THE YELLOW BOOK NOTES[1] IN RELATION TO *THE BLUE BOOK*

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Wittgenstein began dictation of *The Blue Book* in the Michaelmas term of the academic year 1933-34, when he chose for this work five students.[2] The so-called Yellow Book consists of notes taken by Margaret Masterman and myself on informal discussions in the intervals between dictation, and of notes taken by us and by Francis Skinner on lectures he gave at times during the year when he stopped dictating. Its contents consequently connect very closely with problems taken up in *The Blue Book*.

To my mind *The Blue Book* contains the most revolutionary ideas in the work of Wittgenstein. Philosophers have been so concerned with trying to picture him as a conventional philosopher, with a place in an established philosophical tradition, that his contributions to the understanding of philosophical problems have been ignored or muted. That he himself was aware of the change of outlook on philosophy which took place in the early years after his return to Cambridge is evident in the following statement in *The Blue Book*: "One might say that the subject we are dealing with is one of the heirs of the subject which used to be called 'philosophy'."[3] Wittgenstein at that time evidently considered it to be the only important work left to be done in philosophy. He nevertheless fully realized the objection which traditional philosophers would make: "Why should what we do here be call-

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[1] References to the Yellow Book to be abbreviated by YB.

[2] H. M. S. Coxeter, R. L. Goodstein, Francis Skinner, Margaret Masterman, and myself, a group augmented shortly thereafter by Helen Knight and others.

[3] p. 28. This subject is the one for which Morris Lazerowitz coined the term "metaphilosophy".

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ed 'philosophy'? Why should it be regarded as the only legitimate heir of the different activities which had this name in former times?"[4] His awareness of the difference between his new conception and the historical conception of philosophy is clear in this Yellow Book excerpt: "Suppose someone said, 'My craving is to get a general comprehensive picture of the universe. Can you satisfy this craving?' I would say 'No'. But if the person says, 'Are you then entirely useless to me?', I would say, 'Possibly not. Let us see whether doing such and such or thinking such and such a way will, not satisfy your craving, but make you cease to have it. This may happen. But it may equally happen that your craving is not taken away; in this case I can do nothing for you'." This statement is consonant with the position expressed subsequently in the *Investigations*: ". . . the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear."[5] As he said in lectures, not the solution of philosophical problems, but their *dissolution*, is the goal. He recognized that this aim is destructive of what most people consider valuable in philosophy. Thus, in the *Investigations*, he wrote: "Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? (As it were all the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.)" His answer was: "What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing the ground of language on which they stand."[6]

As is known, in this period Wittgenstein found the source of philosophical problems in language. "Philosophy, as we use the word", he said, "is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us."[7] And also, "[Philosophical problems] are solved . . . by looking into the workings of our language".[8] The reference to language is the key to

4 *The Blue Book*, p. 62 .
5 p. 51.
6 p. 48.
7 *The Blue Book*, p. 27.
8 *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 47.

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what John Wisdom called "the Wittgenstein revolution":[9] the drastic change in the conception of philosophical activity and of its future direction. The extensive literature of philosophy pictures the philosopher as a persistent seeker after truth. And at the same time it is a record of the continuous disagreements over whether truth has been found.[10] Various historical figures, Kant for one, Descartes for another, have taken explicit note of this disconcerting fact. Descartes deprecated the lack of stable results in metaphysics as compared with the steady accumulation of secure results in mathematics. But it seems not to have occurred to philosophers that something in the nature of philosophical views rather than a shortcoming on their own part precludes a truth-value decision on them. Wittgenstein turned his mind to discovering what gave them the air of being factual claims, and disagreement about them the appearance of disputation over fact. His conclusion was that their source was a verbal muddle, that the philosopher is misled by his own language into supposing he is solving a problem. Instead of aiming at a decision about where the truth lies, future investigation should focus on determining how the philosopher's use of words manages to create the idea that a true-or-false answer exists. The implication of a number of his remarks both in *The Blue Book* and in the Yellow Book is that the fact-stating form of speech produces the illusion that a theory about matter of fact is being advanced. Quite usually, philosophical pronouncements have an air of paradox about them, and the arguments given for them are puzzling because they seem cogent even to those to whom the conclusion appears obviously false. Their seeming cogency is a sign that "we are up against trouble caused by our way of expression".[11]

General comments such as these are what Wittgenstein called "hints" or "pointers". During the informal discussions recorded in the Yellow Book a question was raised about

[9] In a personal letter.
[10] Unaccountably, Wittgenstein appeared to take no notice of this fact.
[11] *The Blue Book*, p. 48.

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what he meant by "hints", to which he replied that they were "remarks that may set you on the right track in solving a problem. But I could leave out all of the hints, and just treat of special problems. However, people often cannot imagine what I am talking about when they hear me dealing with some special difficulty, and they only understand what I am driving at when they begin to understand my general remarks, my hints ...". One of these hints, found in the Yellow Book, I shall take as a general guide in dealing with a special problem (a problem to which almost half of the informal discussion was given over). The hint is the following: "The fallacy we want to avoid is this: when we reject some form of symbolism, we're inclined to look at it as though we'd rejected a proposition as false . . . This confusion pervades all of philosophy. It's the same confusion that considers a philosophical problem as though such a problem concerned a fact of the world instead of a matter of expression." It need hardly be remarked that, traditionally, philosophical problems appear to concern just what he says they do not: a fact of the world, and not a matter of expression.

In order to give substance to the general hint it is useful to compare briefly an example of the traditional treatment of a philosophical problem with Wittgenstein's treatment of it. Descartes' investigation of mind and body gives us a good illustration of Wittgenstein's thesis[12] that philosophical questions have been approached as one would a scientific problem because they sound as though they are questions about fact of which we do not know enough rather than questions about language. Consider Descartes' question, "What, then, am I?" He gave as his answer, "a thinking thing" (*Meditation* II), and proceeded to delineate its features: "When I consider the mind, that is, when I consider myself in so far only as I am a thinking thing, I can distinguish in myself no parts, . . . for it is the same mind all entire that is exercised in willing, perceiving, . . . etc." (VI). "It is plain that I am not the as-

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[12] Expressed in lectures of 1934-35.

semblage of members called the human body" (II). "There is a vast difference between mind and body, in respect that body, of its nature, is always divisible, and that mind is entirely indivisible" (VI). ". . . although I conceive that I am a thinking and non-extended thing, and that a stone, on the contrary, is extended and unconscious, there being thus the greatest diversity between the two concepts, yet these two ideas have this in common that they both represent substances" (III). In these passages we have a typical philosophical investigation of the nature of one's self, an argument for not identifying it with one's body, and a conclusion that there are two kinds of entities, the one thinking and the other extended. The entire discussion is conducted in what might be called the fact-stating idiom. The impression is that we have been given an account of the features we ourselves, and our bodies, in fact possess.

Without pursuing questions about the self I shall merely contrast how Wittgenstein approached them in the Yellow Book. By collating what he said at various places the differences can readily be seen. His question sounds Cartesian: "Is the person A the same thing as A's body?", he asks. But his answer makes it clear that he thinks words, not the phenomena they refer to, to be the only relevant subject matter for investigation:

> That the name of a person refers to a human body is clear enough if only you consider how you would introduce A to someone. On the other hand we know that a person changes his body during his life-time, by growing up, etc. Furthermore, the following case is conceivable, that someone comes into my room and says, "I'm your friend Smith, though I don't look it. My body has changed overnight while I slept.". . . What would we do to test the truth of what he said? I think we would ask him a lot of questions about his past; and we should say he was the man he claimed to be if he could tell us all the

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details of his life which we knew Smith could have told us. Another criterion we might apply would be whether Smith's former body had disappeared and his second body had come into existence in its place ... These considerations show that the proper name "A" and the expression "A's body" do not have the same use, at least not if we decide to use the above criteria for the identity of A. But now be careful not to think that these considerations show that besides A's body there is something else, another object, which is A. You must refrain from looking for a substance when you see a substantive—but not from thoroughly examining the use of a word.

This directive is elaborated in what follows:

Suppose one answers the question, "Who remembers last year's earthquake?", with "I", pointing to a body. There is a queer mistake, hard to explain, in considering that in answering "I", pointing to a body is an indirect way of pointing to the self. It is bound up with counting objects in visual space, where we understand what we oppose our bodies to. We can count bodies, but how do we count selves? What do I oppose myself to? We're inclined to say that names for selves refer to entities connected with bodies ... Compare supposing that each of us has a self like myself with supposing that everybody has a shilling (though I know only that I myself have one). In the latter case the act of supposing might be done with a drawing. Part of the game of supposing that other people have a shilling is being able to make a picture. The sense of the word "shilling" is given by the use language makes of it, and part of what we might do to explain any sentence containing "shilling"

would be showing a picture ... The supposition of having a self is very different from that of having a shilling, although "Each of you has a self" sounds like "Each of you has a shilling"... Seeing how different they are ... may make you more reluctant to say "although other people can't be imagined without their bodies I could nevertheless be imagined without mine". But suppose we had selves without bodies, what about language? How should we make ourselves understood? ... Voices might be imagined as coming from various places, but it might easily be the case that the same voice was heard at once in several different places; and then what use would the word "I" have? (YB).

Recall that when Smith said "I'm Smith, though my body has changed", "the proper name referred in one way or another to a human body; for Smith in his new body had to remember his old body" (YB). At the same time, the example of Smith's two bodies shows that "'I' and 'this body' can't be interchanged, even though 'I' only has meaning with reference to a body ... But if you discover that the word 'I' doesn't mean 'my body', i.e., that it's used differently, this doesn't mean that you've discovered a new entity, the ego, besides the body. All you've discovered is that 'I' isn't used the same way as 'my body'" (YB).

This is enough to illustrate how Wittgenstein examines the Cartesian question, as though it does not concern a fact of the world but rather a matter of expression. But it leaves one with a feeling of dissatisfaction because it does not make clear what the Cartesian philosopher is doing with language when he says the concept *mind* represents a substance; and the puzzles about the self do not disappear. The stated goal, of dissolving a problem, has yet to be reached. Wittgenstein's views on the nature of positions philosophers put forward and on philosophers' use of language are directed to this goal. By

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filling out and supplementing things Wittgenstein said in *The Blue Book* and Yellow Book, we can use a philosophical position often associated with dualistic views, namely solipsism, to illustrate how these metaphilosophical views function to make a puzzling position disappear. Three important general guides govern Wittgenstein's treatment of philosophical problems, and will be illustrated here by the problem of our knowledge of other minds. These are: (1) that philosophical problems are not empirical problems, (2) that the philosopher, dissatisfied with current language, presents a language innovation under the guise of stating a matter of fact, (3) that the revised terminology is idle in the language in use. First, consider the thesis that a philosophical problem is not empirical, as applied to the following form of solipsism: that I cannot know what goes on in the mind of another, or whether anything goes on, or whether indeed there is another mind. The following questions of the solipsist seem to challenge a commonsense, factual belief: "How can I know that another person has a pain, or whether what he has when he says he has pain is like what I have when I have pain?" His answer is, of course, that I cannot, that one can only know what one experiences oneself. Only if I could have *his* pain could I know what he is experiencing. But there is no possibility of two people having the same pain. It is this last assertion, offered in support of the claim that one cannot know what others' experiences are, or even that there are experiences other than one's own, that Wittgenstein returned to again and again. His avowed task was to destroy the picture created by such words as these: "I cannot experience anything except my own experience. I can see my red, but I can never see yours... I can feel my emotion, but not yours. Even if your anger infects me, so that I feel it in sympathy with you, it is yet, in so far as I feel it, *my* anger, not yours."[13] The picture conjured up by these words is of private ownership, and of private access to what is owned, each mind being related to

[13] W. T. Stace, *The Theory of Knowledge and Existence*, p. 67.

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its contents in this exclusive and privileged way. To all appearances the words are intended to give a picture of the psychological facts.

Whether they in fact do give such a picture is made doubtful by a question analogous to one raised by Wittgenstein in another connection:[14] Does the philosopher mean that all his past experience has shown that he has never had the same feeling as another, and that he is therefore justified in the general claim that sharing anyone's feeling is not psychologically possible? Wittgenstein remarks that "when we say 'I can't feel his pain', the idea of an insurmountable barrier suggests itself to us".[15] The picture of an obstacle that prevents my entering into your experience and sharing your thoughts and feelings is like that of a locked door which bars the way into your study. But the solipsist's support of his position makes it plain that unlike a locked door, there is no conceivable way of circumventing this obstacle. Thus, Stace argues: "Even if you can telepathically transfer a mental state, say an image, from your mind to mine, yet when I become aware of it, it is then *my* image, and not yours. I can never be you, nor you me."[16] We might add that even if, per impossibile, I were someone else, I could not be said to have his image, for my having someone else's image requires a person other than myself whose image I am having. Obviously, if I *were* someone else there would not be two people sharing an image. So long as I am I and he is he, there is no having his pain, and hence no knowing what he is feeling.

Now what is the nature of the impossibility which prevents me from having someone else's pain? The physical structure of human bodies excludes the possibility of my having pain in someone else's tooth. What never in fact happens is nevertheless conceivable; it is merely a fact of nature, which could be otherwise, that it is not possible for my pain to be located in another's body. But that my pain should belong to another

[14] *The Blue Book*, p. 16.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-6.
[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

person as well as to myself the solipsist implies is a *logical* impossibility. As A. J. Ayer put the matter, "It is logically impossible for a sense-experience to belong to the sense-history of more than a single self."[17] It is to be noted that the impossibility of my having someone else's experiences is supported by the *a priori* reason that I cannot be he. Wittgenstein remarked that when the words "can", "cannot", "must" are met with in philosophy, the sentences in which they occur are being used to express propositions which are secure against falsification. That it often appears that a fact is being asserted is sometimes because the same sentence can be used to state a fact of experience.[18] (One can, for example, imagine circumstances in which the sentences "I can't know what is in his mind", "Motion is impossible", "Only I exist" would function in this way.) In his *Zettel* Wittgenstein said that "the essential thing about metaphysics" is that "it obliterates the distinction between factual and conceptual investigations".[19] He therefore set about to "destroy the outward similarity between a metaphysical proposition and an experiential one",[20] and this means dispelling the outward likeness between a necessary proposition and an empirical one.

A philosopher who gives "I am I and he is he" as a reason for his view that no two people can have the same pain is not deriving an empirical conclusion, which means that the sentence "I can't have his pain" is not used to express an empirical proposition. A logical impossibility, not a physical impossibility, is being asserted. In this use according to Wittgenstein the sentence "hides a grammatical rule".[21] This characterization of necessary propositions is central to his explanation of the philosopher's activity, namely, that in arguing for a "view" a philosopher evidences a dissatisfaction with ordinary language. Despite the nonverbal, empirical air surrounding sentences which use the logical "can't" (such

[17] *Language, Truth and Logic*, 2nd. ed., p. 125.
[18] *The Blue Book*, pp. 56-7.
[19] p. 82.
[20] *The Blue Book*, p. 55.
[21] *The Blue Book*, p. 55.

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as "I can't have his pain"), these sentences according to him "do not refer to a matter of experience at all, but only to a form of expression we have adopted and which we could perfectly easily chuck aside. They are statements about a convention which we have made" (YB). The characterization of necessary propositions as "rules of grammar" has caused Wittgenstein to be called a conventionalist, and there is much justification for this label. But we can make his point about the import of a philosophical utterance, now understood as intended to express a necessity, without subscribing to the view that a sentence making no mention of words, e.g., "Cats are animals", is about words. This can be done by considering *sentences* which express necessary propositions, rather than the propositions they express. This approach, which prevents confusing necessary propositions with verbal propositions, is due to Morris Lazerowitz.[22] It achieves Wittgenstein's aim of explaining how a philosophical sentence which appears to state "a fact of the world" while being, in the philosopher's use, the vehicle of a necessary truth, is connected with a linguistic convention. The way in which the necessity of a proposition is bound up with a verbal matter is the following: the statement that a sentence S expresses a necessary proposition is equivalent to a statement about the usage of words occurring in S.

To see this, consider two sentences in current language which parallel "It is impossible for two people to have the same pain", one expressing a necessary proposition and one a fact of experience: "It is impossible for a prime number greater than 2 to be even" and "It is impossible for a horse to overtake a cheetah". The statement that a horse cannot overtake a cheetah could in principle be false. And in general, in the case of every sentence of the form "x cannot . . ." which expresses an empirical proposition, we know what it would be like for the situation asserted by "x does . . ." to obtain. "Cheetah that is outrun by a horse" describes some-

[22] See especially *The Structure of Metaphysics*, pp. 265-71, and *Studies in Metaphilosophy*, pp. 46-56.

thing whose existence is denied by the sentence in which it occurs. A similar account of sentences expressing necessary propositions will, however, not do. Where the "cannot" refers to a logical impossibility the sentence does not deny the existence of something it *describes*. Unlike a physicist, a mathematician who tells us what cannot be does not *describe* what cannot be; for he does not describe what in principle *could* be. In general, in the case of mathematics this is to say that in sentences of the form "x cannot exist", "x" does not have a descriptive function. To return now to the example, "An even prime greater than 2 does not exist", we can see how the fact that it expresses an *a priori* necessity is bound up with a verbal matter: the fact (a) that this sentence expresses a necessary proposition is equivalent to the fact (b) that "even prime greater than 2" describes no number. In knowing fact (a) about the sentence in which "even number greater than 2" occurs, we know that in the language of mathematics this phrase has no use—although the verbal fact about the phrase is not what the sentence expresses. Wittgenstein did not develop the detail required for explaining how the necessity of a proposition is bound up with a verbal matter, but I think the explanation here is consonant with his thesis about philosophical views.

Consider now the philosophical sentence, "It is impossible for two people to have the same pain". Taken as expressing a necessary proposition, it prevents the phrase "having the same pain" from describing the experience of two people. Seeing that this is the point of the philosopher's utterance brings to light his discontent with our present language and the revision his nonverbal mode of speech conceals. It is plain that as English is used it is proper to say "You are having the same headache I have", "We both had the same feeling when we heard the news", etc. Ordinary English does not proscribe its use, and in ordinary circumstances the solipsist would without hesitation describe his pain as the same as another's. He does not bring his ordinary talk into line with his philosophical talk. If he insists in a "philosophic mo-

ment", to use Moore's term, that another's pain cannot be his, that he spoke inaccurately before and should have instead said "His pain is exactly like mine", then Wittgenstein's conclusion seems to be the right one: "He is saying that he doesn't wish to apply the phrase 'he has got my pain' or 'we both have the same pain'. . . ".[23] By advancing his statement as though it expressed a necessary truth he is giving vent to his dissatisfaction with current usage and is changing it in a way that suits him better—all this masked by the fact-stating form of speech in which things rather than words are referred to. Behind the delusive façade of rejecting a proposition as false he is altering an ordinary mode of speech. "Having the same pain as yours" is rejected in favor of "having a similar pain to yours."

The philosopher gives no notice that he is legislating "You and I have the same pain" out of the language, and is unaware that his activity is purely linguistic. He is duped by the indicative, fact-stating form of the words, "Everyone's experiences are his alone", into the illusion that they express a psychological truth, and fails to see that he is merely introducing revised terminology. As Wittgenstein put it in the following well-known but insufficiently discussed passage, ". . . he is not aware that he is objecting to a convention. He sees a way of dividing the country different from the one used on the ordinary map. He feels tempted say, to use the name 'Devonshire' not for the county with its conventional boundary, but for a region differently bounded. He could express this by saying, 'Isn't it absurd to make *this* a county, to draw the boundaries *here*?' But what he says is: 'The *real* Devonshire is this'. We could answer: 'What you want is only a new notation, and by a new notation no facts of geography are changed'."[24] This passage graphically makes the point that the philosopher is in some way dissatisfied with current language. Moreover, where the metaphysician supposes himself to be exploring a terrain for new facts Wittgen-

[23] *The Blue Book*, p. 54.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

stein represents him as merely manipulating terminology. Once this is seen, the erroneous idea the philosopher has of his investigations tends to disappear, and should completely disappear when the linguistic sources are uncovered.

In exploring the sources of the revision Wittgenstein begins in the Yellow Book by pointing out what he calls the difference in grammar of the word "have" in "Miss Ambrose does not have the fountain pen; I have it" and "Miss Ambrose has toothache. I have toothache". In the case of the latter pair an asymmetry strikes us, namely, that there is no hypothesis about the statement "I have toothache". If there were, it would be proper English to say "I think it's I who has toothache" (YB). We are tempted to express the difference by saying that I can know that I have toothache but not that she has (YB). But he asks us to note that if we express ourselves in this way we are emphasizing a difference between "I have" and "she has" in a manner which bears only a surface analogy to the difference between "I have a gold tooth" and "She has a gold tooth". We seem to bring out the difference by saying that I can know both that I have a gold tooth and that she has, but not that we are both in pain. What we have to see is that when we use a similar form of words we are saying something different: that to say I know that I have a gold tooth but cannot know that she has is to assert a matter of empirical fact, supported by my being unable to look into her mouth; whereas to say I can know I have pain but not that she has is to highlight a difference in "the grammar" of "I have" and "she has". Wittgenstein says of our ordinary notation that "it draws a boundary round a rather heterogeneous set of experiences—mine, yours, hers, and in this notation the difference between the uses of the words "I", "you", "she" is minimized. Each designates the proprietor of a toothache. A notation can stress, and it can minimize, and the solipsist is tempted to change the emphasis—by assigning to the pronoun "I" a unique position in the language. That this is what he is doing is hidden behind the

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appearance of an assertion about pain and knowing (YB), in particular, about the possibility of *my* knowing.

Consider now the consequences of the solipsist claim, "Only I feel my pain", taken as expressing a necessary proposition. If what it expresses were necessary, then phrases such as "our having the same pain" would be excluded from being used to describe any state of affairs, and "our having different pains" would be made to cover all conceivable cases of our being in pain. This is to say that "our having different pains" would lose its antithesis. In *The Blue Book* Wittgenstein remarks on the "typically metaphysical" use of a word or phrase, "namely without an antithesis; whereas in their correct and everyday use vagueness [for example] is opposed to clearness, flux to stability, inaccuracy to accuracy . . .".[25] The objection to this revision of usage is that depriving one of a pair of antithetical terms of its use in sentences that convey information destroys the function of both, as when a tiller is detached from the rudder. Wittgenstein stated this general principle in the Yellow Book by saying that "a word to which no other word can be contrasted is of no use". In the present context, preventing the phrase "our having the same pain" from applying to any experience makes "our having different pains" idle. For the latter will no longer distinguish between possible cases of two people being in pain. Since our having the same pain is not a possibility, "our having *different* pains" will cover all conceivable pains of ours, and will have no more descriptive force than does "our having pain"; and "All people in pain have different pains" will convey no more factual information than "All people in pain are in pain". Now in ordinary English "Two people have the same pain" has a use. A nurse, for example, might explain her giving two patients the same sedative by saying they have the same pain. Unless the solipsist makes restitution by means of a form of words which does the work of "They have the same pain", the words "Only

[25] p. 46.

I feel my pain" will not do the kind of work he thinks they do, namely, "express a kind of scientific truth",[26] an important fact about the psychological make-up of people (YB). Instead of being a factual proposition, "Only I feel my pain" reduces to the contentless tautology, "All pains felt by me are pains felt by me". It is clear that if the solipsist does make linguistic reparation so that the new language can express the fact that we have the same feeling, then nothing is gained.

It will be useful now to consider the solipsist position which "I alone feel my pain" was intended to support, namely, "I can know only my own experience, not what anyone else's is; about someone else I can only conjecture. I may believe someone is in pain, but not being he, I can never know this." Here again the words have the air of making a factual assertion, but the solipsist must be understood to use them to express a necessary proposition. For he excludes the only possible evidence for someone else's being in pain, namely, bodily behavior, including speaking and writing as well as moaning. It is logically inconceivable that any evidence should be adequate for knowledge. This means that the phrase "knowing that Smith is in pain" is deprived of its use. The consequence with regard to the contrast words "believe", "conjecture", "suppose", "imagine", and the like now emerges clearly. They no longer have their former function of demarcating a boundary beyond which lies possible knowledge. "Believe but do not know" stands for no contrast. The solipsist uses the phrase in stating his position, but it is mere appearance that either "believe" or "know" is used with its antithesis intact. The suggestion of the solipsist's language is that there is a goal which we cannot reach. But in fact his language provides no goal; indeed, it logically precludes it (YB). And so "believe", etc. lose their contrast use, and therefore their use. There is no point in saying we believe Smith is in pain if nothing better than belief is even theoretically open to us.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

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The solipsist might counter that "believe" still serves to distinguish between an attitude to others' experiences and the knowledge I have of my own. But consider his use of "know" in "I know I am in pain". In what J. L. Austin called the standard case, where the experience is clearcut and the word "pain" unquestionably applies, it runs counter to usage to say "I believe I am in pain". It is just because of this fact that I cannot say "I know". What more does "I know I am in pain" say than "I am in pain"? As Wittgenstein observed, "know" is used where I can also use "doubt", not where "doubt" is logically excluded.[27] It may well have been a source of dissatisfaction to the solipsist that ordinary language does not mark off explicity "I have pain" from "He has pain" by allotting knowledge to the one and belief to the other. But the words by which he expresses his position about the experiences of others employs the distinction between "know" and "believe" while at the same time legislating "know" out of use—by destroying the distinction. This is an indication that the nature of his claim about the limits of knowledge and the role of supporting arguments has been misconceived.

The solipsist will insist that the distinction is preserved: that the word "know" is left a restricted use to preface statements about my own experience, and "believe" and related words are given an enormously expanded use. But if within the stretched use the solipsist gives the word "believe", he tries to distinguish, for example, believing Nixon would be impeached from believing litmus paper will turn red in acid, say by distinguishing degrees of probability, then ordinary language may as well be left alone. There would be no point whatever in introducing "believes with a high degree of probability" to do the work of "knows". Furthermore, the new notation would contain the seeds of the solipsist's discontent with the old: he could ask whether our belief that others have

[27] *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 221.

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pain has a high degree of probability or not. One of Wittgenstein's provocative remarks in the Yellow Book was that what the philosopher says is all wrong, what the bedmaker says is all right.

RESUMEN

El llamado Libro Amarillo consta de notas tomadas a intervalos durante el tiempo en que se dictaba el *Libro Azul* y, por lo tanto, tiene una relación muy estrecha con problemas que en éste se investigan. Como el *Libro Azul*, refleja el cambio en la concepción de Wittgenstein acerca de la naturaleza de los problemas filosóficos y de su solución. Esta nueva idea, expresada en el Libro Amarillo, es la de que las preguntas filosóficas se refieren a una forma de simbolismo pero se las representa como preguntas acerca de hechos del mundo. La implicación de esto es que el tema propio de la investigación filosófica es el uso lingüístico más bien que los hechos no verbales.

Para ilustrar este concepto, se hace uso del tratamiento que da Wittgenstein a la posición solipsista, según la cual uno no puede saber lo que sucede en las mentes de otros. Tres líneas generales importantes gobiernan su examen del lenguaje que el filósofo emplea para expresar una posición y para argumentar a favor de ella. Estas son: (1) que los problemas filosóficos no son empíricos; (2) que el filósofo, insatisfecho con el lenguaje corriente, introduce una innovación lingüística aparentando enunciar una cuestión de hecho; (3) que la terminología revisada se encuentra ociosa en el lenguaje cotidiano.

La tesis de que un problema filosófico no es empírico se aplica al argumento del solipsista de que puesto que uno sólo puede saber que otra persona tiene un dolor, teniendo su dolor, lo cual es imposible, uno no puede saber lo que la otra persona está experimentando. La imagen que el argumento crea es la de que uno tiene acceso a los contenidos de la propia mente, pero no a la de alguien más. Lo que se sostiene, que yo no puedo sentir el dolor de otros, sugiere que hay una barrera insuperable. Pero la insuperabilidad es lógica más que empírica. La oración "No puedo sentir su dolor" se utiliza para expresar una verdad necesaria, y no se refiere a una barrera psicológica, una que podríamos *tratar* de superar.

La caracterización de las proposiciones necesarias como "ocultando una regla gramatical" le es central a la segunda tesis de Wittgenstein de que las palabras de un filósofo no se refieren a experiencias, sino sólo a una forma adoptada de expresión. Puesto que una verdad necesaria está ligada a una convención lingüística, la putativa verdad necesaria del filósofo está ligada a una convención —la que de hecho es una innovación lingüística. La caracterización

de Wittgenstein de las proposiciones necesarias como "reglas de gramática" se encuentra expuesta a las objeciones familiares en contra del convencionalismo. Pero lo que se quiere decir acerca de una expresión filosófica, entendida ahora como pretendiendo expresar una verdad lógicamente irrefutable, puede decirse sin aceptar la opinión de que una oración que no mencione palabras es, sin embargo, acerca de palabras. Una explicación dada por Morris Lazerowitz, que impide que confundamos a las proposiciones necesarias con proposiciones verbales, proporciona una explicación de cómo una proposición filosófica está conectada con una convención lingüística. Esto es, que la afirmación de que una oración S dice lo que es necesariamente verdadero es equivalente a una afirmación acerca del uso de las palabras que figuran en S. Por ejemplo, el hecho (empírico) de que la oración "Es imposible que haya un número racional $= \sqrt{2}$ " expresa una necesidad es equivalente al hecho (empírico) de que "número racional $= \sqrt{2}$ " no se usa para describir número alguno. Es importante notar que este hecho verbal acerca de la frase, no es lo que la oración *expresa*. De manera similar, si la oración "Es imposible que dos personas tengan el mismo dolor" se hace para expresar una verdad necesaria, a la frase "tengan el mismo dolor" se le impide que describa la experiencia de dos personas. Aun cuando en español (inglés) ordinario no es impropio decir "Ambos experimentamos lo mismo al escuchar las noticias", esto sería impropio en el lenguaje revisado del filósofo. Es este punto verbal el objeto de su aseveración, aun cuando él no está consciente de que su objeción se dirige en contra de una convención establecida. La consecuencia de esto es que "tenemos dolores diferentes" pierde su función descriptiva si se impide que "tener el mismo dolor" se aplique a cualquier caso concebible.

La revisión del solipsista se reduce, entonces, a nada. Ni espera el solipsista que el contenido verbal de la opinión de que únicamente yo siento mi dolor, o la opinión que se apoya en esto, que yo no puedo saber lo que otro está sintiendo, se haga operativa en el lenguaje corriente. Su revisión es ociosa. Sostener que yo no puedo saber que otros tienen dolor y que yo sólo sé lo que yo siento, tiene como su correlato verbal que la aplicación de "saber" se restringe a los contenidos de la propia experiencia y pierde cualquier aplicación concebible acerca de las experiencias de otros. Desaparece el contraste usual "cree pero no sabe cuáles son los sentimientos de S" y es engañosa la aplicación amplia que se le da a "cree". Pues si "sabe" pierde su uso, lo mismo le sucede a su antítesis. Las palabras mediante las cuales el solipsista expresa su posición, emplean la distinción entre "sabe" y "cree", y luego mediante su legislación las pone fuera de uso. Cualquier intento por hacer

una reparación lingüística, distinguiendo entre grados de creencia y haciendo que "cree con un alto grado de probabilidad" cumpla con la función de "sabe", es ocioso por dos razones: si realmente jugase el mismo papel, el cambio sería inútil y aún estarían presentes las semillas del mismo descontento escéptico.

(*Resumen de Alice Ambrose*)