of other minds lies most probably in the behavioural criteria. The criterial justification could be the most viable option to deal with the problem of other minds. The other is seen distinctively as a persona from another person. The scepticism which surrounds the doubt regarding the existence of other minds lacks criterial satisfaction; if the satisfaction is fulfilled then the problem can look better. This problem also has its root

in Descartes' theory of mind-body dualism. Descartes introduced a highly debatable use of body. In Descartes it has to be understood at all times in the context of his distinction between *himself* and his body.¹³⁶ When we say that "He was found dead" or "He has a strong body but no brains" we see different uses of body in different contexts.¹³⁷ These statements and others make a wide array of contextual circumstances. His emphasis on 'body' generates the problem of other minds in a more sceptic manner because here "my body" and "others' body" come into the context.

The search for criterial justification:

To solve the problem of other minds we have to look for the behavioural criteria. But looking only at someone's behaviour would not be enough unless his sensations are disclosed. Now if it is about disclosure of certain sensations, then we necessarily need the help from other persons. Because when someone asks me about my sensation e.g. "How are you feeling now?" all that he expects from me is an answer which could give some clue to him. But it is me who has the authority to provide clues to another person; but then one may ask that if it was not possible to know about other minds, then how could a doctor diagnose a problem of a

¹³⁶ John W. Cook, "Human beings", in Peter Winch (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 123.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

patient? The problem of other minds generates from the conscious thoughts and feelings which are directly or immediately given.¹³⁸ I require no support from others when it comes to the access to our own minds, but I have to look for the help of others if I want to know about their minds. This help can be observed by the evident behaviour of the other.

The problem gets trickier when we take the other minds completely different from our own and apply an isolated world to them. Then it becomes almost impossible to judge the other selves as there is no way to put forth the idea of identity between two persons. But this is a mystical outlook to approach a philosophical matter; we must look forward to go beyond mysticism if we really crave for resolving the problem. Stanley Cavell puts it: "What hides the mind not the body but the mind itself - his his, or mine his, and contrariwise".¹³⁹ It is a myth about mind that it is a property of an individual in the exclusive sense of the term. This is a fragmentation of truth in saying that what is internal is concealed from us, it brings us to nowhere. We can unlock the truth in other's mind if we channelise our experiences to others, the most powerful vehicle in doing this job is language. Another aspect of this problem as far as we have

¹³⁸ George Graham, *Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* (2nd ed.), p. 48.

¹³⁹ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (NY & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 369.

observed lies in allowing others to let them know about me. One thing may be observed in this regard that how much we allow others to know about my mind may be helpful in assuming about my knowledge of other's mind. My assurance of letting the other know about my behaviour, experiences, and cognitive development could mark the way for a better and more comprehensive understanding about other minds. The problem arises the moment we deem to believe that my idea of pain is totally different from others. A sceptic would question in this way as George Graham puts it:

Isn't it conceivable that my concept of pain just does not apply to others? Isn't it possible that I have private mental concepts which enable me to know my mind without applying those concepts to others? Isn't it possible that the writing of the nailed person arises from something other than pain?¹⁴⁰

But this is not going to solve the problem, rather it will intensify it. If scepticism is accepted, then pain would mean something to one person, quite different to another one. But Wittgenstein would point out that if it is the case, then it is not pain, but *impression* of pain. Because this way of putting a private perspective is practiced by a private rule, but there cannot be any private rule, rather there are impressions of rule; and a rule is governed under a public standard, it is practiced not privately but in a public use. The problem is that if we believe in communication, then

¹⁴⁰ George Graham, *Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* (2nd ed.), p. 51.

we should believe in other minds, there is no question about it. Only thing is to know the extent of mental activities in another person.

Such sensations as pain do have a status that is inaccessible provided that the person who has it does not express in his behaviour. But, in principle, they are potentially accessible to other persons. It is a misguided notion to ascribe pain as completely private sensation. Wittgenstein's works in the area of philosophy of psychology spans a great range of categories and predicates of mind and experience. His philosophy is based on the idea that there cannot be any subjective justification of our experiences as well as it is baseless to form a concept of ostensive definition of the private mental objects. He observes that the meaning of a concept depends on the examination of its rules of use in ordinary situation. We learn to express particular concepts in with some utterances that are publicly intelligible, and appropriate in specific contexts or occasions in which we communicate.¹⁴¹ The basic about communication is to share the concepts, ideas or beliefs in a manner that is compatible with the public stage-setting or devices. When we talk about mental phenomena, it does not appear that a person is observing the sense-data of another person, not because they are 'private' but because of the structure of the 'criteria'.

¹⁴¹ Jeff Coulter, *Mind in Action* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, in association with Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 82.

It is not that I can see what sort of pain another person having, I can only see that the person is having 'pain' by his reactions in groaning, crying, screaming, or moaning. It is not about observing another person's 'pain' or witnessing someone else's 'dream', it is about understanding or learning about the mental acts.¹⁴² This is how the conceptualisation takes place and one gains the understanding of the mental concepts.

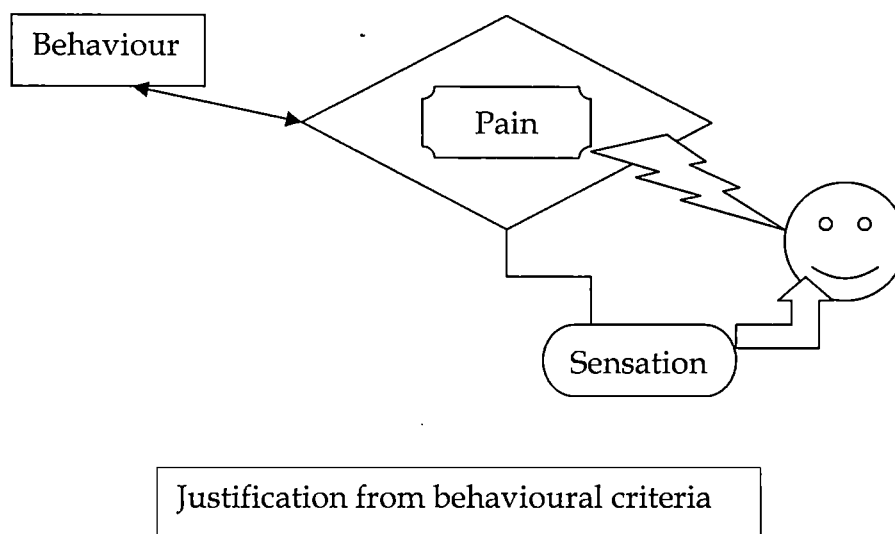
The 'criteria' takes part in understanding the operation of the mind. The mental reality of a person is something which cannot be ignored, but the task of philosophy is to know the mind of others. This can be done if we employ some criteria to reveal the reality and at the same time to check the meaning. For Wittgenstein, the 'inner' stands in need of outward 'criteria'.¹⁴³ But how does it happen? It might make sense to say that what Wittgenstein affirms is to make use of the predictable substantiation that verifies the occurrences of mental phenomena. The behavioural evidences could provide the guidance that is required to accomplish the task of knowing about others. The other is always potentially knowable, on the basis of the judgements which are made under certain circumstantial evidences. If we take the instances of groaning, moaning, or writhing in pain, they cannot be regarded as

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁴³ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §580.

criteria, rather they are weak, inductive evidences. Wittgenstein anticipated the possible objection of behaviourism coming his way. He does not state that pains or mental images are 'grammatical fictions', rather it is the way that we conceptualise them as 'grammatical fictions'.¹⁴⁴ The underlining point of his assumption is that we cannot deny about our mental events, our 'inner experiences', what he denies is the probability of privately enigmatic phenomena. There is no pain-behaviour without pain. But once the pain is expressed the privacy of its being under a mental operation disappears. Pain as a sensation does not belong to the language game, but after its manifestation through behaviour it becomes publicly observable. Pain as a publicly observable phenomenon functions in a language-game and the pain-behaviour is visible to everyone. The privacy of pain in a person is difficult to exist after his expression is observed by others. Therefore, the sensation of pain is potent on the behaviour of the person and hence becomes publicly observable. Here's a look at the following figure about the relation between sensation and the behaviour:

¹⁴⁴ Jeff Coulter, *Mind in Action*, p. 84.

Illustration 4.2:

The above figure could show Wittgenstein as claiming to be a behaviourist. He himself anticipated about the possible objection. What he is looking for is not the exactly same experience, but same sort of experience;¹⁴⁵ even though one will agree that there is a difference in the degree of experience. For example, one might be listening to a music which is soft, another person will also accept the same thing. But the aesthetic responses will be different, even in the same person it will be seen differently in different times. The *private language argument* has a profound implication with regard to the problem of other minds. It brings out a broad spectrum of issues including the problem of other selves. Coming back to the criterial justification, Wittgenstein might be facing some difficulties. Because sensations have internal diversity and ramifications, their structure are altered in different times with different

¹⁴⁵ C.H. Whiteley, *Mind in Action: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 14.

behavioural display. The doubt about the happenings in a person's mental phenomena jeopardizes the whole notion of public world or community standard of meaning.¹⁴⁶ A doctor while treating a patient asks some definite questions with the expectation of a positive answer on the basis of which he has to diagnose the illness of the patient. But is it certain that the patient is able to answer his questions correctly every time? He is surely trying to inform the doctor as best as possible, but his precision of the illness is itself a doubt. Although the modern technology is capable of eliciting a wide range of medical diseases, still the doctor has to have an intuition.

The above viewpoint is one way of looking at the problem of other minds. Cavell talks about the realisation of other selves or internalisation of other's pain. He says that I cannot feel another person's pain, rather I can acknowledge what the other is feeling. He has sketched an idea about the possibility of a kind of scepticism which is quite unusual in relation to the problem of other minds. Cavell argues that if we compare the human body with a machine, even if it is not a machine in the way a *machine* is a machine, I can ascribe 'body' to that machine. What would it be like if that machine behaves like a perfect human body? Cavell exemplifies:

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

And within the vision of the human body as a machine, a machine can feel. (“... It can be conscious or unconscious; it sees, is blind; ...” A machine has nothing special to do with pain. Build me one that can scan, peer, stare, glance....) But to take the human body as machine is as much, or little, a vision of humanity as the vision that takes the body to be inhabited by something *else*.¹⁴⁷

There is a sense in which Professor Stanley Cavell captures the notion of privacy. He questions about Wittgenstein’s remark regarding the obscurity of seeing the soul whilst looking at someone’s attitude. Wittgenstein thinks that the human body is the best picture of the human soul, but Cavell does not deny that there is a human soul that sees, feels, touches. He finds it as the difference between a human soul and a stone or machine. He opines that a machine or a stone cannot express in the way a human being expresses, as a stone or a machine has nothing to express. And there are sensations which are secret, yet to be expressed. Wittgenstein also does not deny that when I am in pain, it is I who give it an expression or fail to give an expression. Then it follows that if I do not give it an expression then no one will be able to know that I am in pain.¹⁴⁸ Cavell takes on the idea of Wittgenstein that if there is no point in saying that I know that I am in pain, then there would be no unutterable privacy. There will remain no bridge in terms of my sensation and its corresponding utterances. But as far as Wittgenstein’s process is

¹⁴⁷ Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 414.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

concerned, one can find the criterion that could satisfy Cavell, which is the question of what it is to be in pain. Cavell has hypothesised an *Outsider* who can, as Cavell has imagined, going beyond our ideas to grasp the relation between me and the external world, to see the difference between human beings and non-human beings or human non-beings.¹⁴⁹ The Outsider is expected to internalise the pain that another person is having, but Cavell expects him how the Outsider sorts him, what he thinks of him as an individual. Cavell presupposes that an Outsider will be able to make comparison between him and other minds if the Outsider is invoked. His take on pain is that I can very well know that I am in pain when I am really feeling pain, but I cannot know about another's pain. Cavell has put a restriction on the Outsider which compels the Outsider to know something about the pain of another person but not about something about mine. Cavell gives the reason, "He is not really an Outsider to me. If he exists, he is in me."¹⁵⁰

We take into account Stanley Cavell's problematisation of the knowledge about other minds. His seems to be a very critical reflection on the problem, but to recognise the fact that what it is to be in pain shows a glimpse of solution, although not in a very convincing tone but still it can

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 417.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 418.

be used as a guideline. The recognition of pain in another person or to acknowledge that there is someone who is having pain makes me delve into the matter by identifying what sort of feelings he might go through. I do not need to totally internalise the pain of the other, I just have to dig into the knowledge of the character of the sensation, to know what it is like to be in pain. The suspicion about other mind starts from the assumption that only I can feel our pain, nobody else. Wittgenstein suggests that there is no point in asserting that "I know that I am in pain"; rather it is right to say that "I know that you are in pain". He attracts us to the notion of language-game where every one of us looks to see the reactions from each other when we are in pain. He not only intends to draw our attention to the reactions to e.g. pain; he means to the way we react to each other when we are in pain.¹⁵¹ We obviously react to others at the times of being in pain as it is naturally stimulating to us. The criterion of identity which we are searching for lies in our recognising of other persons while they are in a particular state of mental affairs, say, pain. Wittgenstein wants to advocate that in the original and primitive form of the language-game is 'reaction'. In the beginning, he says, it was the deed, language only adds refinement. The way a child learns a language is from the behaviour of the adults, their indications of different objects make a child interested to learn the name of the objects.

¹⁵¹ Anita Avramides, *Other Minds* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 196.

Child's learning of language is an example of reaction to the activities of the others. We move from simple or primitive use of language-games to a more complex and sophisticated form of language-game by a process of accretions.¹⁵² Wittgenstein's notion of 'language-game' and his preamble of 'forms of life' is intimately related, one cannot be understood without the other. Wittgenstein considers that to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life. We use signs in our community to convey meaning. But sign, according to Wittgenstein, is itself dead. It only gets alive when it is in use.¹⁵³ He is proposing a method in which our mental terms are expressed through language and the language becomes meaningful in terms of its use. The sensation becomes no more private when it is manifest by language; to know the meaning of a sensation is to know the use of it.

We are living human beings, and only of a living human being, Wittgenstein articulated, can one think that it has sensations, it sees, or blind, hears or deaf, conscious or unconscious.¹⁵⁴ This is a very crucial methodological remark that could show the way to solve the problem of other minds. We live in a world that is full of intersubjectivity and dependent on one another's linguistic communication. Here we cannot

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 194.

¹⁵³ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §432.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §281.

take others as mere 'automatons', machines devoid of any conscious experience or thought. That would simply be a bizarre idea as all our psychological and non-psychological data are derived from a single linguistic fountainhead. What we observe in a person is his behaviour and that behaviour forms the criterion of identity. "I am in pain" is a present tense first-person psychological statement in which one has privileged access, but such assertions do not differentiate a person from others, as I cannot be discriminated from others without ascribing the mental states to other selves. The moment I ascribe my 'inner' states to others it remains no more as a personal property.

Can language bridge the gap?

The problem of other minds is a precarious concern in the philosophy of mind. The scepticism associated with it makes it more complicated and there is always a temptation to treat the subject from an egoistic viewpoint. However, one can hardly get a solution if he gives preference to the ego to solve the problem of other minds. One of the most prudent ways to approach the matter is to study the human reactions when someone feels pain in his body. If a child hurts himself and then cries, adults teach him sensation-words, by telling what sort of pain the child is having and the locution of the pain. Wittgenstein mocked at the idea that

the content of experience is incommunicable; he expressed his disapproval of this factor in his *Philosophical Investigations* and *Zettel*. This was in the process of the standpoint of his second attempt to extend his treatment of the ego to sensations and their types.¹⁵⁵ He extends the treatment to the extent of people's reactions to the sufferer's predicament and included them to the primitive pattern of language. The following are his remarks:

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.

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.¹⁵⁶

The problem of other minds is traditionally rooted in some assumptions. These are – I have certain sensations of which only I am aware, because I have them and I am aware of their quality. I claim those sensations to be *mine* because they qualify *my* condition. However, there are many bodies similar to 'mine', I call them 'other persons'. I often wonder: do these people have sensations?¹⁵⁷ Do they have minds like mine? Many times we behave according to certain rules and causal connections. As a result,

¹⁵⁵ David Pears, *The False Prison*, Vol. II, p. 303.

¹⁵⁶ Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, (2nd ed.), G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), §§540-41.

¹⁵⁷ Bruce Aune, "The Problem of Other Minds", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July, 1961), p. 322.

we promote ourselves as minded beings in comparison to other animals. Animals other than humans also react to the stimulations in certain ways, but they do not have the power of reflection into their own activities. Human beings have the capacity to reflect upon their actions, thereby they could possibly react in a more fruitful and rational manner than other animals. But when it comes to recognizing other people's pains, agonies, fears etc., we face two kinds of enticement. First, the temptation to regard only my sensations, to know that only I see, I feel, I have pains etc. Second, the pity of feeling ashamed not to acknowledge the pain of others, to admit that my experience is not the only real one. This question has been asked by Wittgenstein in his *Blue Book* in the following way:

But wasn't this a queer question to ask? *Can't* I believe that someone else has pains? Is it not quite easy to believe this? – Is it an answer to say that things are as they appear to common sense? – Again, needless to say, we don't feel these difficulties in ordinary life. Nor is it true to say that we feel them when we scrutinize our experiences by introspection, or make scientific investigations about them. But somehow, when we look at them in a certain way, our expression is liable to get into a tangle. It seems to us as though we had either the wrong pieces, or not enough of them, to put together our jig-saw puzzle. But they are all there, only all mixed up; and there is a further analogy between the jig-saw puzzle and our case: It's no use trying to apply force in fitting pieces together. All we should do is to look at them *carefully* and arrange them.¹⁵⁸

The problem in knowing other minds could have a ramification in the link-up between the *philosophy of language* and the *philosophy of mind*. It is

¹⁵⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations"* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 46.

prerogative of the philosophy of language to decide in which way the rule is formulated in the language-game and approach for a criterion based meaning. We find this approach especially in Wittgenstein. If we monitor the argument given by Wittgenstein in the last paragraph, we could easily see that his approach with the problem of other minds is to demystify the issue at large. In other words, it is a participatory activity to learn about someone else's pain. I cannot imagine someone's pain on the model of my own, since this is not an easy job. I simply have to make a transition in imagination from one place of pain to another.¹⁵⁹ But if 'pain' is given a meaning entirely by an ostensive definition, then I would be the only participant witnessing the domain of 'objects' where it does not make any sense to talk of any other's pain. Hence, there would be no such distinction between "my pain" and "pain *simpliciter*" as both the expressions would have precisely the same meaning.¹⁶⁰ This situation invites a lot of the incommunicability factor between two persons as one is hardly aware of another person's pain, given that both are unable to communicate with each other about their experiences. Experiences become private in the sense that the mental events in the persons gain space. It therefore, urges for the meeting point between the persons who have the experiences to share between them.

¹⁵⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §302.

¹⁶⁰ Bruce Aune, "The Problem of Other Minds", p. 325.

The gulf between the experiences among different persons will broaden because of the unavailable resources of sharing the experiences. There must be an instrument which would provide the resources to share the experiences, and this instrument is no better than language. One can guess what the other person is thinking simply by asking a question, even though that person gives a wrong answer it is possible through a dialogue that his mental events could be located. Nonetheless it is not possible for a person to enter into the mind of another person, but that is not the case here. The language by which we communicate has the intersubjectivity which transfers my beliefs to another person. But when we claim that we are using a language that talks about my own immediate private experiences, it becomes obsolete for us to make any standardisation of the use of language. Wittgenstein wants us to pull out of the muddle as there is a collapse of reasons in believing in the mental pictures as our ultimate criteria and that they are sensations. We cannot posit private sensations as our criteria for the function of descriptive predicates to publicly recognisable phenomena because private sensations cannot serve as reasons at all, they fail to make any justification.¹⁶¹ Therefore, a private language cannot be taken as a successful venture to capture the mental events of others. Language, as a

¹⁶¹ Carl Wellman, "Wittgenstein's Conception of a Criterion", in Harold Morick, (ed.), *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Other Minds*, (USA: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 166.

publicly governed activity and driven by shared beliefs, can be the best possible instrumentation in reading the mind of others. Thus, the meeting point between *philosophy of language* and *philosophy of mind* help in creating a strong platform to solve the problem of other minds.

Many would say that the problem of other minds is a bogus one in the contemporary philosophical parlance. But we would not take the matter as lightly as this. Rather our aim is to come across the problem in the light of Wittgenstein's *private language argument*. Wittgenstein's search for a grammar of our sensations had to face the challenge from the other minds problem. Even if we do believe in the other minds, as it is quite normal, question arises about our comprehension of the knowledge of the other minds. Can we fully plumb the depth of the mental level of a person? If we cannot, is it a matter of failure in communication? The concept of 'criteria' plays an important role in this regard. The behavioural criterion like pain-behaviour replaces pain, but still the problem persists. Peter Strawson fittingly remarks:

"To see each other as persons" is a lot of things; but not a lot of separate and unconnected things.¹⁶²

¹⁶² P. F. Strawson, "Persons", in Harold Morick, (ed.), *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Other Minds* (USA: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 150.

CHAPTER 5:

Language, Thought and their Dimensions in the Light of the PLA

The human language is the most potent one for communication among all the species. Humans are conceived to be the most capable animal to express their thoughts, emotions, beliefs through language as they are the most articulate in the world. We regard language as the most powerful vehicle for communication, through language we physicalise our ideas about the external world as well as about our own mental phenomena. When human beings claim themselves as the most gifted in terms of their intellect, it is because they have the capacity of articulation through language. Language is such a dynamic device that we can perform our action at our disposal. Our ritualistic hymns, musical notations, poetry, all have the essence in language. Language, in fact, paves the way for us to interact with the world. Animals also have language, but only difference is that they cannot articulate it like us. One reason that can be given for that is the thought which drives a person to manifest itself in language. Non-human animals can also express their desire by their sign-language, but they do not rationalise the relation between language and thought. Human beings have the intellectual capacity to formulate their own ideas and beliefs and express them in language. This fact raises a question: Are language and thought

identical? The philosopher is in the search of the question: What is the relation between language and thought? Does language express thought every time it is uttered? Or there is a thought that cannot be expressed by language? Is there independent thought apart from language? These questions are pertinent regarding the issue discussed above and philosophers have expressed their divergent of opinions as well. However, philosophy of language has deeply dealt with these questions. The meaning of language is derived only when it properly expresses the thought, only the utterance of a sound does not convey meaning unless it is adequately arranged and appropriately articulated. The examination of the relationship between language and thought in the light of Wittgenstein's private language problem could give us a better idea.

Understanding the transition from Tractatus and the intention of PI:

The linguistic representation of reality is dependent upon certain conditions. Wittgenstein sketches the meaningfulness of language in terms of its use in community or form of life. His deviation in methodology of meaning in language is marked by the use theory of meaning in his later part of philosophy. Earlier he was concerned with the logical analysis of language to conceptualise the structure of the world. In his *Tractatus* he said that the world is all that is the case. He

proposed a pictorial representation of reality. His picture theory of meaning may be taken as the groundwork of his later development of philosophy, because it gave the foundation of his thought about the meaningfulness of language. The challenge he faced in the *Tractatus* was to defeat scepticism. His objection against scepticism is found in the following passage in the *Tractatus*:

Scepticism is *not* irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked.

For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said*.¹⁶³

He also affirmed that there is no reason to say what cannot be said. We have to accept that there is silence, there is something beyond the reach of our language and that is also a reality. His last proposition in the *Tractatus* is:

What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.¹⁶⁴

Wittgenstein's leap in the direction of a more humanistic approach towards meaning in the *Philosophical Investigations* cannot be understood unless it is observed in the backdrop of his *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein himself said in the *preface* of his *Philosophical Investigations*: "It suddenly seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the latter could be seen in the right light only by contrast

¹⁶³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, with a new Translation by D. F. Pears & Brian McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), §6.51.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, §7.

with and against the background of my old way of thinking.”¹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is not always logical to presuppose that the later part of Wittgenstein is completely divergent from his early philosophy. Although here our objective is not to discuss the fashion of philosophy in Wittgenstein by comparing his early and later periods, we should keep in mind that the goal Wittgenstein would probably like to achieve is to divulge the relationship between language and thought.

We need to keep an eye on the intricacies surrounding the language and its expressions. For example, while we begin to picturise the relation between the language and its expressions, we come to face some typical obstacles. One of the difficulties arises at the time of our apprehension of thinking that I know from my own case what is meant by ‘pain’.¹⁶⁶ The problem arises from our presupposition that in the case of our own sensations, the language becomes private. But if it is the case that only I know from my own sensations the meaning of ‘pain’, then it turns out to be impossible for someone to understand my pain. At the same vein, when others have pain I cannot understand their pain as they are referring to their own archetypal examples to refer to their pain that is

¹⁶⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), Preface, viii.

¹⁶⁶ Leonard Linsky, “Wittgenstein on language and some problems of philosophy”, *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. LIV, No. 10 (May 1957), p. 286. Reprinted in John V. Canfield (ed.), *The Private Language Argument* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986).

inaccessible to me. Wittgenstein in his struggle against the possibility of private language invokes the notion of language-game in order to understand the role of language. His notion of language-game depicts the use of language as a tool for communication that consists of language and the actions into which it is woven. This way of regarding language as a tool for communication is in contrast with the view he proposed in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, where language is seen as a picture or mirror of reality.¹⁶⁷ The philosophical confusions, according to Wittgenstein, arise due to the misuse or misinterpretation of language. Wittgenstein reminds us to follow the language-game of our ordinary language, to participate in the activities in the form of life. He remarks, "To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life".¹⁶⁸ Once we know the use of language and its meaning, the confusions which garb the meaning can be met positively. The meaning of an expression is the use in the language-game that consists in the form of life. Wittgenstein thus defines meaning in the following passage:

For a *large* class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 289.

¹⁶⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §19.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., §43.

Meaning in terms of its use has been the theme of Wittgenstein's inquiry of philosophy in *Philosophical Investigations*. If one wants to use his language in a mode that is transparent to other hearers and speakers then one must look for the correct use, i.e. he has to learn or master the technique of using language. The tone of Wittgenstein's approach has been set in *PI* §43, but then it was his struggle to put forward the applicability concern of the ordinary language in his early 1930s is crucial. That is why the reading and re-reading of *PI* is very important as it throws light to various aspects of philosophical inquiry in the backdrop of ordinary language worldview. Different interpretations have given rise to different approaches to the evaluation of the book, but the worth of this text lies in the invoking of the variation in the perspective of a reader when he reads the text more than once. Here a very praiseworthy suggestion has been given by David Stern about how to study *PI*:

The *Philosophical Investigations* is a book that was written with an eye to being read out loud, and that calls for the reader to try out different ideas about what is going on in the text, ideally by discussing it with a group of other readers. Frequently, people first become acquainted with the book by reading it with others in a class, seminar, or reading group, in which everyone can learn from the different perspectives that other readers bring to the text.¹⁷⁰

The broad spectrum that the *PI* offers to a reader makes him more enthusiastic about the problems raised by the book. In the context of our

¹⁷⁰ David G. Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 38.

discussion *PI* becomes a kind of epitome in the sense of its dialogical characteristic and its temptation to invite more questions and solutions to those questions. After all, Wittgenstein dismisses any philosophical thesis or doctrine and sets himself the target to solve philosophical problems.

The problem with our use of language occurs due to our misunderstanding of the purpose of using the language in a particular context. When a person utters something, so many things describe his mental state, he tries to give it a fitting expression. But in many occasions he can be misunderstood because of the bewildering potency of language either on the part of the speaker or on the part of the hearer. The communicability factor is of fundamental importance in language use. It is the 'thought' that is communicated by language, though it cannot be expressed, unless language expresses it. Therefore, language is always governed under a public system, and the moment 'thought' is manifested by language, it no longer remains private. Thought has the potential to be expressed, but it requires language as a medium. Thought gets its shape in language, it is physicalised by the use of language.

When we have a sensation, we express it by a name which is commonly used. For example, if I say "I am in pain" then I must be producing a

language that is compatible with the grammar. The expression of our sensation is in accordance with the convention of grammatical import. The stage-setting of a language is done by the grammar. But the grammar is not a private enterprise, it has a public meaning. The sign 'S' is not private in the sense of its use in a diary. 'S' is not isolated from the public discourse, it has meaning only in so far as it is surrounded in a public discourse of sensations that is non-private in nature.¹⁷¹ Sensation is something common to our language, our form of life, not something that is intelligible to me alone. If it were the case that sensation is private, then some sensation terms like 'content' and others would have been impossible for us to use; because in that case those words would get a unique status of the individual. But in those usages one has no criterion of correctness. The terminology of 'criterion' in Wittgensteinian point of view is used in 'everyday' sense and used by 'the human group as such'.¹⁷² If someone says that he understands what is it to be intelligent, then his statement is supported by the criterion of correctness. If the criteria are associated with the conventions or rules, then the criteria also are subject to criticism and justification. We have a choice to use language, but that choice is restricted by criteria. Criteria are used in conventional platforms, and there is a great array of conceptual

¹⁷¹ Oswald Hanfling, *Wittgenstein and the Human Form of Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 36. The diary example in *PI* §258 speaks about the failure of 'S' as a private sign in distinguishing between what is "right" and what "seems to be right".

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

differences in different societies, but even then we cannot say that our design of concepts is optional for us and we could change it at our will.¹⁷³

The application of language necessarily brings in the application of rules. Language is a human activity that is governed by certain conventions or rules which are public. Language expresses our thought, but that expression needs some inspection, and the rules do the job of the inspection. Human beings speak language as a part of their activity or a form of life. Wittgenstein compares language with 'games' and introduces 'actions' as the linkage between language-games and forms of life.¹⁷⁴ Games have rules that are overlapping and criss-crossing. Some games have some rules in common, others are not. Similarly, in the linguistic communications in different communities or forms of life, there are different rules. Among them, some are common within some communities, some are not. But the main objective is the application. A rule, according to Wittgenstein, stands like a sign-post. Our language has to be driven in accord with the rule to be meaningful. But question may arise: Can there be a private rule? If I entertain myself with a game that is played by me alone, and I have set certain rules for the game, then no one will be able to understand. But Wittgenstein would say, even if the rules

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ Derek L. Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge: A Sociological Perspective* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), p. 32.

are apparently private, but 'in principle' they can be learned by some others. Thinking that one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule, it is a practice.¹⁷⁵ The set up of the rules which govern language must be public, otherwise they cannot be termed as rules.

Wittgenstein's treatment of language questions the legitimacy of describing the inner experiences as private mental events. He denies that we know our mental state of affairs by the method of introspection. Our thoughts are always in the position to be expressed, it is the language that caters the need for thought to materialise into expression. There is nothing significant of private inner experiences, as the community of speakers, as Skinner agrees, has better grip over the speech about public events than those of the private events. Russell Hurlburt and Christopher Heavey have characterized Skinner's identification of limitations about the private events. Here's what they have pointed out:

However, Skinner did identify three main limitations on the scientific use of private events: (1) that verbal behaviour about private events may be impoverished because it is difficult for the verbal community to shape a person's speech about inner experience; (2) that it is impossible for a person to have access to his or her thinking in its entirety; and (3) that it is a mistake to give causal significance to mentalistic events.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §202.

¹⁷⁶ Russell T. Hurlburt & Christopher L. Heavey, *Exploring Inner Experiences: The descriptive experience sampling method* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), p. 35.

There is a little difference between the above approach of Skinner and what it takes to be Wittgenstein's. Wittgenstein's approach or method is more humanistic as he does not deny that there are experiences which are private, he does not deny the existence of sensations either. What he rather proposes is an influx of grammar in identifying the sensations. His point is that it is the grammar of the sensations that needs to be recognised. The inner experiences of a person can be revealed by grammar, the 'pain' would not remain under the veil and it would be expressed in a 'pain-behaviour'. The meaning of 'red' cannot be known until it becomes public, its function awaits the approval of grammar. There is no private meaning according to Wittgenstein. Thought is cultured in a way that it no longer remains private. Our thinking of the mental objects does not add anything for its recognition; the grammar of a language is what makes a sensation understood. My understanding of a concept, e.g. 'red', is not limited only to myself, it means something that is known to everyone. Otherwise, the communication between persons would be affected, there would be no interpersonal or transpersonal communication. Thought is there to be connected with the world by means of communication through language. This is what Wittgenstein says about the learning of a concept like 'red':

What am I to say about the word "red"? – that it means something 'confronting us all' and that everyone should really have another word, besides this one, to

mean his *own* sensation of red? Or is it like this: the word "red" means something known to everyone; and in addition, for each person, it means something known only to him? (Or perhaps rather: it *refers* to something known only to him.)¹⁷⁷

He further draws attention to the fact that when I see something like a blue sky, I do not point into myself, rather I exclaim that feeling to someone else without hesitation.¹⁷⁸ That activity itself points to the piece of evidence that when I see the blue sky, I do not name the sensation which is the property of being a private language. It indicates that the communication of thought cannot be in a private realm because the moment a thought occurs in mind, language pushes it for expression. Thoughts and sensations alone cannot make the understanding of the concept unless language develops them into a form. Thought is physicalised into a linguistic structure, the intention of the thought is driven by language, and the sensation turns into behaviour through the language. But how much this claim works we will examine in the following sections.

The art and the musicality of language:

Language has many layers that transport human cognition into various modes of thought. Because there are so many methods of language

¹⁷⁷ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §273.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, §275.

learning, it makes a huge coverage for language in terms of its capacity to promote cognition. Meaning is not only confined to the walls of verbal communication, it has several other aspects. Language produces awareness of aesthetic concepts, visual imagery, music and cinema. In every sector of life meaning has made its way, thought is shared into multifaceted forms, human development urges for more communicational efforts. Consciousness and language have an intimate relation in so far as one gets conscious about his use of language. The idealist cannot cope with the Wittgensteinian view that thought and language go hand in hand, because there is range of contextual complexities when the outward expression traces back to its inner source as there is no isolable imaginary object.¹⁷⁹ This model of language could be applied to art too since the evaluation of art cannot be done unless there is a common platform between language and thought. The appreciation of art or music depends on our realisation with the feelings of our mental phenomena.

The virginity of an art lies in the depiction of human feelings, desires, flux of emotions; these direct our attention to the art with the feeling of "how it is like" experience. The work of art must have a subjective

¹⁷⁹ G.L. Hagberg, *Art as Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning and Aesthetic Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 40.

perspective, the essence of specificity or particularity, yet a writer or painter may manifest their work in terms of communicating “what we judge or recognize as *essential* to these and to indefinitely many analogous instances in reality”.¹⁸⁰ Art invites us to an amalgam of value-judgement and set of beliefs that help us to evaluate. A painting, for say, offers a broad array of experiences or events, it may signify love, betrayal, hatred or it may exhibit a crisis of a specific city or its people. Therefore, we have the opportunity to grasp the meaning of an art through our worldview. At the same time, one has to accept that the artist might have some personal association with his work which may not come into the purview of our evaluation of the art. The exploration of his vision is expected to come out in his artistic venture and there should be a parallel view or ‘sahṛdayatā’ (Indian sense) among the audience to make the art successful. But is it all about communication of an art through language? Susanne Langer claims that art picks up where language signs off; art has some unsayable parts of human life. An artist is just like a poet because of the creativity he possesses. This point has also been echoed by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger frequently offers poetry as our path to the unsayable, while Wittgenstein simply prefers silence or showing, although both are very cautious about the essentially

¹⁸⁰ Ronald W. Hepburn, *The Reach of the Aesthetic: Collected essays on art and nature* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2001), p. 18.

unsayable.¹⁸¹ Langer says, “Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.”¹⁸² There is a language of feeling, and art could possibly fulfil that part. Langer draws our attention to the mirroring or picturing objects, much like the picture theory of meaning of the *Tractatus*. It is by virtue of the mirroring or picturing of facts that language acquires meaning, as far as the *Tractarian* interpretation is concerned. Langer gives it special importance in the sense of the logical necessity. Her interpretation of art is inspired by the *Tractatus* outlook of logico-pictorial form. In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein talks about the pictorial representation of reality. Langer goes even beyond that to claim that where language cannot speak, art takes off. She offers a similarity between the meaning that art confers and that of the world of inner feeling.¹⁸³ The emotional quotient of art has something beyond the reach of language. In Langer’s interpretation, whereof we cannot speak, there we must endeavour ourselves in composing, painting, writing, making sculpture, so on and so forth. An artist perhaps is not a discoverer; rather he would be an inventor.

¹⁸¹ Nicholas F. Gier, *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology: A Comparative Study of the Later Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 217.

¹⁸² Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 49.

¹⁸³ G.L. Hagberg, *Art as Language*, P. 12.

The above view can be encouraging for supporting some sort of private language. But that is not enough, because interpretation or evaluation of an art is not something totally dissociated from the making of an art. We may object to Langer's view by pointing out that the art is not socially excluded, whatever it offers has a social reflection. Although the artist has an emotional share while making the art, he always has the expectation from the audience for the evaluation of his art. In this sense, he cannot make something which is beyond the appraisal of the audience, otherwise he would not be a successful artist.

The artist has an imagination which motivates him to pull out the talent in him to execute it into work. He has a thought process going on that marks the creative aspect in his work. His creativity is evident by his performance at the public gathering. An artist has intention to perform a certain task. Thought plays a role in formulating that task in his mind, but whether the mental image of a person has any role to play is a matter of debate. Wittgenstein's philosophy of language gives a bit of hint in this regard. In his line of thinking an artist's intention is embedded in human customs and social institutions, the intention is not concerned with the mental image of the work. It could bring in confusion to think that the mental imagery brings out the motivation or intention of an artist. Thought can be said to be an indissoluble part of the work;

imagination and thought make an artist creative, although the creative aspect might not be dependent upon the image that is inside the mind of an artist.¹⁸⁴ Meaning is not a constitution of correlations between mental images and the world, according to Wittgenstein. The understanding of music could be used here as a model for understanding language. In the *Brown Book* Wittgenstein clarifies the linguistic practice that constitutes meaning. Here we can see how he compares the understanding of a sentence to the understanding of music:

What we call "understanding a sentence" has, in many cases, a much greater similarity to understanding a musical theme than we might be inclined to think. But I don't mean that understanding a musical theme is more like the picture which one tends to make oneself of understanding a sentence; but rather that this picture is wrong, and that understanding a sentence is much more like what really happens when we understand a tune than at first sight appears. For understanding a sentence, we say, points to a reality outside the sentence. Whereas one might say "Understanding a sentence means getting hold of its content; and the content of the sentence is *in* the sentence."¹⁸⁵

Understanding music requires an understanding of rules that are associated with the music. Music is also a kind of practice, it is something to be learned under the system of rules governing it. The musical tones represent a particular practice, tones are the symbol of the way music is directed to. The dimensions of music represent a vast arena of a culture, it depicts the reality of a community too. Therefore, music can be a form

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁸⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations"* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 167.

of life, it really is. One might argue that listening to music could be a soothing experience to someone who is under distress. A person can make different reactions to different genres of music, but in every genre he could find some rules being followed. But then, it is hard to believe that understanding music is a mental event that is totally under control of a person's mind.¹⁸⁶ The composer makes a music that could reach the understanding level of a listener as much as possible. Not only this is a practice for understanding, it is the composer's or the singer's skill that makes a musical piece enjoyable for the audience. The rules that one follows in composing music, comes with the perspective of the composer. He makes a lot of adjustment to reach the level of perfection. His success or failure lies at the level of communication he is able to make through his music. We have our musicality in our language too. We talk in different tunes in different occasions; we express ourselves in various modulations; our gestures are often musical. Wittgenstein makes this point in *Zettel*: "There is a strongly musical element in verbal language. (A sigh, the intonation of voice in a question, in an announcement, in longing; all the innumerable *gestures* made with the voice.)"¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 106.

¹⁸⁷ Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (2nd ed.), G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), §161.

The music can also be called a language-game. A performer understands the role assigned to him in terms of his performance. A violinist understands about the music of violin differently than the pianist knows it and vice-versa. The more one practices, the more he reaches the level of perfection. Practice is a part of language game and is followed by rules. Wittgenstein says, "Understanding a musical phrase may also be called understanding a *language*."¹⁸⁸ Music is also a process of learning, and learning can only be done in a language-game. When a teacher explains a musical piece to a student, he has to read the reaction of the student to know whether he is learning in a proper way or not. In this way the learning process can be comprehended by a musical practice. One is in the endeavour for a better understanding of the music he is performing, he yearns for the comprehensive knowledge of the musical notes.¹⁸⁹ The meaning of a musical piece is a transportation of our thought to an artistic creation, whether in playing an instrumental, writing a lyric of a song, composing a musical note, or singing a song. It is language which makes music meaningful by the expression of an imagination of the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., §172.

¹⁸⁹ I have been benefited by the article "Wittgenstein and Haydn on Understanding Music" by Yael Kaduri (available online @ <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=397>). Although I have not discussed Haydn's point of view, my purpose was to show that musical understanding is not isolated from linguistic understanding, and in both cases language-game and rule-following play a crucial role. One might object that there is a part of emotion that contributes to the understanding of music, but I take a rather Wittgensteinian approach in this regard. It is the musical language game that makes music and emotion to meet together, and it is also evident from the reception or criticism of a musical piece.

artist. The artist is in the pursuit of his creative achievement and realises his creative soul accomplishing that task. About the understanding of music, Wittgenstein expounds in *Culture and Value*:

Someone who understands music will listen differently (e.g. with a different expression on his face), he will talk differently, from someone who does not. But he will show that he understands a particular theme not just in manifestations that accompany his hearing or playing that theme but in his understanding for music in general.¹⁹⁰

We have so far outlined a sketch of the involvement of art and music in our linguistic understanding. Art and music both enrich our understanding of the language we are familiar with or not. Even they cross the entire linguistic hurdle in touching a man's heart. The artistic aspect of a language extends the horizon of the understanding; the musicality of language is evident even from our daily life. Thought is what lies at the root of all these creativities, it is probably human's urge of expression of thought that brings about the creativity in man. The artistic and musical dimensions of language have to be realised in the backdrop of the dimensions of thought. Though we are not claiming that the understanding of language presupposes the understanding of thought in a private activity, one can always examine whether language is determined by the thought, or thought is independent of language.

¹⁹⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, Georg Henrik von Wright [ed.], (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 80.

Nevertheless, it is not ironic that thought and language are inseparable when it comes to the expression of the thought. Wittgenstein's rejection of a purely phenomenological language is based on the presupposition of language as a rule-governed activity. But rules are not something dissociated from language game, it is always a sign-post to the person who speaks the language.

If there is a private thought, one might consider of a possibility of that thought not being expressed by language. The imagination of an artist may be that sort of instance, for the artist may not be able to fully express his inner feelings by his creation as his tormented life could become an obstacle. Yet, it is quite possible to assume that the artist tries hard to express, may be his tormented life has come into the being in his painting, may be it becomes a painting of solitude. Even the painting of solitude is expected to produce many interpretations, and those interpretations make the work more fulfilling. The privacy or individuality of an artist is not a property of the artist himself, it carries the potential of being conveyed to the audience. Although it is sometimes very difficult to pick up the artist's intention, it is assumed that the artist is inescapable to the eyes of the audience; he is always under the scanner. The artist has only to judge how much he can deliver his thoughts into

his art. But the deliberation does not necessarily conflict with his projection of the art which he might have done in a private frame of mind.

We are now at a point to specify our objective regarding the layers of the language in the backdrop of the private language problem. The following statements can be taken care of to describe the artistic imagination and expression in a nutshell:

- ❖ An artist is the possessor of his imagination and his creative sense, he is the architect of his creative explorations.
- ❖ The audience is the evaluator of the relation between the creation as well as the intention of the artist that was instrumental in the making of his creation.
- ❖ The artist can claim that he had certain presuppositions in making the art that are not visible for the spectators.
- ❖ The spectators can also claim that the work of the artist is not isolated from the form of life, the 'emotional content' of the art is related with a particular aspect of life and the work is an activity that is governed by rules which the audience is in a position to verify.
- ❖ It is not a privileged access to the artist that only he can know about the intention of his work, as his intention is manifested in his work and opens to the public arena for evaluation; a

successful artist must do something that is parallel to the understanding of the audience.

We can conclude by saying that a painting of an artist or a musical note of a composer or a performance of a singer is in the web of imagination not only to the artist, composer or singer concerned, but also to the audience or the critique since it is not a private sensation or language that is understandable only to the creator, it is a partaking activity for both the creator or performer and the audience or spectator. We are not claiming that a private language is not possible at all, but it is not possible in this way. Our attempt in this regard would not be complete unless we examine the relation between language and thought and their independent status, if there is any.

The bedrock of language, thought and meaning in PLA:

Wittgenstein was quite aware of the possibility of arising misinterpretations out of his private language argument. His remarks in his *Nachlass* protected against these confusions by giving provision of the possibility that a solitary individual could follow a rule 'privately' or speak to himself.¹⁹¹ Robinson Crusoe can master the techniques of calculating, counting and measuring and apply those techniques while

¹⁹¹ G.P. Baker & P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 172.

living in an island isolated from others. Philosophers may raise questions about the applicability of Wittgenstein's theory. If Crusoe masters the technique of using apparatus of language then what is the relevance of language being a rule-governed activity? Because Wittgenstein himself mentioned in his *PI* that to follow a rule privately is not to follow a rule. But here Wittgenstein seems to indulge to establish Crusoe's ability to follow a rule privately, hence bringing about the possibility of private language too.¹⁹² This would not be a complete interpretation of Wittgenstein's idea of rule-following. Wittgenstein is never bothered to imagine a Robinson Crusoe inventing a language and applying for his own use. His contention is that the solitariness or isolation of an individual is irrelevant to the question of speaking a language; what matters is the possibility of communication of that language to another person. In Wittgenstein's view, it is certainly achievable.¹⁹³ It is certainly conceivable, in principle, for another person to grasp the meaning of the language that Crusoe speaks.

Wittgenstein is of the opinion that a solitary individual can (grammatically) follow a rule, but there should be no differentiation between the social conception of rule-following and the individual's

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

following a rule secretly. Our intention should be concentrated on the ability to distinguish between following a rule and seeming to following a rule. The bedrock of Wittgenstein's investigation lies in the conviction that there can be no meaning which is done in a private enterprise. The rules that are followed privately in the first instance is already positioned to be communicated, the meaning is verified in a public stage-setting where language is governed by rules. The unshared language can be followed being 'in accord with a rule' and turn into a practice, but there is no private rule. One must distinguish between following a rule privately and the possibility of a private rule. The confusion lies in the assumption of Crusoe's following a rule privately and his exercising a technique which cannot be learned by anyone else. But the objective of Wittgenstein's methodology is to prove that it is not something that cannot be used by anyone else than Crusoe. There is no scope of a private rule as far as the understanding of PLA is concerned, although a solitary individual could follow a rule privately. Baker and Hacker elucidate this point in the following remarks:

The private language argument introduces 'private' to signify what *cannot* in principle be explained to another person, what cannot be understood by any others (*PI* §243). In this sense of 'private', the phrase 'a private technique' is shown by the private language argument to be incoherent. For there is no such thing as a technique of following a 'private' rule (and hence too no such thing as a 'private' rule). But this

conclusion does not exclude the possibility of following a rule in private or in physical isolation from others, although, of course, a solitary rule-follower will lack any opportunity to explain the rules he is following to anyone else. Consideration of solitary individuals is irrelevant to the intended meaning of Wittgenstein's dictum that following a rule is a practice.¹⁹⁴

We need to give importance to the individual too in the study of language and thought. The individual has a structure of thinking which he aspires to express in language. Language gives him the option to manifest his thoughts. There has been an ancient concern about giving primacy to mind, mental images, activities etc. to ascribe meaning on language. This concern is in a large extent credited to Descartes and his method of self-validation of meaning. With the rise of analytic philosophy this theory has been severely hit. In Quine's view, man has the ability to compose new and unprecedented sentences from old materials.¹⁹⁵ But this is not enough for a man to distinguish himself, human being has a mentalistic semantics of verbal behaviour. This line of thinking has been quite popular among philosophers. Yet the mentalistic semantics tend to obstruct different lines of thought as it fails to suspect the indeterminacy of translation. Mentalistic semantics lack the power to understand an expression, and secondly, its failure to set up the relation

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁹⁵ W.V. Quine, "Mind and Verbal Dispositions", in *Mind and Language: Wolfson College Lectures 1974*, Samuel Guttenplan (ed.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 85.

between an expression and its paraphrase.¹⁹⁶ The behavioural disposition at a stage becomes physiological state, only its expression becomes behavioural manifestation. Quine establishes that mind is identified with behavioural disposition, of which *mostly* is verbal. He ends up with the identity theory of mind which states that mental states are states of the body.¹⁹⁷ This way of looking at mental states supports Wittgenstein's doctrine that behavioural criteria could accomplish in conveying a thought into a meaningful statement.

Thought accomplishes the task of formulating concepts, conceptualisation takes place at the time of using language. If we admit the structure formed by thought, then we have to admit that thought presupposes language. But then, even if thought presupposes language, it is difficult to accept that thought is a private entity. The private realm of a person is like a chamber from where nothing could emerge as manifestation. Thought by nature is not something like this, as it is a manifold version of human sensations and it varies in its manifestation. Consciousness is the content of the thought process, but not a private one. A person at the time of his recollection of memories attends to his consciousness that helps him in the process, but the incident which he is

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 89-90.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

memorising might not be a necessarily private one, rather it is a *lived* experience; an experience which he has shared with other persons, which has enabled him to retrospect the various upheavals and growing up of his life.¹⁹⁸ Thought is a chain of conscious experiences that forms the pattern of behaviour in a person, but the behaviour has a social dimension, therefore thought also has a social element. Thought is never dissociated from the social aspect of a person's life; even the language of thought has the potential to be expressed in a public language.

A person's thinking process grows culturally and the environment has a lot to play in developing the personality of an individual. His linguistic maturity improves with the amount of time he spends with the fellow people in a public setting. His realisation of his own self is only possible by a thorough interaction with other selves, i.e. other persons. A person is not in a position to realise his self, unless he goes to the pinnacle of his ability to realise his personal thoughts, and expresses them in language. This cannot be possible until he realises the activities of other selves; there is no mystery in it. Our point is that if we do not relate ourselves to other selves we would hardly be in a state to focus on our own personalised self, if there is anything like this. Wittgenstein would point

¹⁹⁸ Garry L. Hagberg, *Describing Ourselves: Wittgenstein, and Autobiographical Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), p. 38.

out that there is nothing like a human soul when I attend to someone, listen to her voice, speak to her and so on.

Wittgenstein rejects the possibilities of epistemic privacy, privacy of ownership and the private linguist's theory of meaning. His criticism of the private language has been explicated by Hacker in the following remarks of his *Insight and Illusion*:

Wittgenstein's criticism of the private language can be divided into two main parts. The first is the claim that nothing in the private linguist's theory provides room for the formation and possession of a concept. Hence the fact that the private language is unteachable and unintelligible to others is the least of evils. The really serious criticism is that it is unintelligible to its speaker. The second line of attack is the claim that the elements in the private linguist's theory are insufficient to provide the structure and articulations necessary for the formation of the sentences. Moreover the underlying conception of language and communication is radically misconceived.¹⁹⁹

The problem with a private linguist is that he attempts to describe his inner space by gesturing to his private mental object. But the description fails to do justice to the feeling, as the private object does not give any meaning to his words, rather it is the grammar that is the bedrock of the meaning of the sensations. There is no point in saying "I know that I am in pain", it does not convey any meaning apart from the triviality of the utterance; it does not bear any truth value, neither is philosophically

¹⁹⁹ P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion: Wittgenstein on Philosophy and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 232-34.

significant.²⁰⁰ The plunge of the *Investigations* and other later writings of Wittgenstein contribute to the social theory of meaning, but most importantly it lays the ground for a comprehensive evaluation of sensation terms and the relation between language and thought. He strikes at the very notion of the claimed authenticity of knowing my own sensations or beliefs, instead he claims that it is the other's content of thinking that one can know correctly. He states:

I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking.

It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking."

(A whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar.)²⁰¹

Sometimes the individual feels the lack of expressive ability, he cannot articulate the thoughts to their expressions. But it cannot be claimed that he has no way to find expression, it might be some frustrating situations for the individual where he himself thinks whatever he says seems inadequate expression of his feelings. To get rid of the clumsiness or over-expressiveness of language, we may have to go beyond the system of rules and look for a non-representational role of language. Paul Johnston remarks, "In relation to the Inner, what matters is not the correct application of linguistic rules, but the rule-free use of language; people communicate not because they share rules, but because what one

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 252.

²⁰¹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, IIxi, p. 222.

is inclined to say strikes a chord in another.”²⁰² If linguistic communication happens in this way, as it is not totally unusual in the ordinary language, we have to admit that private and public usage of language would not conflict, rather they would dwell with each other in a continuum. Language need not be private, but it has private application. The sharing of language is an act of involvement, here reactions are not owned, they are shared between the individuals.²⁰³

Can there be thought independent of language?

The private language problem is not only defined to the concept of rule-governed use of language, sensation terms, criteria based meaning etc.; it has become such a fascinating passage in philosophical arguments that so many areas of concern have unfolded. The extended version of the PLA ramifies into the relationship between thought and its expression, but one of the most pertinent questions that come up with this issue is the status of thought. What sort of mental activity thought is? Can thought be said to have a status that is independent of language? Does language presuppose thought? Before delving into these questions let us understand the nature of language conceptualised by Wittgenstein. Robert Fogelin, one of the most successful interpreters of Wittgenstein,

²⁰² Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner*, p. 131.

²⁰³ Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner*, p. 127.

mentions, "Under the spell of a certain conception of the nature of human language, we naturally think that talk about our pains, intentions, etc., concerns private events that can be known only to those in whom they occur. To use one of Wittgenstein's favourite phrases, this is something that we find ourselves *inclined to say*, but if we give way to this inclination, we then find ourselves involved in paradoxes and hopeless muddles."²⁰⁴ Wittgenstein's aim was to get rid of the muddle, i.e. the ability to clear conceptual confusions. He wants us not to see language as a symbol, but as a form of life.

Talking about thought, it is one kind of mental activity that encapsulates human beliefs, desires, intentions, doubts etc. in a single structure. But to claim that thought is only mental would not give its understanding properly. Thought is something which is about to be expressed, its expression depends on language; though language may not always express the thought. Frege was led to the doctrine of privacy in spite of his belief in the objectivity of sense. His 'I' has a double use; it functions as an ordinary indexical. It has a public linguistic meaning but the reference changes constantly on the context of use. On the other side of the coin, 'I' functions as a proper name for him that can be used to

²⁰⁴ Robert J. Fogelin, *Wittgenstein* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd ed., 1987), pp. 171-72.

articulate thoughts for an individual.²⁰⁵ Frege's theory of 'sense and reference' has partly contributed to his doctrine of private senses, as the referent can be seen publicly, but our acquisition of words is dependent on consciousness and hence it cannot be publicly visible. In this sense it can be said that privacy and publicity of the sense are not in conflict, rather they reside with each other. But the real problem with Frege's idea of private senses lies elsewhere. If 'I' is the one that has a private or unique sense to the individual, as well as it is incommunicable, then 'I' lacks the intersubjectivity that construes meaning and provides the basis for expression. Frege's theory contrasts the problem of meaning and learning of language in Wittgenstein, who espouses a theory of meaning that, is all about the use in community. The communitarian view of language establishes that thought is not a unique activity in a person confined only to him, it merges with the experiences of others.

Let us ponder over the relation between thought and language. To speak something one has to think, even if it is for a split of a second he must have some thought while he speaks a language. We often say, "Think twice before you speak." The problem emerges from this very basic concern about thought. If I have to think twice or at least once before I

²⁰⁵ Sara Ellenbogen, "On the Link between Frege's Platonic-Realist Semantics and His doctrine of Private Senses", *Philosophy*, Vol. 72, No. 281 (July, 1997), pp. 375-76; Gottlob Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", *Mind*, Vol. 65 (1956), pp. 289-311.

speak, then shall I claim that thought has a status that is prior to language? In general sense, the answer would be positive. If it is so, then another question would quite obviously be raised: Can there be unspoken or non-linguistic thoughts? We are in a stage where we have to regard the role of language, whether it is all about speaking or beyond that parameter. However, if we go by the *Speech Act* theory of Searle and Austin, the mechanism follows that there is nothing hidden, as speaking is a performance that aims for successful communication. Here everything is manifested, and opens up to the audience. This view tends to look in favour of the Wittgensteinian view. Having said this, there is a need to nurture the possibility of thought independent of language. If there is an independent thought, there could also be the possibility of a private language. However, it is a matter of debate that is unresolved till date, and hence one cannot be in a radically conclusive position.

Let us for a moment, consider the instance of the communication through smell. The sensation of odour has a public realm, it has a cultural significance too through its ritualistic existence in different cultures. In that sense it conforms to the Wittgensteinian outlook of form of life. Odours have natural, cultural and biological aspects, they exist in the social and cultural milieu and are shared between persons. Odours are also stemmed from "various objects and activities in nature and society

that are connected to the individual's experience, and their meaning is part of the shared knowledge in society".²⁰⁶ There is another dimension of odour that is not shared between the persons but meant to concern the private world of unique experiences to the individual.²⁰⁷ From the socio-psychological perspective, the third dimension of odour resembles to the idea of a private language. This possibility emerges due to the phenomenological view of odour, as the phenomenological language has been rejected by Wittgenstein, this comes as a different point of view. Although there is ample possibility of odours being unique to the life experiences of an individual, it's similarity with the private language of words is not so easy to establish. This kind of experiences is based on the recollection of memories, though it is possible that the individual has cognitive and emotional attachments to the experiences of some particular odours and they have a temporal existence that is beyond the grasp of community standards.

The above example may raise the possibility of unspoken thoughts. The issue is at an inconclusive state, as it is difficult for us to endorse the

²⁰⁶ Uri Almagor, "Odors and Private Language: Observations on the Phenomenology of Scent", *Human Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1990), p. 258.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 260. Uri Almagor differentiates between three dimensions of odour. There is combinatorial aroma of culture and ecology that is given in the social and natural milieu. There is a more communitarian dimension of odour that has everything olfactory in terms of the shared knowledge of objects in different contexts. The third dimension raises the question of private meaning of odours.

above case as a possibility of private language. Only thing we can say that the cultural or public aspect of odour may have a private dimension but it does not objectify the odour into a totally subjective experience. Although this instance might be another way to relate the private language problem to a social and psychological angle as well as to observe that private and public application of language may exist on a continuum basis.

Davidson argues “neither language nor thinking can be fully explained in terms of the other, and neither has conceptual priority. The two are, indeed, linked, in the sense that each requires the other in order to be understood; but the linkage is not so complete that either suffices, even when reasonably reinforced, to explicate the other.”²⁰⁸ Davidson opts for the teleological explanation of action, the theory of preference and the theory of interpretation. The teleological explanation depends on the reason being used to discover the coherence in the behaviour of a person. He follows Ramsey in giving a theory of preference or decision-making that helps to build a scheme of quantified beliefs and desires to describe the choices of actions. The theory of interpretation, according to Davidson, “allows us to redescribe certain events in a revealing way”.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ D. Davidson, “Thought and Talk”, in Samuel Guttenplan (ed.), *Mind and Language: Wolfson College Lectures 1974* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 8.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

The method of interpretation signifies the role of a speech community; the individual must be a member of the speech community if he has to communicate his ideas or beliefs to others. He also needs to have the ability to interpret the utterances of other members of the community. Even the private attitude of a person requires the adjustment to the public norm of language to be intelligible at all.²¹⁰

Davidson's arguments, I think, to a very large extent echoes the *form of life* of Wittgenstein. We come to the closure about the relation between language and thought where both depend on each other, but also leaving a possibility of non-linguistic thoughts, although whether it would be private or not is a matter of dispute. Therefore, it would not be conclusive to say that thought has a status that is independent of language. The development of thought depends on the social and cultural aspects of man, hence the linguistic development also contributes to the development of beliefs, desires, intentions of the person, and therefore thought cannot possibly survive without being expressed by language. Even if we accept non-linguistic or pre-linguistic thoughts, we have to admit that there is always a possibility of communication of these thoughts that could bring the possibility of

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

interpretation and analysis in public language and the involvement of a social milieu in the contextual activities.

Although thought gets its expression in language, one cannot deny that thought has a pre-linguistic structure, e.g. in the children who do not possess the ability to produce language in a systematic way. Children utter words in an unconscious level, often match the concepts. Thoughts are physicalised by language under different conditions in different shapes; even we can say that one thinks in language. But the parameter of the expression of the thoughts lies in the individual's ability or his desire to let his intentions known by other persons. As a result, we may assume that there is privacy in terms of a person's thoughts, though this privacy is logically possible to be expressed by language. Hence, the possibility of a private language, in the core sense of the term is not possible, at most it could stay alive on a limited continuum level with the public language.

CHAPTER 6: *Concluding Remarks*

The private language argument consists of some of the most celebrated passages in twentieth century philosophy and it has generated innumerable interpretations especially because of its notorious nature and most importantly later Wittgenstein has treated the matter in an abridged and non-linear fashion. The problem takes various shapes with different interpretations which have made it a significant contribution to the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind. *Philosophical Investigations* mainly consists of the thrust of the private language problem, but other later writings of Wittgenstein also have pieces of the problem. Mainly §243 to §315 of *Philosophical Investigations* are taken as the core of the private language argument. The thesis Wittgenstein developed has been a topic of interest among researchers as it has been able to arouse debates in many sectors surrounding the issue. Our objective is to see what makes it as unique as a philosophical problem; is it the nature of the argument itself, or the anticipations that have been made? The possibilities that the argument has created is another concern that needs to be taken care of. The ultimate aim would be to objectify the applications of this argument and to examine the possibility of a private language, if it happens to be so. We need to nullify any bias or pre-

conceived notion to do this job. The private language problem has a history that dates back to Descartes. We shall not discuss that history here as it has been done so earlier in the thesis. We could detect the errors or misconceptions regarding the argument while we have dealt with the issue. There are so many temptations that the argument offers, it is our objective to critically examine the temptations as well as to notice the dialogue between the author and the interlocutor of *PI* in settling the issue.

Wittgenstein has convincingly refuted the *Cartesian* dualism and its import by his PLA. The attitude of PLA appears to be a kind of behaviourism, but we do not think that this argument represents any philosophical theory like behaviourism. PLA is a great contribution to the understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language; his concepts of *form of life* and *language-game* have got their full shape by this argument. Speaking a language is a performance, not just in words, in action too. Language motivates a person to perform an act; it is the guiding force to the person. We think that language is the strongest and the most persuasive force to make a person present himself to the world. The communication that takes place is through language, whether it is verbal or non-verbal. Gesture and non-verbal communications also are parts of the language-game. The success of the PLA lies in its influential

nature in investigating some key concerns of philosophical analysis. It has enormous scope of interpretations which make it further appealing as an argument.

PLA is a complete package of all the nuances of analytic philosophy and it continues to capture diverse construal of the investigation that Wittgenstein is engaged in. The structure of the PLA is quite an interesting one. It has an author and an interlocutor engaged in a conversation between them. The interlocutor asks many questions to the author and tempts him to fall in the trap of a philosophical delusion. But the author is on target to maintain his agenda of bringing philosophical problems out of the muddle, and the greatest part of the endeavour is in its subtle play of arguments without any philosophical jargon. Wittgenstein invites us to an imaginary private language, this imagination is very essential in understanding the grammar. The approach of *Philosophical Investigations* is a no-nonsense one, because it explores all the aspects of analysis in a quite simple way. A very important means of access to the private language problem has been given by Stephen Mulhall in the following words which detect the failure of the likely private linguist in realising the other, or an internalisation of otherness that is essential for a linguistic communication:

Again and again, the believer in a private language is forced to treat the putative speaker of such a language as if he were always already divided or double, capable of being both measurer and measured, justifier and justified, giver and receiver: it is quite as if two people inhabit this body, each with its own hand (and the face a battleground between them – cp. *PI*, §286). He thereby implicitly acknowledges the internal relation between the acquisition of language and the acquisition of selfhood; but his depiction of it amounts to a painful parody – as if enacting a regression to the self-enclosed, even self-harming behaviour of Wittgenstein’s child in §244 – because it fails to acknowledge that both forms of articulation presuppose a relation to that which lies outside or beyond the self, since both presuppose an internalization of genuine otherness.²¹¹

The broader perspective of the PLA:

The private language argument is a dialogue between the author and the interlocutor. The interlocutor is clever enough to pose some threatening questions about the privacy of language to the author. These questions are like traps, but Wittgenstein has made them look like the diseases which ought to be cured. The argument never really reaches the climax as it is inconclusive in nature. Even then, we must accept that this inconclusive nature has enhanced the philosophical significance of the argument. There is a narrator who raises the problem about the idea of such a private language that describes my inner experiences and that only I myself can understand. There is an interlocutor who takes on the position of a private linguist, he defends that the idea of a private

²¹¹ Stephen Mulhall, *Wittgenstein’s Private Language: Grammar, Nonsense, and Imagination in Philosophical Investigations*, §§243-315 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 113.

language is possible in the sense of §243 and §256 in *Philosophical Investigations*.²¹² The issue by and large gets the shape in a dialogical form between the narrator and the interlocutor. PLA is peculiar in the sense that it offers the reader to make a handful of assumptions about the outcome and the intention of the argument. There is a sense that it proves the publicity of language, but the broader aspect tells us that language-game is always public and it depends on our use.

The uniqueness of PLA is its charming nature of the arguments and counter-arguments between the narrator and the interlocutor. The reader at times could be confused to judge which one is the view of the author if he is not careful enough. Wittgenstein has created a route where we can look for the probable solution. Let us think on the issue in a contemporary outlook: What should be the focal point when we deal with the PLA in the modern world? What can we conclude about the famous argument? One basic element in constructing the argument is the concept of rule-following. We have come to the point where we could no longer be rigid about private use of rules in speaking a language, only thing is that privacy is already on the verge of being public. Even if we use rule-free language, it is possible that the language could itself form a

²¹² David G. Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 174.

rule unconsciously and be governed by it. We would like to say that there could be private use of rules, but not private rules; rules are always public in nature. Wittgenstein sets himself against phenomenism, idealism, dualism in formulating his thesis on language being meaningful in its use. He is against philosophical *egocentrism*, his philosophy is *non-egocentric* in terms of the criticism of egocentric predicaments of unreliability of everything and his non-acceptance of the 'given', 'inherent', 'private object' or 'self' and so on. His philosophy is not about theorising concepts, rather it is a *therapeutic* practice. This is where Wittgenstein's philosophy of language could be compared to the Buddhist doctrine of *non-egocentrism*. The interlocutor in the *PI* is the absolutist, he is sort of bewitched by language into perceiving things as absolutely true.²¹³ A private linguist takes memory as a criterion to check his impressions of the private incidents. In the Buddhist philosophy, the self is a non-existent entity as everything is momentary and in a flux. Wittgenstein also does not seem to accept self as an entity that can be known by reflection to our inner feelings. Buddhist non-egocentrism is against the absolutism in the sense that it does not accept anything like soul as absolute.

²¹³ R.A.F. Thurman, "Philosophical nonegocentrism in Wittgenstein and Chandrakirti: in their treatment of the private language problem", *Philosophy: East and West*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (July, 1980), p. 326.

I take private language problem as a cornerstone of the arguments against philosophical prejudices. Our prejudice from metaphysical assumptions makes philosophy clumsy to some extent and it limits the scope for treatment of a philosophical illness. Although I think there have been some interpreters of Wittgenstein, like Norman Malcolm or Rush Rhees who have followed Wittgenstein's writings in sheer awe and their interpretations of the PLA have somehow encroached the further possibilities arising out of the arguments. Their interpretations have made the understanding of Wittgenstein no less easy than the text itself. We have to address the real purpose of dealing with the PLA. Is it all about establishing that language is a public activity or the aim should be to clear the confusions? The application of language is done in the society or form of life, but it comes as a surprise when someone claims to use a private language. A private language is something spoken in a solitary mode, or within a small group of speakers. The single speaker or the group of speakers use certain codes, like giving a particular code 'S' to record their sensations and speak the language in a way that could only be understood by its speaker or by the group of speakers. Now the fundamental question that could be asked: Is this private enterprise could be regarded as language? Many followers of Wittgenstein have assumed that language is something only spoken in a verbal way, in community or *form of life*. This communitarian view has its limitation

also. When we take language as something only spoken, then the non-linguistic affairs will not be able to come under this proposal. It is true that language is spoken, but there are non-verbal languages too which could be used to communicate the feelings; gestures or indications could serve the purpose in this regard.

The PLA offers various solutions regarding the philosophy of language. The defining of them we may take into consideration is that sensation has a grammar which cannot be ignored. Sensation itself does not have meaning unless it is used in a grammatical form. The question is: In what sense has sensation a grammar? If we watch closely at the PLA we will see that 'pain' is nothing but a word, a sensation-term; the moment I say to someone "I am in pain" the sensation 'pain' is dissolved. The grammar here reveals the nature of the sensation, i.e. 'pain'. The sensations are no more private entities or unexplored objects, rather they are public ones. The motto of PLA is to show that language leaves nothing that is unexpressed. However, we focus on the intention of the argument to observe whether Wittgenstein only wanted to disapprove the possibility of a private language. If we want to assess the merit of the PLA, then we have to understand the broader aspects that are related with the argument. To a great extent PLA stands as a subject of typical philosophical interest because of its uncharacteristic nature of being a

cluster of propositions that are understandable in the ordinary language, but at the same time remains unpredictable in its consequences or interpolation of arguments. Wittgenstein has constructed the argument not only in favour of the *use theory of meaning*, he has set the tone for a *criterion-based meaning* where meaning of a proposition is validated by an independent criterion.

Even then, there is scope for further treatment with the help of PLA. PLA is often seen as an argument against the possibility of a private language. But I would argue that the argument has much wider implication. To settle the issue of privacy was one of the most important aims, but the bigger issue is whether one can think only in his own language and then use the language in a private *modus operandi*. However, the challenge before a researcher lies in the treatment of a philosophical problem, something that has been occupied both the empiricists and the rationalists for a number of decades. One can look at the matter in the light of the emergence of a new philosophical school of thought, i.e. the *Vienna Circle* that looked after the modernisation of philosophy getting it out of the cloud of speculative metaphysics.²¹⁴ Even that would not be

²¹⁴ For a more detailed account, see Keld Stehr Nielsen, *The Evolution of the Private Language Argument* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), Chapters 2 and 3. It deals with the evolution that takes place since the movement of Vienna Circle thinkers who have sought for the physicalistic language. They were highly inspired by Wittgenstein's legacy in this field of study, although Wittgenstein had always maintained a distance from the group.

the real purpose of dealing with PLA. The PLA has gone through an evolution over a period of time as many philosophers have taken divergent paths regarding the interpretations. However, one finds that it is extremely difficult to deal with the privacy of sensations, especially the way Wittgenstein has sketched the idea of private sensations in §243 and §244 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. He has given the idea to portray the reality that depicts language as the medium of communication between the speaker and the hearer. There is nothing private between them, in so far as the communication is concerned. Many of Wittgenstein's followers believe that it was prerogative of Wittgenstein to unveil the nature of sensations. One may say that Wittgenstein has made a huge impact on the philosophy of language by bringing a new insight which was long overdue. It was Wittgenstein's sheer courage and philosophical honesty to innovate his ideas through the PLA, although it is quite common to ascribe the title 'anti-private language argument' to describe his arguments as he has refuted the possibility of a private language.

At a point of time when a giant figure in philosophy named Bertrand Russell had tried his hands to establish a rational privacy that would further inspire Ayer to formulate his opinion in favour of a private language, there was every chance for Wittgenstein to be sidelined in the

philosophical community of Britain. But then, it was his genius that made *Philosophical Investigations* as an epic text that would be in the limelight for many years to follow. In *PI* the private language problem has become the centre stage of all the philosophical attractions. Basically, the PLA has taken a colossal form in terms of the interest it has been able to raise among divergent group of philosophers.

What we find definitive in the PLA is its attempt to remove the cloud of metaphysics of sensations. While doing so, it has applied certain tools; they are *criterion based meaning, rule-following, language-game* etc. However, the theme is highlighted by the meaning in terms of its use in a society or *form of life*. This is why PLA is regarded as the soul of the *Philosophical Investigations*. As we have already discussed about the tools in the preceding chapters, we shall be concentrating on the merits of those tools here as well as their application. The reason that might have played a role for a criterion based approach towards meaning is Wittgenstein's approval of the existence of a private experience or sensation. He was not bothered by the sensation, neither he attempted to deny it. What he tries to show is that sensations themselves are not part of the *language-game*, but when they are expressed by language they become a part. One might wonder whether Wittgenstein had his 'picture theory' in mind while dealing with the private experience. His *Tractatus*

was concerned with the pictorial representation of reality, and he was thinking of the logical primacy of proposition-object relationship, hence picture theory could play a backdrop role in the relationship between sensation and its corresponding language. Unlike the *picture theory* model, Wittgenstein here is looking for the working of language. He goes beyond the domain of metaphysics, although his attack was more on the *Cartesian* semantics rather than the *Cartesian* metaphysics.²¹⁵ Going by his 'beetle-in the-box' argument, we can say that the thing or beetle inside has no place in the *language-game*; likewise sensations are private, but not sensation-language. Once the sensation is expressed by language, it drops out of consideration.

Wittgenstein's approach towards a criterion based meaning is defined by his inclination towards a standard of meaning that is based on the public stage-setting. Apart from that, he was looking for a solution to the problem of pain as a sensation whose nature has been known to be private up till then. Therefore, his task was to establish language as the medium of expression of the private sensation of pain. In doing so, he had to set a standard of meaning. Although, he has hardly given any particular idea of what should be the nature of a criterion, his followers

²¹⁵ Merrill B. Hintikka and Jaakko Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 250.

and interpreters have developed on his idea. A criterion is a vigilant on the application of language. One can associate the notion of 'criteria' to the verificationist account of meaning. When I want to know whether a person is in pain, I have to use criteria. Strawson, in this regard, also accepted that we need criteria for the third-person attribution of pain.²¹⁶ If I do not accept criteria of meaning, then it would be impossible for me to decide whether someone has rightly expressed his pain or not. Here the criterion is known by the behaviour of the concerned person, this is why Wittgenstein's account is alleged by some philosophers to be inclined towards behaviourism, but his notion of 'criteria' differs both from verificationism and behaviourism. Since he has applied the physicalistic structure of language, this misconception was bound to happen to some extent. However, the whole account talks about the use of the sentences in a community or *form of life*. In *Philosophical Investigations* 'use, 'custom', 'practice', 'technique' fall into the central category in terms of the nature of language.²¹⁷

Now if we turn our attention to the concept of *rule-following*, Wittgenstein has explicitly discussed about the viability of a public rule. If Robinson Crusoe employs a language that is totally unique in nature, and if he

²¹⁶ K.S. Nielsen, *The Evolution of the Private Language Argument*, p. 74.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

keeps a diary to record his sensations, he can be said to follow a rule privately; having said that even if he follows a rule privately he must be using some technique. Here a crucial point I want to make. Someone could easily follow a rule privately provided that he keeps certain points intact that are related to the rule being followed. But a rule itself cannot be private, for if it is a rule it must be staged against the backdrop of publicly governed activity. Insofar as the rule being followed privately is concerned, if someone like Crusoe uses a technique which he must do even to follow a rule privately, the technique 'in principle' or 'logically' can be known by some other, since the notion of 'technique' or 'practice' has a public usage and to judge whether Crusoe has followed a rule correctly or not, it must be publicly confirmable. It also connects Wittgenstein's 'diary argument' in *PI* §258 that talks about the failure of memory to be a criterion of identity. Memory as a criterion cannot enable me to distinguish between what is correct and what seems to be correct. Therefore, following a rule privately cannot be justified in the criterion based approach towards meaning. Merely to follow or obey a rule privately is not to follow a rule in the true sense of the term which is justifiably pointed out in *PI* §202.

Games are played under certain rules. The rules change according to the demand of the game. Some rules are common for some games, but there

is not a single rule that is common for every game. Rules are in a criss-crossing and overlapping nature surrounding the games. Similarly in language there are rules to be followed, otherwise one cannot define whether the language has been used properly or not, even it will not be able to communicate. Therefore, Wittgenstein has taken language as a game, in *language-game* rules stand like a sign-post. In his view, to imagine a language is to imagine a *form of life*. The private language argument has been able to set up a strong argument in favour of the public rule and the rules are never in isolation with *language-game*. The semantics of the sensation is the bigger picture in the PLA and it is to be found by the combination of apparatus of 'criterion', 'rule-following' and 'language-game'. As the private ostensive definition fails to provide the requirement to know the semantics of sensations, the employment of 'technique' or 'practice' is essential and in this regard concepts of criterion, *rule-following* and *language-game* are interlinked with each other.

What I have tried to show is the broader perspective associated with the PLA in this section. As in the contemporary philosophy it is hardly a matter to know whether private language is possible, the investigation more or less rests on Wittgenstein's intention, what he was trying to do with his notorious PLA and what the advanced scenario we could

achieve when we delve into the matter.²¹⁸ The huge impact it has made on philosophy of mind and language cannot be unearthed unless we have a comprehensive picture arising out of the PLA. The effort was to highlight and critically examine the picture and its merit.

Looking from a bird's eye view:

So far we have got the picture of the nature of the private language problem, while making a point about the intention of Wittgenstein with regard to his PLA. Now we focus on the very viability of the PLA. No doubt PLA has made a significant contribution on the philosophy of mind and language, but what would interest us is its ever enduring way to baffle the reader with its enigmatic character and inconclusive attitude. Why Wittgenstein would want to form an argument that has so much potent but hardly gives us a conclusion? What should be the reaction to the problem in contemporary philosophy? The greatest contribution, I think, Wittgenstein has made, is to force the reader to think deeply over the issue. Perhaps, this is the reason why he has not given any theory; it is for us to master the technique and skill to develop on the issue.

²¹⁸ K.S. Nielsen, *The Evolution of the Private Language Argument*, p. 178.

We believe that it was prerogative of Wittgenstein to distance himself from the rest of the then philosophical community, especially the Vienna Circle that led him to move on with the ordinary language to solve the philosophical problem. Once he realised in the mid 1930s that there is a lot to be done with the ordinary language, he deviated from the *Tractatus* in terms of the methodological outlook. Regarding the PLA, he has given a great importance to the sensation and sensation language. It is very clear from the passages of *PI* §243 and §244, where he has imagined a language in which a person could talk to himself, give himself orders, ask himself a question and answer it. He has also sketched the possibility of words connected with the primitive, the natural expressions of sensation and used in their place. The phrase "used in their place" demonstrates the referring of a sensation. Wittgenstein remarks that when I say "I know that I am in pain" it gives nothing further for me to claim knowledge, it is trivial. My point is that Wittgenstein is quite right in saying that there is no point in affirming "I know that I am in pain", but then I can easily claim about the pain in a better way than someone else guessing about my pain, though it is possible that he may understand my pain by the facial expression or behaviour. Here I accept Wittgenstein's perception of pain which states "I know only from my own case" as grammatical. The grammar of a sensation is what Wittgenstein is looking for. The inspiration that we can take from Wittgenstein is the approach to

philosophy he has taken, the cloud which he wants to uncover and give us something that is free from any bias. Because one of the foremost concerns he faced is the way philosophers had taken 'sensation' in a totally enigmatic sense, was needed to be kept out of the road. For doing this, his *Investigations* could look itself unfathomable to some extent, but the real spirit behind his approach towards 'private language argument' is that *nothing is hidden*.

In order to understand the nature of the PLA, we have to focus the attention towards the nature of philosophy in Wittgenstein. By and large, Wittgenstein is cautious of our attraction to myth, in the sense of our tendency in language and thinking when we deal with philosophical problems.²¹⁹ He strives to *show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle*, to guide us to emancipate from the myth of bewildering in the jungle of confusions in discussing philosophy. This, we think, is the greatest contribution of the PLA. Philosophical discussions cannot be like fictions, it has to be grounded on reality. The cue we can take from Wittgenstein's writings is in our dialogical and methodological inputs. If we accept private language at the core level, it would be an absurd thing, as when a doctor diagnoses a disease he engages in some dialogue with the patient

²¹⁹ Rush Rhees, "Wittgenstein on Language and Ritual", in *Wittgenstein and His Times*, Brian McGuinness (ed.), (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 92.

before he goes for a machinery checking. He makes certain assumptions about the patient by listening to his problems, and there is a *language-game* involved in the dialogue. Whatever privacy the patient had with his disease or pain, is communicated in the dialogue with the doctor. The dialogical outputs help the doctor, also the patient to cure the disease. Similarly, in philosophy there are so many illnesses and therefore sets of therapies. The task that a philosopher ought to set as far as Wittgenstein is concerned is to go beyond the philosophical perplexities that form certain presuppositions in a person's mind. There are temptations in philosophy that can mislead us to the wrong way, but it is the language, its proper use which could save us. The temptation or bewitchment of language is what we have to be careful of. Anthony Kenny remarks:

According to the Christian doctrine we are all born in a state of sin; according to Wittgenstein we are not born in the state of philosophical sin, but we take it in along with language. Along with language, along with all the benefits which language brings, along with all the possibilities for our way of life which it brings, we take in whether we want to or not, certain temptations; we must resist these if we are not to be misled.²²⁰

One of the foremost temptations we find is to think of our sensations as private and their analogous language to be private too. This is not unnatural, as we have a being that has a private realm to some extent. We all think like this; we say "This is my private matter", or "This is

²²⁰ Anthony Kenny, "Wittgenstein on the Nature of philosophy", in *Wittgenstein and His Times*, Brian McGuinness (ed.), (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 15.

secret". This sort of privacy or secrecy is not what Wittgenstein is greatly concerned about, his concern is to problematise our sensations and resolve the problem by means of language. It is a philosophical illness to think deeply about our sensations and believe in its privacy. The *Cartesian* myth encourages doing so, but Wittgenstein looks for the grammar to solve this perplexity. One might say he was too cautious about 'sensation', but his concern was to rule over the mystery behind the privacy of sensation and while doing this he was automatically led to challenge the possibility of private language. We would like to point out that he was about to bring the solution about the relation between sensation and the language that expresses it. However his followers like Rush Rhees and Norman Malcolm have interpreted it as the *Reductio Argument* which is not totally correct.

What is still a matter of concern to us is whether Wittgenstein had got any independent criterion of correctness in the private language problem. He has talked about the public standard of meaning, but then if a private linguist practices a language unique to him and employs some techniques that resemble more or less to the public standard, what would be the status of that language? Another problem that is pertinent is whether one can think independently of language, i.e. whether there is any thought that is independent of language. My take on this is, when a

person thinks, he must be thinking about something, it cannot be an empty thought. Thoughts are structured, even though they are not properly expressed. Thoughts can be said to have a peculiar status before it is expressed by language, probably psycholinguists would go to the extent of giving it an independent status too. People like Fodor would ascribe meaning to the *Mentalese* terms, to say that there is a language of thought. There is something about thought that can sometimes be difficult to be expressed, like I could say to someone, "Okay, you understand my sadness, but have you understood the depth of my feelings? Can you really plumb it?" To some extent, I can claim it like this, but I can never claim that whatever I feel is simply private or unique to myself, therefore I have formed a sort of private language. Private language of this type can be, in principle, known by some other person. This is what *language-game* is all about, this is what philosophical prejudice or philosophical seduction is about Wittgenstein warns us not to fall in the trap of.

The legacy of Wittgenstein lies in his understanding of both the private sensations and the public criteria. He has accepted both to be true, he has not separated them. The way Fodor mischaracterises Wittgenstein in formulating his *language of thought* hypothesis, is his conception of making those distinct from each other. Rather Wittgenstein's take on this

is a more inclusive position. He has given very much importance to the private sensations, but maintained that when a person expresses them in language, sensations are condensed into the grammar and drop out of consideration. It is in this juncture, we believe, Wittgenstein has distinguished himself from the positivist or a more rigorous group of philosophers as well as has been able to move himself out of the quandary of behaviourism or any particular philosophical theory.

We can take the PLA further to be in a state where the problem of the inner can be looked in the glass of the communitarian view. The triumph of the PLA lies in the emancipation from the age-old philosophical concern of privacy in a person's mental life. The practical significance that we can derive from the famous argument is the level of interpersonal communication that has got the foundation of a strong philosophical thesis. In every person there is a private realm, we are not denying this. But the life of an individual is always on the axis of other persons, even other animals too. The individualistic view of language does not stand on a proven track as it lacks the communicative relation between persons. Language, if it is private, has to have some criteria for being so. The 'memory criterion' fails to do the justice to the private language, as has been decisively pointed out by Wittgenstein in *PI* §258. Even if there is an intrapersonal communication or talking to oneself by a monologist, one

cannot claim that there is a language-game involved. There cannot be any private *language-game*, as there cannot be any private rules. Thoughts are also not private entities, they have a potential to be expressed, and when they are expressed, thoughts remain in the eyes of the others. The defined characteristic that we could find in the private language problem is the individual who is not isolated from the rest of the community. He is not a complete being unless he is able to communicate with others, unless he realises that others are also individual human beings just like him, they also have a language which the individual is acquainted with or could be familiar in a discourse. It is about learning language, living in the *form of life*, governed under the rules of language and maintaining the standard or *criterion of correctness*. Wittgenstein says, "You learned the concept 'pain' when you learned language."²²¹

Learning a language requires skill, and skill is oriented in a social set-up. One has to master the technique or be skilled enough to speak a language as well as convey meaning. The whole issue lies in the use of language. When we talk about the use in our society or community, we cannot preclude the individual. Because the individual is not a secluded being, he has his existence in relation with others. In Wittgenstein's point of

²²¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), §384.

view, thinking is inescapably social, yet conducted within the first person in a way that would impel the voice of private experience.²²² There is a double-layered personality in man, one of them is public and another is the private. Still, the private sphere of the person wants to move out to the public and yearns for the expression. It looks for the relationship with the public world without affecting its own personality. We can therefore conclude that the self is inherently public and the other is not isolated from the individual self. The self is a corporeal entity in the sense that it is incomplete without its relation with the other selves, or other persons. It would be wise to observe Wittgenstein's vision of language in this view so that our understanding of his philosophy of language never gets bogged down within the parameter of the *Reductio Argument*.

One of the most influential contributions that the PLA has been able to do is its attempt to resolve some of the most dominant confusions in the philosophy of language. What PLA has done is not only significant to the twentieth century philosophy, it still adds to a great extent to the philosophy of mind and language in the ongoing century. It has a practical dimension too as Wittgenstein was dealing with the ordinary language in his discussions of the language and its role in the

²²² Garry L. Hagberg, *Describing Ourselves: Wittgenstein, and Autobiographical Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), p. 66.

community. A critique might argue that Wittgenstein's philosophy was inspired by pragmatism, although he was not greatly attached with the writings of C.S. Pierce or John Dewey but had a fair bit of study on William James. But to argue that his arguments conform to the classic pragmatism would be a wrong judgement, rather his arguments have reshaped the pragmatism. It is now cliché to say that his *Investigations* speaks about the meaning in terms of use of the language, the crucial point is that our inward mental processes stand in need of the outward criteria to bring them within the spectrum of the *language-game*.

The inner space of a person is somewhat mystical in nature, only apparently though. The reality banks on the operation of language, how it works, how it systematises our thoughts within the sphere of the interpersonal dealings. It is not about the representations of thought by language, as far as Wittgenstein is concerned, because if the representational role of language is accepted then our sensations or inner space cannot be understood in the technical sense. Therefore, Wittgenstein has sought for a more organisational view of language, as it organises our thoughts into speech in a rule-governed way where an independent criterion plays a crucial part to regulate the use of language. While this is the base of his PLA, he has given primordial importance to the human face, its expressions of the inner sensations. The inner is

connected with the outer and makes the human being as an integrated individual, an individual who is never secluded from the others.

Hence, looking from a birds' eye view on his PLA, we find it as something that incorporates thought into human language, makes a person a public being in spite of his unique existence as an individual, thus establishing that it is language which reveals the mystery of the inner being of a person. PLA depicts about the amalgamation of the individual and the social characters dwelling in a person; it is a momentous achievement in the philosophy of language as it takes the importance of sensations in a manner like never before. It is no longer confined only within the scope of the possibility of a private language, rather it opens a door for the ins and outs between language and thought.

The way to go with the PLA: A contemporary perspective

At the onset of any discussion about the *Private Language Argument*, one has to face the challenge whether there is any possibility of a private language. Since Wittgenstein has given a notion of private language that he later went on to refuse to have any logical possibility, the investigation revolves around the scope of privacy in our language-game. The protocol

language that Carnap has talked about is impossible to communicate to someone else, but according to Wittgenstein, under certain conditions it would be impossible to communicate meaning even to oneself.²²³ This is a point that can be worked on to prove that the communication is made not only between different persons, there is communication in a person too. One can communicate her thoughts to herself, retrospect her previous works, and curse herself for her undue advantages in life and so on. Juxtaposed with this, when someone writes something in his diary to record his pain, he is dependent on his memory the moment he has transcribed his sensation. It makes him fallible against the vulnerability of misjudgement of the sensation as memory is not itself an infallible source of knowledge; rather it has to depend on the previous memory to justify the claim of meaning. So, there is an infinite chain of consciousness that never makes the person convinced enough even to oneself to claim the sensation as a private mental object. One is always in the struggle to verify his claim and he fails to communicate to himself, let alone his communication to others. A mechanism that produces meaning is not coherent with the above kind of linguistic communication, since in this case the private sensation does not come under the gamut of *language-game*. What we can learn from the *Investigations* is that communication is not all about conveying meaning to the third person, it

²²³ K.S. Nielsen, *The Evolution of the Private Language Argument*, p. 63.

is about the communication within oneself as well. There is a cognitive platform in a person on which the transportation of meaning first takes place independent of his communication of that meaning to others.

The above point is not made to establish that there is a privacy of language, it is made to clarify that communication takes place within the individual in the same way as interpersonal communication takes place. The privacy of language is a contingent possibility, it never reaches the edge of total privacy. If sensation is accepted as private, then the grammar of the sensation has to be found by language and once language meets the criteria to explore the grammar, the privacy of sensation is simply compressed into the grammar. Now the essential point we need to address is, which criterion enables me to locate my sensation? The inner is always in need of the outward criteria, but what is actually interesting is Wittgenstein's emphasis on terms like 'use', 'function', 'purpose' etc. The verbal expression of pain also needs to maintain the criterion, and the criterion lies in our use of language. It is the standard of correctness that Wittgenstein is looking for, that is why he gives the expression very much importance, as in §258 of *Philosophical Investigations* he demands for an independent standard of correctness that enables a person to distinguish between *what is right* and *what seems to be right*. Beneath the demand for criteria there are notions of 'use' and

'function', because Wittgenstein gives optimum importance to the ordinary language in his *Investigations* and he takes ordinary language to be meaningful.²²⁴ We think his insistence on the meaningfulness of the ordinary language is one of the most important turning points of the 20th century analytic philosophy as it has given him a cult status among his contemporaries as well as the door has been widely opened for other disciplines such as cognitive science or artificial intelligence.

Despite the fact that language is essentially a public or social activity, there are situations when private language does look possible in the human discourse. One such possibility remains with the autistic persons who can apparently look like normal human beings, but their communication effort seems to be different at times. There comes a point which needs to be pondered over. Is language only social in its nature, or beyond that parameter? Because if language has only a social dimension that we normal beings are used to be, then the autistic persons might question its legitimacy. The categorisation of language may need to broaden its span so that we do not claim to be the arbiter of how the language should be used. What I want to point out is that the publicity of language can only more fruitfully be addressed if we accept that language has also a private dimension. Apparently this line of thinking

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

may not represent Wittgenstein's view on language, but as far as his arguments are concerned, I think he would not deny the fact that there is something called sensation that leaves some space for privacy of language. Only thing is, this privacy remains possible to be expressed by means of *language-game*.

Another aspect needs to be addressed is the scope for non-linguistic communication. Communication is broader than language, says William Vicars. Communication can be non-linguistic like gesture, body language, symbol etc. where language is not used to communicate thoughts. Vicars says, "Notice, there is a difference between "language" and "a language." Neurolinguistic psychologists talk about "language." Linguists talk about languages. Cognitive scientists talk about language use. Linguists talk about language features. How you define language depends on your audience."²²⁵ Therefore, we can derive that PLA has a broader significance than just to prove that language is essentially public. Language is what makes communication possible, but all communications are not based on language in their activities. Language is the tool or vehicle by means of which communication is to be achieved, here communication is the aim or destination one wants to reach. Yet, we

²²⁵ William Vicars, "Nonlinguistic communication", Available online @ liferprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/nonlinguisticcommunication.htm.

believe, the coercion from communication to language does not limit the scope of language, and it does not either prove that non-linguistic communications are private in character. Gesture, body language, sighing, posturing – these are activities that have a public sphere, because they are there to communicate one's feelings and thoughts, so being non-linguistic does not necessarily follow to be private. Had it been so, communication would have been impossible to be made, since there would not be any use of non-linguistic activities. Again we are talking about the relevance of Wittgenstein's notion of 'use' as everything we accommodate in our communication must have a use in society.

Let us look at the other side of language. In each of us private language resides as a register which can never be fully understood. A self-conscious activity continues to play in a human mind that others are not able to measure. When someone carries out suicide there is an overabundance of disgraceful signifiers that cannot be processed through the existing resources of the self.²²⁶ A suicide may be an outcome of an accumulation of misrecognitions, where the self is shattered with a sense of both individual history and future prospect. There is a great remoteness in the mode of thinking between the suicide agent or victim

²²⁶ Henry Sussman, "Maxima Moralia: Millennial Fragments on the Public and Private Dimensions of Language", *MLN* 110.4: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 856. Web source: muse.jhu.edu/journals/mln/v110/110.4sussman.html.

and the rest of us, because the incident marks the place of the non-adjustment of circumstances and conditions we could endure, but unbearable to the agent who commits suicide. It is a question of alternative whether to remain alive in those circumstances or not. This is what differentiates between Wittgenstein's concept of a social language and the idiosyncratic, singular language.²²⁷ There is strangeness in this sort of personal language.

The categories like suicide, bodies, sexuality and various ethnic, national categories are social factors, but on the other hand they have appeal something unique to us. Suicide may be seen as an instrument of conceptualising our singularity. Thinking about suicide is nothing appallingly dramatic, because thinking about it does not presume to commit the act of suicide.²²⁸ Every self enjoys more or less established patterns of behaviour and thought. Some circumstances or conditions may be unfavourable for upbringing and other social stages, yet the instability of the self is understood in comparison to the relative tolerance of a formed system.²²⁹ These inconsistent selves have the potential of great intellectuals, artists or social reformers, yet their achievement bears the disgrace of moral suspicion and futile responsibility. This is a bitter

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 857.

²²⁹ Ibid.

truth of life that can hardly be ignored. Even if the person is socialised, his experiences are not always easily communicated due to the tinge and torque that the self's private language consists of. If there is any private language at all, that would look like this. Privacy, although it does not form the basis of language, consists some of the basic tenets of a human being. The individual is not hidden from others, but his existence has a private realm; it may not be secret all the way, but it moulds the personality either to positive or negative direction.

We have a corporeal body which is subject to the laws of physics. But at the same time we experience ourselves, our mental affairs, achievements, failures, desolation in a way that inflames us to hypothesise a corresponding, non-physical complement. The author of an autobiography very often faces the challenge of revealing some of his truths to the readers as it may damage his image in the public life. On the other hand, he has to decide how much he can conceal from the public; otherwise his autobiography might look very dull and unworthy of reading with enthusiasm. It incorporates a dimension of our being, which can never be tackled in principle with the instruments and the formal logic of science.²³⁰ Nor can it be traced by making the soul a module of self-awareness or experiencing ourselves through

²³⁰ Sam Vaknin, 'The Basic Dilemma of the Artist'. Web source: samvak.tripod.com.

introspection as rightly suggested by Wittgenstein. We have emotions, love, fear, anguish, desire and each one of us forms and develops an idiosyncratic, unique emotional language; and there is a universal, natural language. How can we link the lingual space? Again we have to look for a solution by means of language.

We face a dilemma in closing the gulf between the original experience and its representation. Fodor turns this problem into conceptualising his *language of thought*. He makes it clear that learning the first language essentially involves the use of an unlearned internal representational system.²³¹ This line of thinking may inspire non-linguistic or paralinguistic theories to some extent, but there is so many disputes in that way. Wittgenstein formulates a picture of public language that is governed by the conventions of the speech community. Fodor observes that these conventions relate the public language terms to paradigm public situations. But this sort of model picture may not always be right due to the propositional attitudes like beliefs since my verbalisations are determined not just by my intentions but also by my beliefs.²³² Still, the issue is so complex that propositional attitudes are not enough to establish a private language, and we cannot but accept that the main

²³¹ J. A. Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975) p. 79.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

function of language is to communicate our thoughts no matter how much the individual is able to really express his situations. Hence the possibility of the private language still looks distant in the exclusive sense of the term.

Coming back to the issue of lingual gap between our idiosyncratic, private languages and the universal language, we can look for help from the artists in mediating between us and their experience. The artist also has a reference group, his audience, to assess the aloofness between the original experience and its representation. There is a parallel podium between the artist and the audience; otherwise the appraisal of the art would not have been possible. In spite of this, the audience cannot totally claim to grasp the intention of the artist, as there must be something exclusive that the artist might have thought before painting the objet d'art. Therefore, even if language is a robust tool for social communication, the possibility of its having private dimensions cannot be denied. In hindsight, these dimensions make the debate on private language argument more tempting and hence we need to look into the matter in a contemporary perspective from art and aesthetic point of view also.

There is a huge range of possibilities with regard to the PLA, of which we could critically discuss only a very short part perhaps. Since the issue is multifaceted and so many philosophers have given their viewpoints, the literature related to the problem also consists of a large area. It was very difficult to give a radical conclusion regarding the problem, as being radical or fundamental does not do justice to philosophical researches. Despite this, my attempt was to explore the genius of the argument and thereby doing justice to what Wittgenstein has said in the *preface* of the *Philosophical Investigations* that he expects it to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own. It has really stimulated and brainstormed my thoughts to the extent that I could find new highways to deal with the problem. I humbly submit that I could touch upon some key areas, while leaving many that I would like to develop in future in some form or other. Delving into the issue has inspired me a lot and opened a new door to the philosophy of Wittgenstein.

Finally, I can say that after a thoroughly careful and critical study of the private language argument, it is very difficult to deny Wittgenstein's position. If we deny his position, then the problem of other minds would look more complicated. It is also not possible to establish an essentially viable private language, as it would violate the rules of the language-game and it would then be impossible to communicate our thoughts.

Rather, public language can be said to have a private dimension in the form of art and aesthetic works. Even in these instances, the consciousness of an artist or author is not isolated from the public stage-setting. Seeing from a broader and more practical point of view, the PLA can have a greater importance in developing the communication skill and techniques of the individuals as well as it could help autistic persons to develop their vocabulary by following the rules of language that could be set up to their own advantage and patterns of behaviour. Wittgenstein's thoughts could be applied to develop the communication skill of the persons of different genres and differently minded human beings. The use of language is what depicts the *Investigations* and there is nothing better than to apply the 'use' in our society or 'form of life' even to bridge the communication gap between persons and enable us to live a better public life.

From a theoretical point of view, the language is nothing but ultimately social. It is an institution in which the society is governed in a systematic way. The private life of the individual is there, but the scope of language is much broader. Private language cannot be accepted in the core sense of the term. The use of language is what Wittgenstein promotes in his *Philosophical Investigations* and the PLA is the soul of this view. The main target is to construct the relation between language and thought, and

since memory cannot be the *criterion of correctness* as described in *PI* §258 due to its fallibility, there needs to have a public and independent criterion that would check whether language has been properly used to convey meaning or not. Psycholinguists would probably have a different outlook, but in the context of meaning Wittgenstein's position still looks better poised. PLA testifies to the fact that there is an integrated relationship between language, thought and meaning and the total system is governed by a public set of rules.

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