

Think of the law of identity, " $a = a$ ", and of how we sometimes try hard to get hold of its sense, to visualize it, by looking at an object and repeating to ourselves such a sentence as "This tree is the same thing as this tree". The gestures and images by which I apparently give this sentence sense are very similar to those which I use in the case of "Only this is really seen". (To get clear about philosophical problems, it is useful to become conscious of the apparently unimportant details of the particular situation in which we are inclined to make a certain metaphysical assertion. Thus we may be tempted to say "Only this is really seen" when we stare at unchanging surroundings, whereas we may not at all be tempted to say this when we look about us while walking.)

There is, as we have said, no objection to adopting a symbolism in which a certain person always or temporarily holds an exceptional place. And therefore, if I utter the sentence "Only I really see", it is conceivable that my fellow creatures thereupon will arrange their notation so as to fall in with me by saying "so-and-so is really seen" instead of "L. W. sees so-and-so", etc., etc. What, however, is wrong, is to think that I can justify this choice of notation. When I said, from my heart, that only I see, I was also inclined to say that by "I" I didn't really mean L. W., although for the benefit of my fellow men I might say "It is now L. W. who really sees" though this is not what I really mean. I could almost say that by "I" I mean something which just now inhabits L. W., something which the others can't see. (I meant my mind, but could only point to it via my body.) There is nothing wrong in suggesting that the others should give me an exceptional place in their notation; but the justification which I wish to give for it: that this body is now the seat of that which really lives--is senseless. For admittedly this is not to state anything which in the ordinary sense is a matter of experience. (And don't think that it is an experiential proposition which only I can know because only I am in the position to have the particular experience.) Now the idea that the real I lives in my body is connected with the peculiar grammar of the word "I", and the misunderstandings this grammar is liable to give rise to. There are two different cases in the use of the word "I" (or "my") which I might call "the use as object" and "the use as subject". Examples of the first kind of use are these: "My arm is broken", "I have grown six inches", "I have a bump on my forehead", "The wind blows my hair about". Examples of the second kind are: "I see so-and-so", "I hear so-and-so", "I try to lift my arm", "I think it will rain", "I have toothache". One can point to the difference between these two categories by saying: The cases of the first category involve the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error, or as I should rather put it: The possibility of an error has been provided for. The possibility of failing to score has been provided for in a pin game. On the other hand, it is not one of the hazards of the game that the balls should fail to come up if I have put a penny in the slot. It is possible that, say in an accident, I should feel a pain in my arm, see a broken arm at my side, and think it is mine, when really it is my neighbour's. And I could, looking into a mirror, mistake a bump on his forehead for one on mine. On the other hand, there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have toothache. To ask "are you sure that it's you who have pains?" would be nonsensical. Now, when in this case no error is possible, it is because the move which we might be inclined to think of as an error, a 'bad move', is no move of the game at all. (We distinguish in chess between good and bad moves, and we call it a mistake if we expose the queen to a bishop. But it is no mistake to promote a pawn to a king.) And now this way of stating our idea suggests itself: that it is as impossible that in making the statement "I have toothache" I should have mistaken another person for myself, as it is to moan with pain by mistake, having mistaken someone else for me. To say, "I have pain" is no more a statement about a particular person than moaning is. "But surely the word 'I' in the mouth of a man refers to the man who says it; it points to

himself; and very often a man who says it actually points to himself with his finger". But it was quite superfluous to point to himself. He might just as well only have raised his hand. It would be wrong to say that when someone points to the sun with his hand, he is pointing both to the sun and himself because it is he who points; on the other hand, he may by pointing attract attention both to the sun and to himself.

The word "I" does not mean the same as "L. W." even if I am L. W., nor does it mean the same as the expression "the person who is now speaking". But that doesn't mean: that "L. W." and "I" mean different things. All it means is that these words are different instruments in our language.

Think of words as instruments characterized by their use, and then think of the use of a hammer, the use of a chisel, the use of a square, of a glue pot, and of the glue. (Also, all that we say here can be understood only if one understands that a great variety of games is played with the sentences of our language: Giving and obeying orders; asking questions and answering them; describing an event; telling a fictitious story; telling a joke; describing an immediate experience; making conjectures about events in the physical world; making scientific hypotheses and theories; greeting someone, etc., etc.) The mouth which says "I" or the hand which is raised to indicate that it is I who wish to speak, or I who have toothache, does not thereby point to anything. If, on the other hand, I wish to indicate the place of my pain, I point. And here again remember the difference between pointing to the painful spot without being led by the eye and on the other hand pointing to a scar on my body after looking for it. ("That's where I was vaccinated".)--The man who cries out with pain, or says that he has pain, doesn't choose the mouth which says it.

All this comes to saying that the person of whom we say "he has pain" is, by the rules of the game, the person who cries, contorts his face, etc. The place of the pain--as we have said--may be in another person's body. If, in saying "I", I point to my own body, I model the use of the word "I" on that of the demonstrative "this person" or "he". (This way of making the two expressions similar is somewhat analogous to that which one sometimes adopts in mathematics, say in the proof that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is 180° . We say " $a = a'$, $b = b'$, and $g = g'$ ". The first two equalities are of an entirely different kind from the third.) In "I have pain", "I" is not a demonstrative pronoun.

Compare the two cases: 1. "How do you know that he has pains?"--"Because I hear him moan". 2. "How do you know that you have pains?"--"Because I feel them". But "I feel them" means the same as "I have them". Therefore this was no explanation at all. That, however, in my answer I am inclined to stress the word "feel" and not the word "I" indicates that by "I" I don't wish to pick out one person (from amongst different persons).

The difference between the propositions "I have pain" and "he has pain" is not that of "L. W. has pain" and "Smith has pain". Rather, it corresponds to the difference between moaning and saying that someone moans.--"But surely the word 'I' in 'I have pain' serves to distinguish me from other people, because it is by the sign 'I' that I distinguish saying that I have pain from saying that one of the others has". Imagine a language in which, instead of "I found nobody in the room", one said "I found Mr. Nobody in the room". Imagine the philosophical problems which would arise out of such a convention. Some philosophers brought up in this language would probably feel that they didn't like the similarity of the expressions "Mr. Nobody" and "Mr. Smith". When we feel that we wish to abolish the "I" in "I have pain", one may say that we tend to make the verbal expression of pain similar to the expression by moaning.--We are inclined to forget that it is the particular use of a word only which gives the word its meaning. Let us think of our old example for the use of words: Someone is sent to the grocer with a slip of paper with the words "five apples" written on it. The use of the word in practice is its meaning. Imagine it were the usual thing that the objects around us carried labels with words on them by means of which our speech referred to the

objects. Some of these words would be proper names of the objects, others generic names (like table, chair, etc.), others again, names of colours, names of shapes, etc. That is to say, a label would only have a meaning to us in so far as we made a particular use of it. Now we could easily imagine ourselves to be impressed by merely seeing a label on a thing, and to forget that what makes these labels important is their use. In this way we sometimes believe that we have named something when we make the gesture of pointing and utter words like "This is..." (the formula of the ostensive definition). We say we call something "toothache", and think that the word has received a definite function in the dealings we carry out with language when, under certain circumstances, we have pointed to our cheek and said: "This is toothache". (Our idea is that when we point and the other "only knows what we are pointing to" he knows the use of the word. And here we have in mind the special case when 'what we point to' is, say, a person and "to know that I point to" means to see which of the persons present I point to.)

We feel then that in the cases in which "I" is used as subject, we don't use it because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics; and this creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless, which, however, has its seat in our body. In fact this seems to be the real ego, the one of which it was said, "Cogito, ergo sum".