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Philosophical Concepts, the Ideal of Sublimation, and the "Unpredictability of Human Behaviour"
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Wittgenstein famously criticizes the philosophical practice of analyzing the meaning of words outside their ordinary use in everyday language, whereby often self-made pseudo-problems arise. In order to shed further light on Wittgenstein's critique, this article makes use of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*. First, starting from the remark in Vol. I, §52, his criticism of the philosophical method of selection and generalization is explained in detail. Next, I give a brief outline of Wittgenstein's own way of philosophizing by reference to a selection of comments concerning the use of psychological words in everyday language, which will also further elucidate his critique. Finally, I enter into the question which (kind of) significance everyday language according to Wittgenstein has for philosophy.

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1. Introduction

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein criticizes all the forms and methods of philosophy in which philosophers don't pay (adequate) attention to the everyday use of language on the one hand; and on the other hand he himself points out the diversity of language-games (e.g., Wittgenstein [1953]/2009, §23; hereinafter cited as PI), the unsharp boundaries of many of our words (e.g., PI §§69–71) and the entanglement of language with activities or practice (PI §7).

With regard to the above mentioned critique, Wittgenstein often concentrates on the treatment of philosophically relevant terms such as "meaning", "language", "logic", "intention", "explanation", "knowledge", "perception", "sensation", etc. in order to demonstrate that the philosophical use of these terms fails to solve the philosophical problems, or, even worse, in some cases produces them in the first place. Right at the beginning of the *Philosophical Investigations*, for example, Wittgenstein shows that in referentialist and mentalist theories the term "meaning" is used in too narrow of a way, thereby covering only a "narrowly circumscribed area" but not "the whole of what [they] were purporting to describe" (PI §2). If philosophers promoting these theories, however, think of it as "a general concept of the meaning of the word", they are, according to Wittgenstein, not able to see "the working of language" clearly (PI §5). And if this weren't bad enough, this approach leads to self-made pseudo-

problems, for instance, thinking about the word "this" as being "the *real* name"—for Wittgenstein an example of problems that only "arise when language *goes on holiday*" (PI §38).

To dissolve the existing philosophical problems and to avoid creating new "houses of cards" ("*Luftgebäude*"; PI §118) in the sense of these self-made pseudo-problems, Wittgenstein recommends that we quit these kinds of misleading ideals of exactness and generality (related to the search for the "essence" of the things, compare. PI, §91f.) and to investigate the (diverse) everyday use of the respective words instead (e.g., PI §116) as well as its embeddedness in our acting in certain situations or contexts (e.g., PI §337). And if these investigations lead to the result that the use of a word in everyday language is manifold or even vague, then this result, according to Wittgenstein, doesn't present us with the task of analyzing possible defects of the *everyday use* and to remedy them for the philosophical use. Rather, the result is quite the contrary, we are to analyze the defects of the *philosophical use*.

This kind of confrontation between every day and philosophical uses of words raises the question if the everyday language holds greater authority and, if the answer is yes, why this is so. Concerning this question, some remarks in Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* are very helpful. Furthermore, these considerations illustrate the just delineated thoughts presented by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Finally, they give us some hints of how Wittgenstein thinks psychological concepts should be investigated.

In the following, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. I, §52 serves as my starting point (Wittgenstein [1947]/1980a, hereinafter cited as RPP I). In this remark, Wittgenstein criticizes the practice of constructing one's own uses of words in philosophy and taking these special uses to be authoritative, or more philosophically interesting, than their uses in everyday language. In order to explain this remark, I will first sketch this method of selection and generalization for the philosophical use of words,

together with Wittgenstein's main points of criticism (Section 2). In the next part (Section 3), I will pick up on some of Wittgenstein's comments on the uses of psychological words in everyday language to clarify his own method(s) in philosophy on the one hand and to further elucidate his critique on the other.

2. Composing a Use of Words

Early in the first part of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, we find the following observation:

> Philosophy tries to compose for itself a use of a word, which constitutes as it were a more systematic realization of certain features of the ordinary use (RPP I, §52; translation by author).

As the term "philosophy" in this remark doesn't refer to Wittgenstein's own philosophizing, we can discern some points of criticism from it that are also relevant for the investigation of the use of psychological words. When Wittgenstein writes that philosophy tries to *compose* a use of a word, we can read this as a hint that the criticized mode of philosophizing disregards the observation and description of everyday language. Of course, this point of criticism is well-known, as it runs as a common thread through Wittgenstein's later writings. Therefore, the details of this critique are of greater interest. One of them we already find in the second half of the remark just cited: one form of composing consists in "a more systematic realization of certain features of the ordinary use". This remark is not easy to understand, but with the context of the remarks preceding and following this one, it can be elucidated in the following way: philosophers are prone to take into account only some facets of the use of a word. Be it, for example, because they aren't conscious of the other facets, that they consider only some facets to be philosophically interesting, or because they consider them as fundamental concerning the explication of the meaning of this word (very often, it will be a mixture of these reasons, apart from the fact that there will be even more reasons for this practice).

Correspondingly, this philosophical, "more systematic realization" of the use of a word, in distinction from the ordinary uses, attempts to establish one particular use of the word as the postulated right one, as the one that seems to be inherent in the word. With this use, philosophers think they have prepared themselves to get to the bottom of things. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, this idea of philosophical purification is described as the search for

> a final analysis of our linguistic expressions... That is, as if our usual forms of expression were, essentially, still unanalysed; as if there were something hidden in them that had to be brought to light. As if, when this is done, the expression is completely clarified and our task accomplished (PI §91).

According to *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*,Vol. I, the "more systematic realization" means selection as well as generalization: selection insofar as only "certain features of the ordinary use" are taken into philosophical consideration; generalization, since these features now are imposed on all uses of the respective word (RPP I, §52). In order to get a better understanding of what Wittgenstein is getting at here, it is useful to have a closer look at the previous remark. He opens this paragraph by asking "How is 'will' actually used?" (RPP I, §51) This question alone is already hard to understand since it is not even clear whether it is Wittgenstein himself asking it, or whether this is a question he actually rejects. In other words: it remains unclear whether the word "actually" refers to the actual use of a word in everyday language here, or to a postulated, underlying meaning "behind" these various manners of use. Both readings have something to them; the first one seems slightly more convincing, even though the use of the word "actually" seems somewhat curious in the context of speaking of a variety of different uses.

It is thus gratifying that the interpretation of this paragraph does not depend on the choice of either reading. For, after putting said question forward, Wittgenstein focuses on the kind of philosophizing he criticizes. He writes:

In philosophy one is unaware of having invented a totally new use of the word ["will"], by assimilating its use to that of, e.g., the word "wish". It is interesting that one constructs certain uses of the word especially for philosophy, wanting to claim a further elaborated use than they have, for words that seem important to us (RPP I, §51; translation modified by author).

It now becomes clear that the assimilation of various uses of different words into one—in contrast to its ordinary uses—does not merely yield a certain distortion of their ordinary use. For Wittgenstein explicitly speaks of "a totally new use of the word" for philosophy and of "construct[ing] certain uses of the word especially for philosophy". The above remark demonstrates this by evoking the example of how the word "willing" may be assimilated with the word "wishing". This topic is also treated in various others of Wittgenstein's writings. Earlier, in the *Yellow Book* (1933/34) he writes:

We must note that *willing* and *wishing* are entirely different. When I say I willed to raise my arm, I do not mean that I merely wished it very strongly and then the arm rose. Willing is not a thing which happens to me; it is a thing I do (Wittgenstein [1933-34]/1979, 55).

And in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein makes the following remark for instance: "When I raise my arm, I have *not* wished it to rise. The voluntary action excludes this wish" (PI §616).

Wittgenstein thus demonstrates that the uses of the words "will" and "wish" are primarily characterized by differences rather than by similarities. And against this backdrop, it is thus not surprising that the practice of claiming "a further elaborated use. . . for words that seem important to us" can only lead to the result "of having invented a totally new use of the word" (RPP I, §51). For if observing the use of the words "will" and "wish" in everyday language shows more differences than similarities, the extension will yield an entirely different use. This is because philosophers assimilate them by extending the use of "will" by

adding the domain of use of "wish" to it, or even by letting the use of the first word be ruled by (part of) the use of the second. Hence, if we assimilate the use of the word "will" with that of the word "wish," we have created an extension of the ordinary use which has effectively led to the construction of a "totally new use". For the word "will" is then understood as meaning an active, conscious process preceding the action and thereby in a certain way enabling it. And this active, conscious process is thus taken for granted in *all* voluntary movements.

The next comparison put forward by Wittgenstein in this paragraph presents a slightly different case: the comparison between the words "will" and "try".

"[Will]" is sometimes used with the meaning 'try': "I wanted to get up, but was too weak." On the other hand one wants to say that wherever a voluntary movement is made, there is volition. Thus if I walk, speak, eat, etc., etc., then I am supposed to will to do so. And here it can't mean trying. For when I walk, that doesn't mean that I try to walk and it succeeds. Rather, in the ordinary way I walk without trying to. Of course it can also be said "I walk because I want to", if that distinguishes the ordinary case of walking from that in which I am shoved, or electric currents move my leg (RPP I, §51).

The difference between this and the former comparison is that in everyday language "will" is also sometimes used as having the meaning of "try"—such as if I say, for example, that I wanted to stand up, "but was too weak". In such cases I may, if I want, say that I also had an intention or wish to stand up.

This means that here we are dealing with one of those cases where one of the "traits of the ordinary use" of the word "will" has similarities with the use of other words, such as "try", for example. And hereby, we have arrived at the "more systematic realization of certain features of the ordinary use" Wittgenstein addressed in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. I (RPP I, §52). The philosopher that Wittgenstein criticizes is not satisfied with the result that "will" is *sometimes* used as meaning "try", but

wants to carry this use over to *all* cases of voluntary movement. And subsequently, it becomes evident that the consequences of this seemingly harmless philosophical strategy are quite severe. For the generalization of those specific uses results in our presupposing volition, and we understand volition as a mental process or active motor preceding action in *all* cases of voluntary movement: "Thus if I walk, speak, eat, etc., etc., then I am supposed to will to do so" (RPP I, §51). However, in most of these cases one neither speaks of "wishing", nor of "trying", but "[r]ather, in the ordinary way I walk without trying to" (RPP I, §51) Further, no one speaks of a conscious wish or attempt preceding their walking, let alone *necessarily* preceding one's walking. Quite the contrary: in everyday language a statement like "I walk because I want to" only makes sense in very specific situations, as for example, "if that distinguishes the ordinary case of walking from that in which I am shoved, or electric currents move my leg" (RPP I, §51). It is obvious that such a situation will rarely ever occur.

There are several more remarks to be found in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* that address this topic. I choose two of them, one that refers to the motives for this practice described and criticized by Wittgenstein, the other concerned with its consequences.

Regarding the motives for this misleading way of doing philosophy, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. II, §289, is an interesting example (Wittgenstein [1948]/1980b, hereinafter cited as RPP II). Here, Wittgenstein starts with an objection to his own investigation into the word "knowing", judging it to be "irrelevant" in the sense of being uninteresting at bottom. It's true, these other philosophers say, that the philosophical concept of knowledge differs from the use of the word in everyday language, but this doesn't justify a critique. On the contrary, the philosophical concept of knowledge "is an important and interesting one, created by a kind of sublimation from the ordinary, rather uninteresting one" (RPP II, §289). Thus, we can under-

stand the objection against Wittgenstein in the following way: all the better for the philosophical concept of knowledge if it doesn't conform with our everyday language. This is because, as we can read in the *Philosophical Investigations*, the use of words in everyday language is "inexact" (PI §88), "contaminated" (PI §100), and "coarse" (PI §120). According to this philosophical position, making something philosophically attractive means: 1. defining the use of words more precisely, and 2. unifying the different uses by crystallizing the postulated "true" meaning out of the ordinary uses. As Wittgenstein writes at the end of this remark, he himself is convinced that it is just this way of doing philosophy that gives rise to philosophical problems:

> But the philosophical concept was derived from the ordinary one through all sorts of misunderstandings, and it strengthens these misunderstandings. It is in no way interesting, except as a warning (RPP II, §289).

Quite plainly, the word "sublimation" used above is replaced by "misunderstanding" here, and of course a misunderstanding is not really interesting—except in the sense of a warning to prevent other philosophers from similar misleading practices, and from similar misunderstandings.[1]

Wittgenstein mentions consequences of understanding philosophy in the way he criticizes in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. I, §648, among others:

> The concept of experience: Like that of happening, of process, of state, of something, of fact, of description and of report. Here we think we are standing on the hard bedrock, deeper than any special methods and language-games (RPP I, §648).

This remark, too, does not seem easily comprehensible. The difficulties already begin with the question of how we are to understand the similarity mentioned in this context: does Wittgenstein

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[1]As an aside, the misunderstanding regarding the concept of knowledge for Wittgenstein primarily lies in the idea that knowledge be guaranteed as such through a special mental state; a topic which I won't discuss here (see for example RPP II, §303).

want to refer to similarities between the aforementioned terms here? Or does he want to say that a philosopher may, within the realm of his investigations about psychological phenomena or terms, eventually reach the conclusion that the term "experience" and an array of other terms are the central guiding concepts for his investigations? The latter appears to be more plausible to me.

Not all difficulties are hereby resolved, though. For the next imposing question is how those terms shall now provide the "hard bedrock". Does this mean that we may view every single one of those terms as a fundamental term for the investigation of psychological terms? What speaks against this reading is, in my view, that the terms "description" and "report" which Wittgenstein employs here, do not seem particularly apt to serve as the sole foundation for an investigation of psychological phenomena. Therefore, I consider the following reading to be more convincing: as previously discussed, a philosopher could be of the opinion that these very different terms play a similar role inasmuch as they represent fundamental concepts for the investigation of psychological phenomena. And the idea is that, once these terms are analyzed, one can comprehensively explain the psychological phenomena. According to the position that is briefly outlined here, the comprehensive explanation is of greater depth "than all special methods and language-games" (RPP I, §648).

This greater depth appears to be primarily marked by generality, as it is presented in opposition to "special" methods and language-games. Hence, one does not just want to investigate specific aspects of psychological phenomena, which would, for example, be the case if one would apply the "special" methods of experimentation, interrogation or the measurement of brain waves. One also does not want to be limited to the observation of the manifold "special" language-games involving psychological words. Instead one would want to get to the realm of a hidden basis/source, underlying all special methods and language-games

(regardless of how one might even have come up with the idea of such a thing's necessary existence in the first place or of how exactly one might imagine such a thing's constitution).

Given the fact that every single one of these words already has manifold uses in ordinary language in its own right, Wittgenstein cannot expect, of course, anything to be gained from the composition of a list of supposedly foundational and extraordinarily interesting philosophical terms. And speaking of a "hard bedrock", and depth is also unjustified in his eyes (see e.g., PI §§89-92). Instead, what comes into sight here are the consequences of ascribing words an extended domain of use in philosophy, compared to the one they have in ordinary language, consequences already mentioned in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. I, §51. Wittgenstein's evaluation in the second part of this remark is thus correspondingly negative:

> But these extremely general terms have an extremely blurred meaning. They relate in practice to innumerable special cases, but that does not make them any *solider*; no, rather it makes them more fluid (RPP I, §648).

This remark calls attention to an aspect that hasn't been mentioned yet, which is how the combined method of selection and generalization leads pointedly away from the hoped-for specification of the use. Instead of gaining accuracy, the method leads to greater vagueness than when the words are used in everyday language. If one tries to extract the postulated essence of the meaning of a word and to transfer this essence to all uses of the word, one fails to notice that, in carrying out such a process, one must generalize. Therefore, the meaning becomes blurred and fluid. Blurred and fluid meanings, however, cannot be captured. While many philosophers find this search for a meaning that is hidden and difficult to grasp particularly attractive, for the later Wittgenstein this is one of the self-made pseudo-problems.[2]

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[2]This evaluation of some philosophical problems as pseudo-problems, by the way, doesn't mean that Wittgenstein can't retrace their attractiveness any-

3. "Unpredictability of Human Behaviour"

In the following, I try to sketch the main lines of argument by which Wittgenstein characterizes his own philosophizing in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*. In addition, this sketch serves to clarify his critique outlined in the previous part of this paper.

First, using the example of the word "think", he formulates a well-known objection, as we find it in several of his later writings. One has to consider, Wittgenstein writes in *Remarks on the Philosophy of* Psychology Vol. II, §194, "that 'think' is an everyday word, just as are all other psychological terms". Therefore, "[i]t is not to be expected of this word that it should have a unified employment; rather it is to be expected that it doesn't have it" (RPP II, §194). What Wittgenstein does here is, in fact, nothing more than contrasting the above described and criticized "sublimation" with everyday language and its variety of uses of words. The latter is, in his view, a more relevant basis for a philosophical investigation. But, of course, this forming of a contrast alone doesn't explain *why* the psychological concepts don't have a unified use in everyday language.

Wittgenstein's remarks concerning human behaviour, and its specialties regarding psychological phenomena and words, are instructive for this present question, among others. In a longer series in the second part of the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Wittgenstein turns his attention to these two aspects. He starts with a reference to "the complex nature and the variety of human circumstances" (RPP II, §614; translation modified by author) which are "[a] natural foundation" for our concept formation (RPP II, §614). From this it can be derived, Wittgenstein continues, that "given much less variety, a sharply bounded conceptual structure"—which is exactly what many philosophers re-

gard as their goal—"would have to seem natural" (RPP II, §614). Such a "simplified case", however, is very "difficult to imagine". At most, one can imagine "a facial expression [that is] not susceptible of gradual and subtle alterations; but which had, say, just five positions; when it changed it would snap straight from one to another" (RPP II, §614).

Apart from being an impressive proof for Wittgenstein's inimitable irony, in this remark we get a concrete hint at why Wittgenstein views the method of selection and generalization as unproductive: its way of forming and using concepts is unnatural in the sense that it completely dismisses the variety of human behaviour. It leads to a downright bizarre caricature of human behaviour, as the comparison with suddenly changing—but apart from that completely frozen—facial expressions very clearly illustrates. In the following remark, this comparison is made directly: "A facial expression that was completely fixed couldn't be a friendly one. Variability and irregularity are essential to a friendly expression. Irregularity is part of its physiognomy" (RPP II, §615). Thus, Wittgenstein criticizes how that way of thinking neglects "the subtle shades of behaviour", aspects that for him have "importance" (RPP II, §616).

With the term "irregularity", however, a further central aspect concerning psychological words is hinted at, since irregularity can imply uncertainty. And because of this uncertainty, one can get the impression that, for example, one does not know what is going on in another person. All of us probably know this uncertainty: whether someone else is really in pain or just pretending; whether a smile is honest or not; how deeply is someone really grieving, etc. And occasionally it happens that we have to conclude that a person is a mystery to us; we cannot understand his actions and reactions, we don't understand what is going on in him, as we usually would say in everyday language.[3]

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more. On the contrary: first, he examines them in detail in many of his texts and tries to dissolve them. Second, in the *Philosophical Investigations* for example, he explicitly speaks of "an urge to misunderstand" philosophical problems (PI §109).

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  [3]Note that this probably would be our main reaction to people with "a facial expression [that is] not susceptible of gradual and subtle alteration" (RPP II, §614).

It is exactly this manner of speaking—not knowing what is going on in another person, for example—that is picked up by philosophers who use the method of selection and generalization. That is, they pick up one of the "features of the ordinary use" and try to compose "a more systematic realization" (RPP I, §52). This practice results in sentences like "I can never *know* what is going on in him" (RPP I, §138), with all the well-known philosophical consequences, for example, the focus on inner states and processes to explain psychological phenomena. Thus, uncertainty here is explained or seen as caused by private inner states and processes. If, first, inner states and processes are seen as the main features of psychological phenomena and, second, I assume that I can't gain insight into these states and processes in another person, then, of course, I will conclude that his thinking and feeling remains closed to me, that I cannot find myself in him, that I can never know what is going on in this person. I can only reach such a knowing, according to this position, in regard to my own person. Michel ter Hark elucidates the difference between uttering this uncertainty in ordinary language and its treatment by philosophers in the following way:

> if one meaningfully says, 'Only I know my thoughts', the circumstances in which one says this are roughly the circumstances in which one might also have said, 'I will never tell you my secrets'. In these circumstances doubting what another person is thinking clearly makes sense but then the uncertainty is *de facto* and can be removed through appropriate behaviour in certain circumstances. This practical employment of the picture of inner processes does not legitimise the philosophical and sceptical extension, according to which inner processes are something that goes on behind words and ways of behaving and which can never be known by other people. Failure to see how this picture is actually applied, however, leads philosophers into drawing misleading analogies which obscure rather than explain the distinguishing features of psychological concepts (ter Hark 2000, 205).

Wittgenstein's first, somewhat ironic, reply to the above described position reads as follows: "The uncertainty is not founded on the fact that he does not wear his pain on his sleeve" (RPP II, §621). Quite to the contrary, following Wittgenstein, it must be stated that "[t]he *only* way of recognizing it is by externals" (RPP II, §657), no matter if we are certain of his pain or not. For Wittgenstein, the uncertainty is strongly correlated with "[t]he unpredictability of human behaviour" (RPP II, §663). This unpredictability seems to be linked closely to "the variety of human circumstances" (RPP II, §614) mentioned before. We find in human life (or in a special culture, even in one single person) not only *one* form of grief or only *one* form of smile but many of them (some quite similar, some very different). Furthermore, the respective expression of grief or joy is not static, as Wittgenstein makes clear in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. II:

> Variability itself is a characteristic of behaviour without which behaviour would be to us as something completely different. (The facial features characteristic of grief, for instance, are not more meaningful than their mobility) (RPP II, §627).

That is to say, on the one hand, there are characteristic expressions of grief, joy, anger, etc., which is why in *Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment*[4] Wittgenstein speaks of "patterns": " 'Grief' describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the tapestry of life" (PI §2). On the other hand, the "mobility" (RPP II, §627), the "[v]ariability and irregularity" (RPP II, §615) of these expressions are also characteristic of the respective patterns. An expression of grief is not something that stays the same in every moment across time (if so, it would be analogous to a frozen smile). Instead, such an expression has manifold forms and transitions. Therefore, for instance, we say that joy lightens a person's face or that a smile dies down, that grief surges or flattens, that it overwhelms a person or that it is a constant trait of his personality, etc. All these manners of speak-

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[4]The formerly so-called part II of the *Investigations* is nowadays published as *Philosophie der Psychologie—Ein Fragment / Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment* in Wittgenstein ([1953]/2009). Hereinafter cited as PI.

ing wouldn't have any sense if words like "joy" or "grief" had "a sharply bounded conceptual structure" (RPP II, §614) and if their uses weren't characterized by variability.

It is important to keep in mind that this "unpredictability of human behaviour" does not mean, according to Wittgenstein, that we can never know what is going on in the other person. On the contrary, he makes clear in several remarks that in very many cases we don't feel any uncertainty, for example:

> Every day we hear one man saying of another that he is in pain, is sad, is merry, etc. without a trace of doubt, and we relatively seldom hear that he does not know what is going on in the other. In this way, then, the uncertainty is not so bad [after all] (RPP I, §138).

That is to say, if we observe our everyday lives, we notice that such judgements, the possibility of which are called into question by some philosophers in principle, are passed regularly in these ordinary practices. In many cases, this happens without any uncertainty, without precedent weighing up whether the judged person perhaps conceals something, or whether our familiarity with this person is insufficient, and, finally, without our uttering a general doubt concerning the possibility of surmising what is going on in this person.[5] Such moments of comprehensive uncertainty are exceptions, not the rule. Furthermore, as Wittgenstein says, this usual certainty in regard to the grief, anger, or joy of another person is not weaker than the certainty "whether I have a notebook in front of me and a pen in my hand, or whether this book will fall if I let go of it, or whether I have made a miscalculation when I say 25 x 25 is 625" (RPP I, §137).

To sum up: it is precisely not the case "that everyone is hopelessly in doubt about what other people feel" (Wittgenstein [1948-49]/1992, I, §877). However, in specific cases, uncertainty cannot

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[5]In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein puts this thought in a nutshell: "Just try—in a real case—to doubt someone else's fear or pain!" (PI §303)

be denied. Indeed, Wittgenstein does not want to deny such uncertainty, he even explicitly points out those cases in several paragraphs—yet not as the result of the unrecognizability of internal/mental states, but as "constitutional" uncertainty, which in no way represents a defect: "It resides in our concept [e.g., of pain] that this uncertainty exists" (RPP II, §657). The "unpredictability of human behaviour" is thus not to be understood as fundamental foreignness. It merely means that our acting and behaviour do not run on uniform tracks, but rather include numerous variations and show great diversity. And this is precisely what our manifold everyday language-games with psychological words show.

4. Concluding Remarks

As assumed in the introduction, some of the considerations in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* can illustrate or even elucidate reflections presented in the *Philosophical Investigations*:

Wittgenstein criticizes the practice of many philosophers who don't take the use of everyday language serious enough and, as a consequence, are not only unable to solve philosophical problems but actually produce them. His description of the procedure to "compose" uses of words in the sense of "a more systematic realization of certain features of the ordinary use" (RPP I, §52) illustrates very clearly what he means when he writes in the *Philosophical Investigations* that philosophers don't see "the working of language" (PI §5). For this way of composing contains selection (in the sense of taking up only one facet of the use of the word) as well as generalization (in the sense of imposing this facet on all uses of the respective word because one thinks that this facet contains the essence of its meaning). This is especially demonstrated by Wittgenstein's investigation of the assimilation of the words "will" and "try". The result of applying this method of selection and generalization, however, leads us far away from the actual working of everyday language. Of course, here one

might object that this isn't problematic at all. However, according to Wittgenstein, these philosophers not only construct meanings but thereby also construct philosophical problems, which hence are self-made pseudo-problems. Furthermore, preexisting philosophical problems also can't be solved with this method.[6]

In this context, in the *Philosophical Investigations* (compare PI §§38, 89, 94) as well as in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Wittgenstein speaks of 'sublimation'. Though in the *Philosophical Investigations* there is already no doubt that Wittgenstein judges this idea as misleading, he is much more direct in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* Vol. II, §289 where he equates "sublimation" with "misunderstanding", and states that it is useful only as a warning. This warning is addressed to philosophers who see their main target as finding precise definitions for the meaning of a word that can be employed in all uses of the word, since it is thought of as the "real" meaning lying behind the diverse and imprecise uses in everyday language. In Wittgenstein's view, this search leads to the very reverse as "these extremely general terms have an extremely blurred meaning" (RPP I, §648) and therefore lays the ground for the construction of philosophical problems as described.

As an antidote to these misleading ways of philosophizing, Wittgenstein recommends the careful inspection of the (often) manifold uses of words (depending on the situational context) and their embeddedness in our acting. With regard to this inspection, psychological concepts are especially instructive examples, as not only the variety comes into play but also some uncertainty (whether one is really in pain, a smile is honest etc.), the latter leading us sometimes to say that we don't know what is going on in another person. Instead of selecting this aspect of our ordinary use (i.e., our occasional utterance that we are uncertain about other people's feelings and attitudes) and generalizing it (i.e., that we can never know what is going on in the other person), Wittgenstein shows us that this uncertainty is far from being as comprehensive as this philosophical way of speaking suggests. Additionally, Wittgenstein makes clear that this uncertainty is constitutional for our use of psychological words. This, however, means something very different from the general assumption that we cannot know what is going on in another person. As Michel ter Hark puts it, it means "that the rules for the use of the concept of pretence, or the concept of lying [among others], do not provide for conclusive evidence" (ter Hark 2000, 216).

How, finally, can the question of whether the everyday language is authoritative over the philosophical use of terms be answered? In one respect, the answer is positive, in another it is negative.

Everyday language is authoritative in the sense that it serves as a counterbalance for philosophical confusion arising out of misleading ideals of exactness and generality. When Wittgenstein calls our attention to "the complex nature and the variety of human circumstances" and takes this variety as "a natural foundation" for our concept formation, he thereby shows that sharp boundaries and unified meanings can be seen as natural only in case of a far smaller variety (RPP II, §614). In this context, he uses the picture of a facial expression with only five positions that change abruptly without any intermediate movements to illustrate this confusion, and show that the ideal of precise as well as general terms cannot capture the wide range of phenomena as intended; but rather it produces a distorted, oversimplified, or even false, caricature.

This kind of a Wittgensteinian conceptual investigation made by a comparison of the philosophical use with the ordinary one can also be fruitful for the field of psychology,[7] as Oskari Kuusela elucidates:

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[6]If they are solvable at all in a strict sense, as in PI 109–31 Wittgenstein seems to suggest that instead we have to dissolve them by "an insight into the workings of our language" (PI §109).

[7]ter Hark (2000) gives an informative overview of misleading or even false interpretations of Wittgenstein's considerations in this context.

Essentially, Wittgenstein's methods are designed for dealing with conceptual complexity, that is to enable us to approach dynamic and complex linguistic practices in a way that makes this complexity manageable. Perhaps it will ultimately be necessary for psychology, too, to acknowledge the non-reducible complexity of its objects of investigation, for example, that the phenomena of thinking, remembering or seeing do not constitute simple uniform unities but a multitude of varied cases falls under each concept, as Wittgenstein's investigations of psychological concepts suggest. In that case, perhaps Wittgenstein's methodological ideas can also help psychology to deal with complexity (Kuusela 2013, 53).[8]

However, this role of a counterbalance should not tempt us to conclude that philosophers have to restrain themselves to merely regarding and describing the ordinary use of language. In several remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives examples of other philosophical methods that are helpful to handle philosophical problems, such as in *Philosophical Investigations* §91, where Wittgenstein mentions that sometimes "we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact". We can read this as a hint that the ordinary use, too, is potentially misleading in some cases and that *in these cases* it is helpful to reduce the vagueness. Again, in *Philosophical Investigations*, §122, Wittgenstein informs us about "the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*" in order to clarify the use of words. Inventing intermediate links, of course, exceeds the task of description. Or, further, one can think of all the remarks in which Wittgenstein prompts us to imagine situations very different from the ones we are familiar with, for instance: "Imagine people who only think out loud and only imagine by drawing on a paper" (RPP I, §172), or imagine "people who could *regularly* read a man's thoughts—say by observation of his larynx" (RPP I, §578). Finally, as a last example, it's noteworthy that Wittgen-

stein himself sometimes uses simplified cases, for example, the language of the builders in *Philosophical Investigations*, §2, that consists of only four words.

These few examples alone should show us that Wittgenstein doesn't want us to restrict ourselves to a mere description, and that we won't be able to dissolve philosophical problems using description alone. What Wittgenstein rejects here is nothing more, nor less, than philosophical positions using selection and generalization as the methodological principle based on the false assumption of there being an essence of words.

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[8]For a more detailed presentation of how Wittgenstein's considerations can be interesting for psychologists, see Kuusela (2013, 62–68), and Hacker (2013, 14–19).

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