ORIGINS OF THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT

JAN DEJNOŽKA

In this paper I attempt a brief overview of all the major pre-analytic origins of the private language arguments (PLAs) in the analytic tradition. It is necessarily a bird's-eye view of a huge panorama. But it is enough to show that there are at least eight major origins, and a crowd of pre-analytic anticipators of the analysts' PLAs. This weakens the analysts' claim that their linguistic turn radically breaks from traditional views. But connecting the analysts' PLAs to some of the biggest themes of traditional thought can only broaden and deepen their already great interest.

Such a survey has been long overdue. Hector-Neri Castañeda, in his 1967 article "The Private Language Problem," cited only two anticipators of the later Wittgenstein on private languages: Rudolf Carnap and Julius R. Weinberg. Today there are some excellent literatures on several origins, but they are largely piecemeal.

I discuss the origins in eight sections: verificationism, naturalism-pragmatism, materialism, mathematics, justificationism, realism versus nominalism, the theory that language and thought are identical, and as a second-level overview of all these, "no entity without identity." The first section is long because I discuss the controversy whether the *Tractatus* contains verificationism.

Johannes Herder defined "origin" as meaning cause, source (antecedent), or beginning (first of its kind). It is hard to be so precise here. Historical influences are often speculative, and it is not always clear when antecedents end and things of a kind begin. But everything I de-
scribe is surely a source at the very least; and at least my speculations as to causes or beginnings should be clear enough.

My title, "...the private language argument," is misleading. Many different arguments aim to show that private languages, in some sense of "private language," are impossible, in some sense of "impossible." It is unacceptable to find only one argument, to find it only in Wittgenstein, and then to look for its origins. Frege gave at least twelve such arguments, Russell seventeen, Wittgenstein eight in Investigations alone, and Quine three.²

Frege's Black Box PLA sets the stage. A Black Box PLA likens minds to boxes whose contents are unavailable to others. Then the question whether ideas in different minds are the same is "unanswerable."³ Thus if meanings were ideas, then people could never agree or disagree with each other, since they could not tell if they spoke with the same meaning. Frege used the systematic invertability of meanings of color words and spatial words to dramatize the absurdity of supposing that minds are like closed boxes. It was Locke who held that meanings are ideas; Descartes' dualism provided the framework. Russell's early Act-Object PLAs, that an item intended by two people must be mind-independent,

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³ "The Thought."
were a positive complement to Frege's negative reductio. They have roots in Meinong, Brentano, and medieval act theory. Russell's later Probability PLAs, in which teaching and learning words require a high probability that teacher and learner "perceive" the same external events, are survivals of the Act-Object PLAs in his later scheme of probable scientific realism.

1. The Verificationist Background

In this section I shall discuss the origin of the verificationism in Wittgenstein's principal PLA in Investigations. Quine's naturalistic verificationism belongs to the section on naturalism-pragmatism; Frege and Russell were not verificationists.

The first wave of scholars, notably Ayer, held that the principal PLA in Investigations is based on verificationism.\(^4\) The second wave, notably Kripke, held that the argument is justificationist, and de-emphasized its epistemic side.\(^5\) As a new third wave, I hold that the argument is a Dance of Two Veils. The first wave reported well the express word of \#272. The second wave is right that a more purely semantic argument seems implied in the pre-#202 sections. But the core of both waves is Frege's Black Box PLA; the example of the color red in #272's color inversion example is an homage to Frege (see Foundations and "The Thought"). The veils are needless additions of dubious doctrines to the core argument. To claim that Locke's theory is "meaningless" in an Ayerian verificationist or Kripkean justificationist sense is superfluous if the Black Box PLA succeeds and unwarranted if it does not.

Kripke is wrong that "semantic skepticism" is more radical than epistemic skepticism. He repeats O. K. Bouwsma's error of long ago. Bouwsma argued that Descartes's evil genius hypothesis is unverifiable. But a genius might be deceiving Bouwsma and Kripke on the soundness

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of their respective semantics. Thus both veils seem equally important to theory of meaning.6

Was Rudolf Carnap’s physicalist verificationism an antecedent of the later Wittgenstein’s? Herbert Feigl suggests Carnap as a source of the analysts’ private language arguments in general:

Analytic philosophers, especially those practicing the methods of G. E. Moore and Wittgenstein, have in various ways... argued that the absolute privacy or subjectivity which for some philosophers constitutes the criterion of the mental is an idea begotten with confusions... There are very important passages in Carnap’s formulations of 1932 which anticipate in very compact form much of what has been dialectically (and partly independently) elaborated by the British analytic philosophers.76

Ayer adds, “And much as Wittgenstein disliked Carnap’s methods, there is an echo of physicalism in his dictum that an ‘inner process’ stands in need of outward criteria [580].”8 But the Hintikkas say, “To put the main point bluntly, Wittgenstein accused Carnap of using his idea of physicalistic basis language without... proper acknowledgement... Wittgenstein wrote [in a letter to Schlick in 1932]: ‘...[It is false that I have not dealt with the problem of “physicalism” (albeit not under this—horrible—name...’.”9 The Hintikkas suggest that “Carnap never understood what precisely Wittgenstein had in mind” by this accusation.10 Thus who may have influenced whom is unclear.

My own suggestion is that the origin is in the Tractatus. Michael Wrigley argues well that the origin of the Vienna Circle’s verificationism can only be in the Tractatus.11 But there has been much dispute over where it might be. L. Susan Stebbing says, “This is Wittgenstein’s princi-

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10 Ibid., p. 147.
ple of verifiability: the meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification. It seems to me that Wittgenstein may have been suggesting this principle... in the *Tractatus* ... (4.031)." \(^{12}\) Oswald Hanfling says cautiously that “apparently” Wittgenstein first advanced the “Verification Principle.” But Hanfling says that “there is no mention of verification” in the *Tractatus*. \(^{13}\) Hanfling says that it is first mentioned in the “Theses” Friedrich Waismann set down as Wittgenstein’s around 1930 (the *Tractatus* was published nine years earlier). Hanfling says:

A careless reading of the ‘Theses’ might encourage such misunderstanding. This is true, for example, of... To understand a proposition means to know how things stand if the proposition is true...’ This is almost identical with a passage in the *Tractatus* (section 4.024). But whereas in the ‘Theses’ this remark is expounded in a verificationist sense, it is not so in the *Tractatus*. \(^{14}\)

Hanfling gives an argument for his view: “[T]his was not how the elementary propositions of the *Tractatus* were conceived. They were defined by their logical properties and not by any connection with verificationism.” \(^{15}\) Perhaps so. But a Tractarian verificationism would not concern the logical form of an “elementary proposition [Elementarsatz],” or even the definition, i.e., the individuation, of an elementary proposition as logically independent of every other elementary proposition. It would concern the “sense [Sinn] of a proposition.” If it concerned any definition at all, it would concern the definition of that sense. But, secondly, why must a Tractarian verification principle be definitional (analytic)? Could it not be “an important kind of nonsensical” proposition? Thus Hanfling’s argument is doubly ill-conceived. But it is Hanfling’s merit to have given the only argument against verificationism in the *Tractatus*. The only other “ground” for this virtually universal view is that the word “verificationism” is not handed to us on a silver platter there.

Maurice Cornforth’s argument for Tractarian verificationism is decisive. Cornforth says the verification principle “lay at the basis of...

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\(^{14}\) Introduction to *Essential Readings*, p. 6.

Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*..."\(^{16}\) Cornforth argues in effect that the Tractarian distinction between factual and necessary truth presupposes the picture theory of meaning, and the picture theory of meaning presupposes the verification principle.\(^{17}\) Cornforth observes that in the *Tractatus*, statements which are neither verifiable in terms of facts nor tautologically true or false are ipso facto condemned as nonsense.\(^{18}\) I endorse this powerful argument. Moreover, this distinction among factually verifiable, tautological, and nonsensical propositions is the basis of the logical positivists’ verificationism in their heyday. It seems inescapable that the *Tractatus* is the origin of their verificationism, as well as of that of *Investigations*. Cornforth goes wrong only when he says that when Wittgenstein realized the error of “trying to whistle what you cannot say,” he abandoned the Tractarian verification principle and replaced it with the “meaning is use” approach of *Investigations*. Cornforth does not realize that that is the new verificationism, expressly stated in *Investigations* #353. It is worth noting that the *Tractatus* already connected its own notions of sense and use.

I suggest that the following *Tractatus* sections collectively imply verificationism:

\[ T\, 2.221 \mathrm{What} \, \text{a picture represents is its sense (Sinn).} \]
\[ T\, 4.021 \mathrm{A \, proposition \, is \, a \, picture \, of \, reality; \, for \, if \, I \, understand \,(\text{verstiebe}) \, a \, proposition, \, I \, know \,(\text{kenne}) \, the \, situation \, that \, it \, represents.} \]
\[ T\, 4.022 \mathrm{A \, proposition \, shows \, its \, sense \,(Sinn). \, A \, proposition \, shows \, how \, things \, stand \, if \, it \, is \, true. \, And \, it \, says \, that \, they \, do \, so \, stand.} \]
\[ T\, 4.024 \mathrm{To \, understand \,(\text{verstehen}) \, a \, proposition \, means \, to \, know \,(\text{wissen}) \, what \, is \, the \, case \, if \, it \, is \, true... \, [This \, is \, the \, section \, Hanfling \, cites \, as \, not \, verificationist.]} \]
\[ T\, 4.03 \mathrm{A \, proposition \, communicates \, a \, situation \, to \, us, \, and \, so \, it \, must \, be \, essentially \, connected \, with \, the \, situation.} \]
\[ T\, 4.031 \mathrm{...Instead \, of, \, ‘This \, proposition \, has \, such \, and \, such \, a \, sense’ \, (Sinn), \, we \, can \, simply \, say, \, ‘This \, proposition \, represents \, such \, and \, such \, a \, situation’. \, [This \, is \, the \, section \, Stebbings \, cites.]} \]
\[ T\, 5.156 \mathrm{...We \, use \, probability \, only \, in \, default \, of \, certainty – \, if \, our \, knowledge \,(\text{kenne}) \, of \, a \, fact \, is \, not \, indeed \, complete, \, but \, we \, do \, know \,(\text{wissen}) \, something \, about \, its \, form. \, (A \, proposition \, may \, well \, be \, an-} \]


\(^ {17}\) Ibid., pp. 114-116.

\(^ {18}\) Ibid., p. 116.
My argument is simple. What is verificationism? It is a connection between epistemology and meaning such that a statement has meaning if and only if we know how to tell it is true (strong form), or there can be possible evidence that it is true (weak form). Do we find such a connection in the *Tractatus*? Yes, we do. In fact, we find two such connections. We find the strong form, where we fully understand a statement's meaning if and only if we know its truth conditions, in T 4.021 and T 4.024. This concerns the picture theory of meaning. We also find the weak form in T 5.156, where a given statement can be meaningful but only probable because it only partially pictures the situation, S, in which we are interested. Such a statement is meaningful only because it fully pictures some other situation, S*, such that we know the truth conditions for S* and S* is the evidence for S. The weak form presupposes the strong form, just as it should. 19

I also find a Black Box-Verificationist PLA in the *Tractatus*. Namely: I must understand statements about other minds in terms of the states of affairs which I know; but such states of affairs could only concern the behavior of others.20 Here other minds are behavioristically viewed, but I alone seem to be the solipsistic viewing “public.” Not surprisingly, this PLA is close to Ayer’s Verificationist PLA in *Language, Truth and Logic.* 21 Likewise, Carnap’s *Aufbau* and its inspiration, Russell’s *External World,* explicate other minds in terms of behavioristic appearances of others to oneself, only after first explicating bodies in terms of primitive data. (Russell’s *External World* is physicalistic in that its sense-data are mind-independent physical events.)22 The forerunner of all these is Hume’s theory of meanings as ideas which are derived from sense-impressions. All have tendencies toward behaviorist neutral monism.

Raymond Bradley thinks the *Tractatus* is physicalist. I tend to follow the Hintikkas in thinking it was written when Wittgenstein was a phe-

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19 The argument was that without strong verifiability, one would not understand what one was weakly verifying. But Neurath and Carnap denied that any statements about the world were completely verifiable.

20 Apply T 5.5562 and T 5.5563 to “Smith now feels a toothache.”


22 See the relevant essays in Russell’s *Mysticism and Logic* of the same time.
nomenalist. But officially it takes no sides on what objects are. Even so, in it ordinary talk of bodies surely must be analyzed in terms of objects before ordinary talk of other minds can be, since selves are definitely not given as objects, and surely the contents of other minds are not either. This brings the Tractatus Black Box-Verificationist PLA closer to that in Investigations. If I am wrong about that, Investigations' verificationist physicalism and Carnap's methodological physicalism are little improvement on Wittgenstein's earlier verificationist phenomenalism and Carnap's earlier methodological phenomenalism in explicating other minds as communicators. For there can be as little genuine communication among mere physical behavior patterns as there can be among mere constructions of phenomena. Julius Weinberg noted that about Carnap; Thomas Reid made much the same point about Hume. Carnap and Russell saw the problem and moved to an acceptance of other minds, respectively as explanatory posits and as probably real structures. Wittgenstein and Hume did not. Neither has Quine. Even the 1992 Quine's "irreducibly mental ways of grouping" "neural realities" (Davidsonian anomalous monism) are not communicators. What did his way of grouping neural events tell her way of grouping neural events over the backyard fence yesterday?

Cornforth's decisive argument tends to equate the origins of Tractarian verificationism with the origins of the picture theory of meaning: Plato's Theaetetus 201-2, and behind it, Parmenides.

2. The Naturalist/Pragmatist Background

Quine calls himself a naturalistic verificationist and a pragmatist. Admitting a heritage from Peirce, Quine cites Dewey and Wittgenstein as anticipating his PLAs, and also cites a British heritage. Quine might

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have mentioned also the pragmatic side of Carnap's methodological
classical, and Jeremy Bentham's theory that words are tools. Quine
does cite Bentham's contextualism, and also John Horne Tooke's
methodological replacement of ideas with words.

The pragmatic side of Wittgenstein is well-known. Wittgenstein may
have learned from the pragmatism in Frank Ramsey's later works. Pragmatic aspects of Piero Sraffa's Marxism may have been an influence.
But I agree with H. S. Thayer that since Wittgenstein's conversations with
Ramsey and Sraffa were unrecorded, any evidence of pragmatic influence
in the text of *Investigations* must remain circumstantial. William James's
*Psychology* was for a time the only book Wittgenstein had in his rooms. While Peirce and pragmatism are not listed in its index, its philosophy of
mind is largely instrumentalist. It may never be clear how much its instrumentalism influenced Wittgenstein.

The 1927-59 Russell's theory of knowledge is largely naturalistic; this
affects his Social Language and Probability PLAs. This seems to be
Russell's accommodation of what he deemed valuable in pragmatism after
he rejected the pragmatic theory of truth.

While Frege intended his formal notation to have great utility in the
way of rigorous proof, such an intention cannot be tied to classic pragmatic philosophers. Still, rigor's demand for public confirmability does
link Fregean "pragmatism" to public notations.

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27 Ibid.


Carnap attributed his methodological physicalism to Neurath, whom he said was influenced by Büchner and Haeckel. But Neurath praised Marx for his behavioristic approach. Neurath's background also included Marx's pragmatic theory of truth. Neurath's own theory of truth is pragmatic and behavioristic. It is concerned with how well sentences cohere into a theory, and theories for Neurath are physical markings concerning the behavior of the physical world.

Peirce's theory of meaning emphasized the social and the objective. James was concerned mainly with truth. But James's views were much closer to Peirce's than James's more bombastic slogans suggested. Dewey had no systematic theory of meaning, but his very Peircean remarks on meaning strongly support Quine's program. The pragmatists made many claims about their own views' origins, which I cannot mention here. James's neutral monism was the main influence on Russell's neutral monism in 1921.

The strong interplay between social action and linguistic meaning in Marx and Engels derives from Hegel. Hegel was a pragmatist in that he combined both practical and theoretical considerations into his dialectic. Hegel strongly influenced the early Dewey and so, indirectly, Quine.

3. The Materialist Background

Quine follows Carnap in advocating methodological physicalism. But most 19th-century materialists were already methodological materialists, according to the great 19th century historian of materialism, Frederick

33 Meaning and Action, p. 3; see pp. 314-21.
Lange.\textsuperscript{36} Maurice Cornforth and Keith Campbell find the middle-to-later Wittgenstein congenial to materialism.\textsuperscript{37} Merrill B. and Jaakko Hintikka deem him a physicalist in some fairly nondescript sense hard to discern from mere nonrealism.\textsuperscript{38}

Wittgenstein and Carnap may have been inspired by Marx's materialistic behaviorism. Wittgenstein may have learned about Marx from Sraffa.\textsuperscript{39} Wittgenstein also read some Marx. He read some of Das Kapital, in which Marx says language is a "social product."\textsuperscript{40} We can also go from Carnap through Neurath to Marx. Marx held that language and consciousness are essentially social.\textsuperscript{41} This view is easily traced from Marx and Engels through Feuerbach\textsuperscript{42} to Hegel's Phenomenology.\textsuperscript{43} The Marx-Hegel society-language-consciousness nexus has deep roots in Hobbes\textsuperscript{44} and Plato.\textsuperscript{45}


\textsuperscript{38} Investigating Wittgenstein, p. 165.


\textsuperscript{45} I quote some Plato in section 7.
In French materialism, Bonald resembles Hegel in emphasizing the organic social-linguistic nature of all human thought. Marx and Engels praise French materialism as the progenitor of socialism and communism. They cite Lamettrie, specifically Man Machine, as part of this tradition. There, as Lange notes, Lamettrie cites the early church father Amobiús's Social Language PLA (thinking and meaning are impossible to one without a public language) from ca. 300 A.D.:

Let us then imagine a place dug out in the earth, fit for dwelling in... To this let there not come any sound or cry whatever, of bird, of beast, of storm, of man... Now,... let us receive some one born to dwell there, where there is nothing but an empty void... Let us... provide a nurse also..., ever silent, uttering not a word... Let us suppose, then, that he grows up, reared in a secluded, lonely spot, spending as many years as you choose, twenty or thirty... Will he not, then, stand, with less wit and sense than any beast, block, stone? Will he not, when brought into contact with strange and previously unknown things, be above all ignorant of himself?... Is this the learned [Platonic] soul which you describe, immortal, perfect,... endowed with the loftiest powers of reason?

The theology of Arnobius is that pace Plato, human reason, and even the human soul, are far too weak to exist apart from communal language-teaching. Thanks to Marx's and Engels' specific praise of Man Machine, it would seem that they not only would have wholly approved of Arnobius's Social Language PLA, but actually knew of it. Arnobius

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knew Lucretius and Epicureanism better than he knew the Gospels. Marx wrote his doctoral dissertation on Epicurus and Democritus. All this must not be confused with Marx's invective against "Robinsonaden," stories in which a lone Crusoe thrives. Such stories, in Ricardo and others, are illustrations only of economic theory. Our present concern is Marx's metaphysical theory of materialism, on which language and consciousness are literally communal properties. To be sure, Marx would not have wished to cite a Christian theologian as providing the original argument for it.

4. The Mathematical Background

The first PLA given by an analytic philosopher was Frege's argument in 1884 that rational beings with very different spatial intuitions would agree on which theorems in geometry are true. The argument is based on projective geometry's famous principle of duality. In his own 1897 geometry book, Russell notes Lotze, Helmholtz, Land, Newcomb, and Abbott as discussing the notion of rational beings with different spatial intuitions. One may add Clifford. Quine cites Poincaré's spherical world in which everything shrinks as it moves outwards from center; since yardsticks shrink too, no measurement can reveal the shrinkage. Quine classifies this as a case of empirically equivalent theories, not
translational indeterminacy or referential inscrutability, since there is nothing in actual space corresponding to the spherical world’s center point. Quine misses that the sphere-dwellers’ home theory about their space would not mention such a point any more than our home theory about our space does. Thus translational indeterminacy and referential inscrutability occur here after all.

Helmholtz was led to geometry by his study of optics. The inversion of all images on the retina was already much-discussed. Projective geometry originated with the Renaissance painters’ desire to paint more realistically. Thus the Geometric PLA was associated with naïve scientific realism from the beginning, though as Russell notes, projective geometry had three philosophical phases. Russell’s aim was to improve Kant’s objective idealist theory of space by replacing Euclidian geometry with projective geometry as the universal and necessary precondition of all possible perceptions of a pluralist external world of things. But Russell soon moved to the extreme realism of Principles.

Hans Sluga’s interpretation of Frege’s Foundations as embracing a Lotzian objective idealism spices up the question of the implications of the Geometric PLA for realism. Or should I say the Geometric PLA spices up Sluga? Certainly Russell assigned a neo-Kantian logical role to projective geometry. But Sluga overlooks that in Foundations, Frege connects objectivity “not with the ideas of planets, but with the planets themselves.” Sluga’s interpretation founders on that rock, not to say planet, of Frege interpretation.

The Geometric PLA merged with argumentation for physicalist objectivity in the early twentieth century. In relativity theory, the projective

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56 The History of Materialism, Book 2 Continued (new pagination), pp. 207-8, quoting Johannes Müller, Handbook of Physiology (1840).
58 Hans Sluga, Gottlob Frege (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 120; see pp. 54-55, 94-95, 123-24, 133-34, 182.
59 See Morris Kline, Foreword to An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry, p. ii; Essay, pp. 1-6, 179-82.
60 Foundations, p. 37.
geometers' notion of invariance under transformation blossomed into the tensor calculus, which allowed the latest scientific laws to remain invariant across observers in different spatiotemporal coordinate systems. Such argumentation plays a key role in Russell's theory of physical structure in *The Analysis of Matter*, and meshes with Quine's physicalist theory of objectivity based on intersubjective checking.

I suggest that the basic idea of projective geometry is triangulation, commonly attributed to Thales. The father of philosophy is said to have used it to determine the height of a pyramid and the distance of a ship at sea. Today the Geometric PLA would be a more general Topological PLA. Someday an even greater mathematical generalization may be achieved. But a greater logico-semantic generalization already has been achieved. To it I now turn.

5. The Justificationist Background

The Kripkean Justificationist PLA is a generalization of the Geometric PLA and arguments like it. Here there is a general problem of logically multiple interpretation of the meaning or reference of any expression. This problem is typically solved by positing a holistic language-game or home language. Kripke notes how close Wittgenstein and Quine are on this. Here the conservative Quine upholds a linguistic communalism. The later Russell allowed the systematic inversion of sensible qualities; he also allowed indefinitely many empirically indistinguishable metaphysical interpretations of experience. However, he classified these as problems of knowledge, not as problems of meaning, and was led to a holistic, pragmatic theory of knowledge. I do not know whether Frege intended his geometric and color inversions to illustrate a general thesis about meaning. But that would help make sense of his remarks in *Foundations* that "everyone recognizes the same geometrical axioms, if only by his behaviour," and that "[e]ven a colour-blind man can speak of red and green" by following the lead of others or by following science. Such remarks suggest a latent holism, as does the very notion of systematic inversions of meaning.

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J. N. Findlay has found an anticipation of this sort of PLA in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Hegel argues that the meaning of ethical language is in its public, objective structure, using a systematic-inversion-of-morality example which is historically bracketed by Shakespeare's "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" and by Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values. The context suggests that Hegel is making a very general point about meaning, using ethics only as an illustration.

6. The Realist/Nominalist Background

Here we find a clash of opposing backgrounds. Historically, materialists have favored nominalism, while the Geometric and Justificationist PLAs seem to favor a notion of real structure as common to many. Among naturalists, Peirce and Dewey reject nominalism while James and Quine favor it. Quine appears as a trebly ambiguous figure. First, he admits both "extensional universals" and an inclination to reduce them to classes. Second, he cites both Dewey and the British empiricist-nominalist tradition as anticipating his own antipathy to private languages, seemingly unaware that Dewey is much closer to Peirce's scholastic realism. Third, Quine cites Wittgenstein, who is even more of an ambiguous figure. Wittgenstein rejects traditional nominalism and realism alike for treating words as names at all. He is nominalistic in that for him "most" meanings devolve to word uses. But he is universalistic in that these very word uses are games or structures which are, and indeed must be, common to many. Russell and Frege are both realists. Frege's concept-names do not change reference across singular statements. Thus his concept *round square* must be a universal ante rem.

There is one nominalistic lineage from Wittgenstein to Mauthner, Mach, and Hume, and another, more materialist line to Hobbes and Francis Bacon. Both have roots in William of Ockham. But there is also a

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universalist lineage permeating Marx, Feuerbach and Hegel, with roots in Plato's theory of forms. Marx and Feuerbach hold that human consciousness is consciousness of our species-being, which they derive from Hegel's view that self-awareness is mirroring ourselves in another. For Hegel, every word is a universal, and to think is to name. And to name and think truly is also to state the essence of a thing. Thus Hegel has holistically collapsed the nominalist-realist-conceptualist distinctions.66

For Plato, forms are common to many, objective, and real; particulars are relativistic, privatistic, and evanescent. Behind this is the Heraclitean two-tiered world of law and fire. There are echoes of such views in Quine's Slippage PLA (intersubjective checking prevents word slippage), in the publicity and stability Russell's constructions and structures, as opposed to his momentary sense-data, provide, and in Frege's view that mental ideas comprise an unstable flux needing words to stabilize it.67

7. The Language = Thought Background

In all his major works, Max Müller has held that language and thought are, with appropriate qualifications, identical. In “My Predecessors,” Müller cites many anticipators of this view: Hegel and Schelling; Taine, Bonald, Maistre, and Condillac; Hobbes and Bacon; and Plato.68 In Plato he cites: “[The soul when thinking appears to me to be just talking...” (Theaetetus 190); “Are not thought and speech the same, with this exception, that what is called thought is the unuttered conversation of the soul with herself?” (Sophist 263). Müller notes that the old Greek ordinary notion of logos already connoted the identity of thought with language. Müller oddly overlooks that Schopenhauer endorsed Cicero's identification of ratio with oratio. Schopenhauer is well-known for having influenced both Mauthner and Wittgenstein; Mauthner, who

66 On Marx, Feuerbach, and Hegel, see: Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man, pp. 70-71; Feuerbach, pp. 26, 162-65; An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics, pp. 15, 18, 21 n.37 on self-consciousness as mirroring others; chapter 3 on universals and objectivity; Hegel: A Re-examination, pp. 23, 308-10.


Müller belongs to the naturalistic background. Charles Darwin briefly discussed Müller on language in \textit{The Descent of Man}. The later Frege says all thinking is garbed in language; Russell says most of it is. The early Wittgenstein equates the limits of thought with the limits of language; the later Wittgenstein looks to uses of the word "thinking." Quine, following Tooke, methodologically replaces ideas with words.\footnote{See Frege, "On the Scientific Justification of a Conceptual Notation," pp. 83-84, 86; \textit{Posthumous Writings}, pp. 269, 270; Russell, \textit{The Analysis of Mind} (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1933), p. 152; Quine, "The Pragmatists' Place in Empiricism," p. 24 and "Facts of the Matter," p. 155.}

It is not enough for the Social Language PLA that thoughts merely be inseparable from words. The words must be public. Müller believed he followed Hobbes in deeming individual uses of words primary and 'communal' uses secondary.\footnote{On Hobbes's distinction between \textit{notae} and \textit{signa} see \textit{The Science of Thought}, vol. 1, p. 35, citing Thomas Hobbes, \textit{Works}, vol. ii. 4. See note 44.} This makes room for private names, at least prior to the full development of language. But most of Müller's predecessors and successors have clothed thinking in public languages, including Hobbes, who says, "The Greeks have but one word \textit{logos}, for
both *Speech* and *Reason*; not that they thought there was no *Speech* without *Reason*; but no *Reasoning* without *Speech*... This is only natural. Müller reports that people asked him not whether he thought in a public language or a private one, but whether he thought in German or English.

**8. The "No Entity Without Identity" Background**

On the ontological level of "no entity without identity," Panayot Butchvarov traces the origin of private language arguments back to Plato:

The reason for accepting the proposition that whatever exists is identifiable is implicit in Plato’s argument that there can be no knowledge or even language about things in a flux, in Frege’s argument that if something is to be accepted as an object it must be capable of being recognized, in Wittgenstein’s argument against the possibility of a private language, and in Price’s argument for the primacy of recognition in conceptual cognition. It consists in the recognition of the intimate relation between the notion of existence or reality, on one hand, and the notions of knowledge, understanding, judgment, and concept, on the other... In a world without... identity nothing is recognizable, nothing can be classified, nothing can be perceived or referred to twice, no linguistic expressions could be used twice with the same sense or the same reference, no piece of language, or of knowledge, or of thought could last beyond the specious present. We would be in the Heraclitean flux, with its consequences for knowledge and language that Plato so eloquently described in the *Theaetetus*.

All the origins discussed concern public identity conditions. Insofar as the verificationists identified the cognitive meanings of statements with methods of public verification, and insofar as the pragmatists identified the cognitive meanings of statements with expected or possible practical public consequences, they gave such cognitive meanings public identity conditions. The broad naturalistic society-language-consciousness nexus

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concerns what remains the same through stages of public growth and development. The nexus has roots in early Greek naturalism, in which the stuff of the world is what remains the same through change, and in the Sophists' later question of what remains ethically the same across people and cultures. These roots develop into a Hegelian tree whose branches include Marx and Dewey and whose fruits include Neurath, Carnap, Wittgenstein, and Quine. Physicalism identifies or replaces thoughts with physical patterns. Isomorphic structures and universals concern what is the same across different persons. The theory that language and 'thought' are identical is an expansion of the nominalistic identification of concepts with public predicates.

*Visiting scholar in Philosophy*

*The University of Michigan*