Did Wittgenstein Practise What He Preached?

JOHN W. COOK

I want to make some observations about Wittgenstein's philosophical method. Not his descriptions of it but his actual practice. I want to consider whether he practised what he preached. He declared, for instance, that in order to sustain ourselves in philosophy, we must nourish our thinking with a healthy supply of examples. He also said that a philosopher mustn't guess how a word is used but must *look at* its use and learn from that. But is this what Wittgenstein actually did?

I

Rather than discussing this matter in generalities, I will consider how Wittgenstein dealt with a particular philosophical problem. Almost any problem would suffice, but I am going to study his treatment of the problem of other minds, i.e., whether, and if so how, one can know that there are other human beings with a mental life more or less like one's own. I am not going to survey all that he said and wrote about this problem but will pick out and discuss some remarks of his that I take to be typical specimens of his philosophizing.

To repeat, what interests me here is how Wittgenstein conducted himself in his treatment of a problem; I am not interested in his results or conclusions, not in his final destination but in how he got there. Accordingly, I am not interested in his remark in *Philosophical Investigations*: 'If we are using the word "to know" as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain.'[1] Nor am I interested in his remark: 'It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking" ' (*PI*, 222). The typical mind-body dualist maintains that no one *can* know what, if

[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), third ed., §246. This volume will henceforth be referred to in the text as *PI*.

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anything, another person thinks or feels.[2] That is not, of course, his starting point; it is where his reasoning has led him. So if you were to contradict this conclusion of his, it would not be unreasonable of him to reply, 'But consider the following ...', whereupon he would attempt to win you over to his position. What we would then have is one philosopher pitting his *modus tolens* against another's *modus ponens*. A stalemate! This is perhaps why Wittgenstein thought it a mistake to contradict what another philosopher says.[3] So, while I am willing to concede for the moment that Wittgenstein may have found his way through or around the problem of other minds, I want to figure out, if I can, how he did that. I certainly would not want to embrace his conclusion if I could not see how to get there on my own.

II

The specimen of Wittgenstein's philosophizing that I want to discuss is, as I've said, part of his treatment of the problem of other minds. But before considering that specimen, I must emphasize that in the passages I want to discuss Wittgenstein was addressing the mind-body dualist and was invoking the verifiability criterion of meaning in order to discredit dualism. I must begin, then, with

[2] Wittgenstein understood the matter as follows: 'A philosopher will say: psychological phenomena are things that happen in some man's mind; I can know only events in my own mind not in another man's.' *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology, 1946–47*, P. T. Geach (ed.) (University of Chicago Press, 1989), 34. (I will henceforth refer to this volume as *WL47*.) In this volume Geach has compiled the notes taken of those lectures by himself, K. J. Shah, and A. C. Jackson.

[3] When John Wisdom mentioned to him a fruitless discussion he had had with another philosopher, Wittgenstein commented that the trouble perhaps lay in the fact that Wisdom had contradicted the other man. Some commentators have claimed that Wittgenstein, to deal with the problem of other minds, simply contradicted dualists by appealing to the ordinary use of the verb 'to know' in, for example, 'I know he's in a lot of pain; I hear him moaning'. But that is no way to break the stalemate since a dualist may very well disdain ordinary language. Thus, C. D. Broad said: 'In philosophy it is ... silly to be a slave to common speech ... When we remember that it represents the analysis made unconsciously for practical ends by our prehistoric ancestors we shall not be inclined to treat it as an oracle.' *The Mind and Its Place in Nature* (London: Trench, Trubner & Co., 1925), 148.

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some reminders about what, exactly, these two positions are as they pertain to the problem of other minds.

Dualists, such as G. E. Moore and C. D. Broad, maintain that while we cannot *know* that there are human beings with a mental life like our own, we at least *believe* that there are. It is common sense, they maintain, to believe that. Verificationism, on the other hand, declares that a putative proposition for which we might wish to have evidence but for which there *can* be no evidence (now or ever) makes no sense and is really not a proposition at all. So when a dualist says he believes, but can't know, that those whom he regards as his fellow human beings have a mental life like his own, his putative belief makes no sense and is not a belief at all. As Wittgenstein put the matter in the last year of his life, 'It seems to me: if one can't really *know* whether someone is (for instance) irritated, then one also cannot really believe or surmise it.'[4]

These two positions can be further delineated by the accounts they give of the common-sense man, the non-philosopher. Moore, a typical dualist, in his enumeration of the beliefs of common sense, declared that we all 'believe that men, besides having bodies, also have minds ... We all commonly believe ... that acts of consciousness are quite definitely attached ... to some material objects [i.e., human and animal *bodies*], and quite definitely not attached to others.'[5] Wittgenstein, by contrast, held it to be a mistake to attribute such (unverifiable) beliefs to the common-sense man and declared that dualists are caught up in a philosophical picture: 'We make a picture like that ... of a barrier which doesn't allow one person to come closer to another's experience than to the point of observing his behaviour; but on looking closer we find that we can't apply the picture which we have made.'[6]

Regarding the dualist's claim to believe that others have a mental life like his own, Wittgenstein said in *The Blue Book*: 'But how can I even *believe* this? How can these words make sense to me? How could I have even come by the idea of another's experience if there is no possibility of any evidence for it?' (46). These are, of course, rhetorical questions, and a bit later Wittgenstein repeats them. Addressing the dualists' supposed 'hypothesis' that one's friends

[4] *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, *II*, (Blackwell, 1992), 84. This volume will henceforth be referred to in the text as *LW, II*.

[5] *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), 2–7.

[6] *The Blue and Brown Books* (Blackwell, 1958), 56. This volume will henceforth be referred to in the text as *BB*.

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and neighbours have 'personal experiences', he comments: 'But is it a hypothesis at all? For how can I even make the hypothesis if it transcends all possible experience? How could such a hypothesis be backed by meaning? (Is it not like paper money, not backed by gold?)' (*BB*, 48).[7] Did Wittgenstein mean that the common-sense man, the non-philosopher, makes no sense and is saying nothing at all when he says such things as 'The child is in great pain' and 'I believe that Jones is worried about his job'? No, for Wittgenstein distinguished such ordinary remarks from the claims of dualists (or 'realists', as he called them). The dualist, in declaring that he believes, but can't know, that others have personal experiences, is making a *metaphysical* claim, said Wittgenstein (*BB*, 48), whereas the common-sense man, in saying that someone is worried or suffering, is *not* making a metaphysical claim (*WL47*, 41, 165). The difference is that the dualist, but not the common-sense man, means to be speaking of events *in the mind* of another. Accordingly, Wittgenstein says that the dualist (or realist) 'is not the common-sense man, who is as far from realism [i.e., dualism] as from idealism' (*BB*, 48).

Dualists, of course, are unlikely to acquiesce in another philosopher's accusation that they are speaking nonsense when they state their position regarding other minds. They are likely to bridle at the suggestion that their statement is, as Wittgenstein once put it, like mere gibberish except for 'the jingle of the words'.[8] A dualist is likely to protest: 'I would certainly know whether I am making sense or spouting gibberish.' Wittgenstein anticipated such a reaction and replied that meaning is not something that can be discovered by introspection, and 'Therefore the phrase "I think I

[7] Wittgenstein seems to have borrowed the unsecured bank-note analogy from William James. In Lecture VI of *Pragmatism* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949), James writes:

> Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass', so long as nothing challenges them, just as bank notes pass so long as nobody refuses them. But this all points to direct face-to-face verification somewhere, without which the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash-basis whatever. We trade on each other's truth. But beliefs verified concretely by *somebody* are the posts of the whole superstructure. (207–208)

[8] *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1932–1935*, Alice Ambrose (ed.) (University of Chicago Press, 1979), 64. This volume will be referred to henceforth as *WL35*.

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mean something by it" or "I'm sure I mean something by it", which we so often hear in philosophical discussions to justify the use of an expression, is for us no justification at all' (*BB*, 65).[9]

III

What I have said thus far provides some background for what I want to discuss, and I trust that no one will find what I have said controversial. There is, however, something further that needs to be emphasized here, for there is a vital point on which Wittgenstein and the dualist agree but which is seldom made explicit. They agree that what we see (observe, perceive) of another person is his or her (usually clothed) *body*. Not, of course, a corpse or a torso, but that which remains of a Cartesian person once it has been stripped of its thinking/feeling component, the mind. (Moore was acknowledging this when, in a passage quoted above, he spoke of human bodies as *material objects*. Except for their unique shape and locomotion, Cartesian bodies, as we may call them, like bricks, are nothing more than material objects.) So what I see if I see a ball being thrown or a nail being hammered are certain *bodily movments* (related to a ball or a nail). Wittgenstein and the dualist are alike, then, in sharing the idea that what we see of other people are Cartesian bodies and their movements.

That, in fact, is why they *have* a problem of other minds. After all, if they did not embrace that philosophical idea, if they were concerned, instead, with how we know that this man or that woman is worried or angry or in pain, the answer would be relatively simple: 'Ask him' or 'Ask his wife' or 'Read her diary' or 'Wait til he's in his cups' or something of the sort. Such questions about individual men and women cannot all be answered alike, of course, since people are not all alike. As I recall, it was impossible to draw out of my uncle whatever worries or disappointments he may have had about this or that. While my aunt could read him like a book

[9] Wittgenstein was not here answering an objection he merely imagined. His friend Drury reports that W. E. Johnson, the logician, said to him: 'I consider it a disaster for Cambridge that Wittgenstein has returned. A man who is quite incapable of carrying on a discussion. If I say that a sentence has meaning for me, no one has a right to say it is senseless.' M. O'C. Drury, 'Conversations with Wittgenstein', in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, Rush Rhees (ed.) (Oxford University Press, 1984), 103.

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(they had a very long marriage), to us children he remained inscrutable. My aunt, on the other hand, wore her heart, and a great deal more, on her sleeve. We never had to guess what was going on in her mind. Or rather we seldom did. There was a brief period in my youth when she was visibly downcast (she had been to her doctor, we later learned), but she would not speak of her troubles. It was not until she went in for surgery that we began to fathom her state of mind. And so it goes. People differ greatly as to what they will reveal of themselves and to whom. So we learn to pry and probe in different ways, and to respect the silence of others, as we grow up and develop relationships with various people. But in our daily rounds we have no occasion to ask a *philosophical* question about whether a friend or neighbour thinks and feels, about whether he or she, in the prime of life, is a sentient being. We have no occasion to do so because what occasions the philosophical question is the idea that when we look around us at (what we take to be) family and friends, what we see are material objects (a.k.a. 'bodies') and their movements, an idea that plays no role in our daily intercourse with other people.[10]

Here is the problem. Material objects, such things as bricks and old shoes, seem eminently unqualified for the role of sentient beings. So, when we philosophize about thoughts, emotions, sensations, and the like, where are we to give them a home? What could possibly be the *bearer* of such things? When we go looking for candidates, philosophers don't offer us familiar, plain-as-day answers. The dualists' candidate is a mysterious, immaterial entity, the mind. Dualists would have us regard *that* as the bearer of toothaches, thoughts, emotions, intentions, and the like.[11] But if we accept that candidate, we will have settled for a mystery instead of solving one. Moreover, by accepting that alternative we would be making the thoughts, feelings, etc. of other people unknowable. If,

[10] For detailed criticisms of the philosophical notion of a body, see the following two articles by Douglas C. Long. 'Descartes' Argument for Mind-Body Dualism', *The Philosophical Forum*, Vol. I, No. 3 (Spring, 1969), 259–273, and 'The Bodies of Persons', *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LXXI, No. 10 (May 30, 1974), 291–301. Throughout this paper I have assumed that this matter needn't be revisited.

[11] Thomas Reid, in *The Intellectual Powers of Man*, essay 2, ch. 18, said: 'Now reason assures us that pain, being a sensation, can only be in the sentient being, as its subject–that is in the mind ... When we consider the sensation of pain in itself [i.e., as distinct from its cause] ... we cannot say with propriety that the [injured] toe is either the place or the subject of it.'

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however, we reject the dualist's answer, the common philosophical alternative seems equally unsatisfactory: the bearer of thoughts, feelings, and so on is a body, something essentially like a brick. If we are going to attribute mental states to *bodies*, we will have to settle for some form of behaviourism, the idea, basically, that if one's neighbour has a toothache, his toothache consists in his body behaving in a toothachy fashion. While this basic version of behaviourism can be embellished, and Wittgenstein did embellish it, the embellishments must not divert our attention (as I think often happens with philosophers) from the basic story, namely, that one's friends and neighbours are just material objects; they are brick-like things, except that they move about and make noises.[12]

So philosophers find themselves having to choose between, as it were, a brick and a spook, and this should strike us as peculiar. But can these be the only alternatives?

Notice that philosophers, in their pursuit of veritable sentient beings, have managed to overlook the most obvious candidates, people. We daily say such things as that Jack is worried, that Lucinda is angry, and that Walter went to the dentist with a toothache. Here, in Jack, Lucinda, and Walter, unsullied by metaphysical definition, we have three commonly recognized sentient beings, if that means that, from time to time, they become worried or angry or suffer toothaches. They are nothing like bricks. So why not dispense with (Cartesian) minds and bodies and happily seize upon people? Some philosophers, I realize, could never settle for so unphilosophical an answer. Or at any rate, it is not the answer that would have occurred to them if left to their own devices. But what about Wittgenstein? Did he, as I have hinted, opt for Cartesian bodies and behaviourism?[13]

[12] One may want to protest that these material objects must at least have a nervous system, which would make them very different from bricks. But Wittgenstein would not concede even that. He wrote that it is helpful when philosophizing to bear in mind that 'I don't know at all whether the humans I am acquainted with actually have a nervous system', (*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, I* (Blackwell, 1980), §1063). And in *On Certainty* (Blackwell, 1969) he wrote: '... it is imaginable that my skull should turn out empty when it was operated on' (§4).

[13] It may be protested here that I answered this question nearly forty years ago in my article 'Human Beings', in *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Peter Winch (ed.) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 117–151. But I have long since repudiated that article and explained what

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IV

Consider what Wittgenstein said about the difference between the questions we ask about friends and family ('Is he still in much pain?') and the philosophical question whether those around us are sentient beings. He wrote: 'We all know the doctor's question "Is he in pain?" ... but the philosophical question is of a completely different kind; it is not [a] doubt about each individual in a particular case.'[14] So Wittgenstein acknowledged *a* difference, but did he mention the relevant difference? No, for he failed to point out that the philosophical, unlike our ordinary, question presupposes the philosophical idea that what we see of others are their Cartesian bodies. That is the philosophically relevant difference, but it never occurred to Wittgenstein that the idea of Cartesian bodies is just as problematic as the idea of Cartesian minds. This can be seen from his remark: 'Talk about a chair and a human body and all is well; talk about negation or the human mind and things begin to look queer', (*WL35*, 119). We can extract from this: 'Talk about ... a human body and all is well', i.e., the philosophical use of the word 'body' is unproblematic. We can also extract: 'talk about the human mind and things begin to look queer'. The solution? Jettison that queer entity, the mind. As for bodies, let them stand.

What is gained by that maneuver? As Wittgenstein saw it, once we have disposed of the (immaterial) mind, what remains, the body, is what is given a name, such as 'Walter' or 'Lucinda' ('other people's names refer to bodies' (*WL35*, 61), said Wittgenstein), and is regarded as a person.[15] And that, in turn, allowed Wittgenstein to hold that we regularly attribute aches and pains and hopes and fears to bodies, material things.[16]

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is wrong with it. See *The Undiscovered Wittgenstein: The Twentieth Century's Most Misunderstood Philosopher* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2005), 48–51, esp. note 14.

[14] *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, *I*, (Blackwell, 1992), §239. This volume will henceforth be referred to in the text as *LW, I*.

[15] In *The Big Typescript* (Blackwell, 2005) he wrote: 'I regard a person's name as the name of a body', (360).

[16] This committed Wittgenstein to adopting some form of behaviourism, which he did. I have thoroughly documented this elsewhere: *Wittgenstein's Metaphysics* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), ch. 9, and *Wittgenstein, Empiricism, and Language* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 47–94.

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This is what he was getting at in *The Blue Book* when he addressed philosophers, such as Reid (see note 11), who think that pains, etc. 'can only be in the mind'. Wittgenstein said:

> Let us now ask: 'Can a human *body* have pain?' One is inclined to say: 'How can the body have a pain? The body in itself is something dead; a body isn't conscious.' And here again it is as though we looked into the nature of pain and saw that it lies in its nature that a material object can't have it. And it is as though we saw that what has pain must be an entity of a different nature from that of a material object; that, in fact, it must be of a mental nature.
>
> On the other hand we can perfectly well adopt the expression 'this body feels pain', and we shall then, just as usual, tell it to go to the doctor, to lie down, and even to remember that when the last time it had pains they were over in a day. (*BB*, 73)

One may want to ask: 'But where are we to find that *body*, that material object, Wittgenstein talks about?' His answer would be: 'Look around at your family and friends; what you see are material objects that we call "bodies".' In other words, Wittgenstein was answering his initial question, 'Can a human *body* have pain?' by saying, in effect, 'Of course we *can* attribute pains, thoughts, emotions, etc., to bodies; we do it all the time!'

The crucial part of this passage, however, occurs in the second paragraph, where we find Wittgenstein employing his 'substitution method', which he had explained and employed earlier in *The Blue Book* (see 23 and 49). This method was supposed to remove difficulties by substituting a new form of expression for an ordinary form in order to display the depth grammar that is not perspicuous in the latter. In the *Investigations* he wrote: 'Some [misunderstandings] can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression', (§90). In lectures he said: 'In certain connexions it is useful to use a different form of expression for a while, and then we may go back and use the old form without feeling that it is unsatisfactory.'[17] So when he says in the

[17] *Philosophical Occasions* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 333. Wittgenstein first explained his use of the substitution method in 1930 in *Philosophical Remarks* (University of Chicago Press, 1975): 'Each time I say that, instead of such and such a representation [i.e., form of words] you could also use this other one, we take a further step towards the goal of grasping the essence of what is represented [by the ordinary form of

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above-quoted passage that we could adopt the expression 'this body feels pain', he is saying that this new form of expression displays the depth grammar of such ordinary forms of words as 'He is in pain' and 'Mary has a headache'. (I quoted Wittgenstein above saying that people's names 'refer to bodies'.) And when he says 'and we shall then, just as usual, tell it ...', this is his way of saying that the 'This body ... ' locution merely gives us a new way of saying the *same* thing that we have said in the past when using third-person pronouns and people's names. In other words, Wittgenstein utilized his substitution method here because he saw people taking such ordinary forms of expression as 'She is in pain' and 'Mary is in pain' to be referring to something other than a body when, in truth, a body is exactly what they *are* referring to.

So Wittgenstein held that when we say that someone has a toothache we are attributing pain to a *body*, a *material thing*. He never repudiated this metaphysical notion of bodies. For instance, in his 1946–47 lectures he said that when a person makes a decision, he 'says something and his body acts accordingly', (*WL47*, 36). And it is clear from what he wrote just months before his death (*LW, II*, 66–67) that he still clung to the idea that a person—your friend or neighbour—is a body, a body made human by its (non-mechanistic) way of behaving.[18]

Clearly, then, Wittgenstein and the dualist were bedeviled by the problem of other minds for the same reason: they both took it to be unquestionable that what we see of other people, if there are any, are their bodies and the movements of those bodies.[19] Yet the

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expression]', (51). See also his conversations with Friedrich Waismann in 1931 (*Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* (Blackwell, 1979), 184).

[18] See *The Undiscovered Wittgenstein*, op. cit., 48–51 for my discussion of these passages as well as *PI*, §284.

[19] I do not mean to suggest that these philosophers invariably kept this assumption in the forefront of what they said and wrote. On the contrary, they frequently failed to do so, with the result that they often appeared to be talking about real people, not metaphysical mock-ups. In doing so, they sowed a great deal of confusion. This was evident in a review of my *Wittgenstein, Empiricism, and Language*, where I had written that in Wittgenstein's philosophy there are Cartesian bodies but 'no people as we normally understand this' (60). The reviewer for *Philosophical Investigations* (April, 2001), Beth Savickey, was apparently so taken aback by this that she could only attribute it to this author's morally indefensible scholarship (the misuse of quotations). As she did not cite a single instance of such perversity, her claim was not rebuttable.

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problems they face are quite different. The dualist is faced with the question: 'If psychological states are states of an immaterial entity, the mind, an entity with which we can't even make eye-contact, how could one know (given that we see only bodies) that there are other sentient beings beside oneself, beings with a mental life like one's own?' Wittgenstein was faced with the question: 'How could we ever have come to say "He's worried" or "She has a headache" if we are talking about *bodies*, things essentially like bricks?' How did Wittgenstein answer this question?

V

In order to elicit his answer, it will be useful to return to the end of Part II and pick up the debate between mind-body dualism and Wittgenstein's verificationism.

When we left that debate, the dualists had said that they would certainly know it if they were spouting gibberish, and Wittgenstein had replied that that is no answer since you can't tell by introspection whether what you say makes sense or not. But the dualists had not fired their last shot, and in *The Blue Book* Wittgenstein quotes one of their responses. He says: '... I am told: "If you pity someone for having pains, surely you must at least *believe* that he has pains" ' (46). He does not say who 'told' him this, but a dozen years later, in his 1946–47 lectures, he revealed that it was C. D. Broad (*WL47*, 41, 165, and 284).[20] The point of Broad's remark was obviously to persuade Wittgenstein that he *can* believe, although he cannot verify, that others have aches and pains, that he is not spouting gibberish when he says this. His reasoning seems to have been as follows (see also *BB*, 48). I often feel pity (or sympathy) for an injured person, and in doing so I make no assertion and hence no unverifiable assertion. So as regards my feeling and exhibiting pity there is nothing to call 'gibberish'. Moreover, if I do pity an injured person, I certainly *believe*, I am of the *opinion*, that he is in pain. But if I can believe that someone is in pain, then, although I could never verify that he is, it at least *makes sense* to say, 'I believe he's in pain'. Broad's aim, then, was to show

[20] Geach, Shah, and Jackson all quote Wittgenstein, on the pages cited, as attributing to Broad the remark about pitying (or sympathizing with) someone.

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that verificationism is wrong: we *can* believe that p where 'p' is unverifiable. Let us call this 'Broad's Comeback Argument'.[21]

So the lines are drawn: Are dualism and other forms of realism true, as Broad and Moore held, or are they nonsense, as Wittgenstein maintained? Being unwilling to concede Broad the victory, Wittgenstein in his last lectures (and elsewhere) mounted a counter offensive on several fronts. He claimed that, contrary to dualism, thoughts and pains, etc., are not private in the sense of being known only to the person who has them (*WL47*, 33, 154, and 275). He also claimed that, contrary to dualism, a pain or a thought is not private in the sense that one person and one person only *has* it (*WL47*, 50, 52–54, 178–179, and 293). Finally, he declared that the dualists' fundamental mistake lay in their thinking that believing in the pains, etc. hidden from us in the mind of another person is analogous to believing that N has a stomach ulcer or that N has a bad tooth (in his firmly shut mouth), (*WL47*, 283–284). This, said Wittgenstein, is a bad analogy and must be resisted: '[It] misunderstands, or glosses over, the totally different uses of "believe". When you sympathize [with another person], that just is a good part of "believing in his toothache" ' (*WL47*, 284).[22]

This last point is directed at what I am calling 'Broad's Comeback Argument'. That argument works (proves verificationism wrong) only if the following is true: In 'If I pity someone for being in pain, then I *believe* he's in pain' the word 'believe' means 'am of the opinion'. But this, said Wittgenstein in the passage just quoted, is *not* true. Wittgenstein concedes that if you pity someone

[21] It is significant that in his 1946–47 lectures Wittgenstein was still ruminating about Broad's remark, made a dozen or more years earlier. For if, as some have alleged, Wittgenstein had abandoned the verifiability criterion of meaning in his later years, he would have ceased to be exercised by Broad's remark. In *The Undiscovered Wittgenstein* (op. cit.) I devoted chapter 4 to demonstrating that, although Wittgenstein modified the verification principle in his later years, it continued to play a critical role in his philosophizing.

[22] Wittgenstein often said that philosophers have been led astray by this or that apparent analogy in ordinary language. For example he said: 'It is the apparent analogy, and again the lack of analogy, between these two cases which causes our trouble. And it is this troublesome feature of our grammar which the realist does not notice'(*BB*, 49). In the present case, according to Wittgenstein, the dualist has made the mistake of thinking that 'it's in his mind so I can't feel it' is analogous to 'it's in his stomach [or his closed mouth] so I can't see it'.

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for being in pain, then you believe he's in pain.[23] But he then argues that in this case 'believe' doesn't mean what it does in 'I believe he has a stomach ulcer' or 'I believe he has a bad tooth'. In these latter cases, says Wittgenstein, the belief is an opinion, but when I believe in another's toothache (notice Wittgenstein's odd idiom here, 'believe in'), this is *not* an opinion. So Broad's argument, which was meant to show that there can be an *opinion* that p where 'p' is unverifiable, fails. It presupposes something that, according to Wittgenstein, is false.

The question is: How did Wittgenstein discover, if he did, that Broad's presupposition regarding 'believe' is false? In other words, when Wittgenstein spoke, in the above-quoted passage, of the 'totally different uses of "believe"', what enabled him to recognize, if he did, that these *are* different uses? One might think that Wittgenstein would have seen fit to parade before us a number of examples involving the word 'believe', examples in which we can see, with no coaching, that in some of them believing is, and in others is not, the same as having an opinion. But nowhere do we find Wittgenstein engaged in such an exercise. So he seems to have plucked his account of the two uses of 'believe' out of thin air. I mean, it appears that he did not abide by his own advice to stop guessing how a word functions and instead '*look at* its use and learn from that' (*PI*, §340). So we need to disregard that advice and find something else that might have led him to say what he did about the verb 'to believe'.

There may be a clue in his introducing the phrase 'believe in his toothache'. He seems to have thought that whenever the 'believe in' idiom is appropriate the belief is not an opinion and no question of verifiability can arise. So let us ask: where else does the 'believe in' idiom crop up in Wittgenstein's writings? An important instance, because we are concerned here with the problem of other minds, is his remark: 'If someone can *believe in* God with complete certainty, why not *in* Other Minds?'[24] Here Wittgenstein uses the 'believe in' idiom for both religious belief and believing in other minds. But what does this mean: 'believe in other minds'? Does anyone ever say that he believes in other minds or in another's thoughts? I

[23] In *The Blue Book* he said: 'Certainly, we shouldn't pity him if we didn't believe he had pains', (48). And in the *Investigations* he wrote: 'Pity, one may say, is a form of conviction that someone else is in pain' (§287).

[24] *Culture and Value* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), 73; emphasis added. This volume will henceforth be referred to in the text as *CV*.

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doubt that anyone actually says such things, but Wittgenstein may have been thinking of something like Moore's remark, quoted above, that we all believe that men have minds as well as bodies. (I am playing a hunch here, but bear with me.) Perhaps Wittgenstein asked himself what Moore could possibly have been thinking when he said that. And he may have answered somewhat as follows: 'We all treat others and talk about them as sentient beings, as beings that see and hear, have aches and pains, get worried and angry, etc., etc. So Moore is right to this extent: we do treat others, i.e., other human bodies, this way.'[25] This is what he may have been summing up in the phrase 'believe in other minds'. It is also significant that Wittgenstein, in the sentence quoted above, compared believing in other minds to believing in God. Apparently, he thought that there is a philosophically significant similarity between these. But in what *way* did he think they are similar? He was willing to speak in both cases of *believing* but insisted that neither belief is an opinion. (So we find him saying, for example, 'My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not [as dualists think] of the *opinion* that he has a soul' (*PI*, 178).) Also, he thought it a mistake to picture either God or the 'contents' of another's mind as transcendent, as something that transcends one's own experience. As he himself often said (see, for example, *PI*, §§126 and §§435; *WL47*, 43, 168, 285), 'Nothing is hidden' and 'Everything is open to view'.

Our question was this: how did Wittgenstein discover, if he did, that there is this use of 'believe', a use in which the belief in another's toothache is not an opinion and verification doesn't enter the picture? I think it is fair to say that he didn't discover this use of the word by paying attention to our everyday language, to what we say outside philosophy. If he paid attention to anything in this connection, it may have been Moore's remark (or something similar) about our believing that men have minds as well as bodies. And he was simply giving us his behaviouristic version of this. He was not bringing a word 'back from its metaphysical to its everyday use' (*PI*, §116).

I want now to bail out of the foregoing discussion, which was based on little more than a hunch, and address something else that

[25] I have used the phrase 'human body' here so as to reflect Wittgenstein's use of it, as when he said: 'If I talk of seeing, then as a rule I think of a subject which sees an object—I think of a *human body* and before his eyes a certain object' (*PO*, 365; emphasis added). This passage was brought to my attention by Thomas Mayberry.

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Wittgenstein said regarding the two supposed uses of 'believe'. (My interest once more is in philosophical method.) I have quoted Wittgenstein as saying that the dualists' fundamental mistake lay in their thinking that one's believing in the pains, etc., hidden from us in the mind of another person is analogous to believing that N has a stomach ulcer or that N has a bad tooth (in his firmly shut mouth). He added: '... to say "I believe he has a toothache" is to say something quite unlike "I believe he has a bad tooth" or "I believe he has a stomach ulcer" ', (*WL47*, 284). Let us pin this down a bit. If I am asked why a friend is going to the dentist, I may answer, 'I believe she has a broken tooth; she bit down on a cherry pit last night'. On another occasion I may answer: 'I believe he has a toothache; I noticed him wincing and rubbing his jaw'. In the one case I speak of a bad tooth and in the other of a toothache, and Wittgenstein is saying that in these two cases 'believe' is used in ways that are 'totally different'. What does he say in support of this claim? I can find nothing that he says in support of it, which would not be untypical of his philosophical practice. He does, however, say that sympathizing with another person 'just is a good part of "believing in his toothache"', and this seems to imply that one cannot, *without* sympathizing with N, believe that N has a toothache. Is this, perhaps, what makes 'believe he has a toothache' a special case, different from 'believe he has a broken tooth'?

If Wittgenstein was saying that, whereas one can believe that someone has a stomach ulcer without pitying the man, the case is otherwise with a toothache, we can put this to a test. It is true, of course, that a doctor who treats people's stomach ulcers on a daily basis may feel no pity for the patient presently before him; his attitude toward the patient may be purely professional, a concern to provide the appropriate medical treatment. But the same could be said of a dentist, especially if he works in a miliary dispensary, where he sees dozens of soldiers or sailors every day. He may very well believe that the patient now sitting in his chair has an aching upper molar, that the soldier was not malingering when he came in complaining of toothache. But, as the case is entirely routine, he does not think or say, 'Poor kid, that must hurt.' His attitude toward him is purely professional, 'Open wide!' Here we have a plausible example which, instead of supporting Wittgenstein's claim, appears to show the opposite. (Think also of the case in which an evil Nazi dentist—Laurence Olivier's character in the film 'Marathon Man'—uses his drill to inflict sadistic 'oral surgery' on

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an adversary.) So if Wittgenstein thought that a person is bound to pity someone whom he believes to have an aching tooth, he was mistaken.

Consider another possibility. Could Wittgenstein have thought that because sympathy is a feeling and cannot, therefore, be true or false, then because sympathy is, as he says, a good part of what believing comes to when we 'believe in another's toothache', such believing, too, can be neither true nor false? Could Wittgenstein have thought that this is what makes 'believe he has a toothache' logically distinct from 'believe he has a stomach ulcer'? If so, he was once again mistaken. For I can perfectly well believe that N has a toothache and pity him, but later learn that he was malingering and, for that reason, rebuke him. I might say to him, 'You led me to believe you had a toothache, but that wasn't true, was it?' If he is honest, he will answer, 'No, that wasn't true.'

My point in the two preceding paragraphs is that we can construct realistic examples by means of which to think about the claim Wittgenstein made in reply to Broad, but Wittgenstein, instead of considering such examples, merely invented the phrase 'believe in his toothache' with the result that he only muddied the waters.[26] He gives us no reason to agree that the verb 'to believe' has different meanings in the two cases he was comparing. In fact, we have good reason to think the opposite.

[26] Occasionally, but rarely, Wittgenstein reflected on the proper construction of philosophical examples. In his 1935 lectures he said: 'Logicians use examples which no one would ever think of using in any other connection. Whoever says "Socrates is a man"? ... What I am criticizing is the fact that logicians do not give these examples any life. We might use "man" as a predicate if we wanted to distinguish whether someone dressed as a woman was a man or a woman. We thus would have invented a surrounding for the word ...' (*WL35*, 124). His insight that an example must be given some 'life'—must include context—may be what led Wittgenstein, fifteen years later, to say: 'The contexts in which a word appears are portrayed best in a drama [*einen Drama*]; therefore, the best example for a sentence with a certain meaning is a quotation from a play' (*LW, II*, 7). (As Frank Ebersole has pointed out to me, this would not be good advice if Wittgenstein meant that we should borrow our examples from actual stage plays. But while Ebersole is undoubtedly right, I suspect that Wittgenstein was thinking of how we might give 'life' to our examples by providing a context. For a development of the quoted passage see *PI*, 188–189, as well as *LW, II*, 7.) The requirement that one give life to one's examples was seldom implemented in Wittgenstein's practice. In *On Certainty* he made an effort to do so but mostly, and in crucial instances, failed. See my 'Notes of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, *Philosophical*

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In making this point I do not mean to suggest that, as regards the problem of other minds, we should take sides with Broad rather than Wittgenstein. On the contrary, I would insist, and have argued at length elsewhere,[27] that both parties have gone wrong and have done so in the same fundamental way: they uncritically embraced the metaphysical notion of bodies. What happens in such a case is that the contending parties, having misguidedly set off along the same path, eventually branch off in opposite directions and begin to quarrel. Neither thinks to retrace his or her steps and challenge the metaphysical assumption they both have embraced.[28]

VI

I began this article by saying that I wanted to examine the way Wittgenstein went about dealing with a philosophical problem and, in particular, whether he employed the method or methods he recommended to others. We can now see that he did not practise what he preached.[29] For one thing, he did not make use of examples where doing so would have proved useful. Also, he made no

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Investigations, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Autumn, 1980), 15–37, and also my 'Malcolm's Misunderstandings', *Philosophical Investigations*, vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring, 1981), 72–90.

[27] See my *Wittgenstein, Empiricism, and Language*, op. cit., Part II. See also *Wittgenstein's Metaphysics*, op. cit., chapters 7–10.

[28] Wittgenstein was confident—overly so, as it happens—that he had canvassed most, if not all, of the possibilities available for dealing with the philosophical problems that troubled him. Norman Malcolm reports: Wittgenstein 'once remarked to me that it was very unlikely that anyone in his classes should think of something of which he had not already thought' (*Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 55). We have seen that in the present case he was wrong about this: he failed to recognize that it is just as important to challenge the idea of Cartesian bodies as it is to challenge the idea of Cartesian minds. This failing was not confined to the problem of other minds. Too often, I believe, Wittgenstein accepted the terms, the philosophical jargon, in which philosophical problems had been posed by his predecessors. See my discussion of this in the appendix of *Wittgenstein, Empiricism, and Language*, op. cit., 167–179.

[29] As I said at the beginning of Part II, I would be considering only a part of what Wittgenstein said about the problem of other minds, so my conclusion must be confined to that part. Elsewhere, however, I have considered other parts and have reached the same conclusion, that

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attempt to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. And although he declared that philosophical problems must be 'pulled out by the roots' (*CV*, 48) lest they come back to haunt us, in the case we have studied he left the roots, the notion of Cartesian bodies, in place, with the result that he did not really deal with the problem. (The one 'method' he did employ, his substitution method, merely gave him a linguistic means of equating other people with bodies.) As a result, the problem of other minds continued to haunt Wittgenstein, a fact attested to by the two volumes entitled *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, which were written during the last three years of his life.

This should forewarn us that while we may find some of Wittgenstein's general remarks about philosophy to be insightful, we should be wary of taking that as a reason to think that we can safely acquiesce in his treatment of particular philosophical issues. His failure to see that he did not follow his own methodological advice when dealing with particular problems very likely explains something that puzzled Wittgenstein, the fact that, as he put it to Alice Ambrose, although people 'understand what I am driving at when they begin to understand my general remarks [about philosophy]', they 'cannot imagine what I am talking about when they hear me dealing with some special [particular?] difficulty.'[30, 31]

Chico, California

Wittgenstein's practice cannot be reconciled with his declared philosophical method. For example, I have shown that his concept of a criterion was not arrived at by any consideration of the everyday use of words. He designed the concept, rather, to meet his metaphysical requirements. See chapters 8 and 9 of *Wittgenstein, Empiricism, and Language*, op. cit.

[30] Quote by Alice Ambrose in 'Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Portrait', in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophy and Language*, Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz (eds.) (New York: Humanities Press, 1972), 16.

[31] I wish to thank my wife, Annie Cook, for her contributions to this article.

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