

DISCUSSION

Reply to Sullivan: Idealism and limits

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Abstract

In this discussion I argue that Peter Sullivan is wrong to suggest that Wittgenstein's position in the *Philosophical Investigations* involves a commitment to transcendental idealism. I show that Sullivan's interpretation involves holding that transcendental idealism was employed by Wittgenstein in the attempt to combat a Platonist mythology. I show, through a detailed appraisal of Wittgenstein's discussion of samples, that Wittgenstein's approach to Platonism does not involve any such employment of transcendental idealism. I conclude that there is no such motivation as Sullivan finds in Wittgenstein for endorsing transcendental idealism, and that we ought not, therefore, ascribe to him such a view.

I | INTRODUCTION

Peter Sullivan has suggested that Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*,¹ makes unfortunate use of transcendental idealism in order to dismantle Platonism. In the following discussion I argue that this assessment is incorrect. I begin, in Section 1, by outlining what I take to constitute the reasons given for this interpretation by Sullivan. In Section 2, I seek to show that this reading involves attributing to Wittgenstein a conception of what it is to dismantle Platonism which is foreign to the *Philosophical Investigations*. I aim, therefore, to offer a novel understanding of the way in which Platonism is treated by Wittgenstein, which does not portray the *Philosophical Investigations* as depending, in an objectionable fashion, on transcendental idealism.

¹Wittgenstein (1974).

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II | SULLIVAN ON WITTGENSTEIN

Sullivan's discussion of transcendental idealism in the *Philosophical Investigations* emerges from a series of exchanges between him and Adrian Moore more squarely focussed on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.² As others have noted,³ Moore's and Sullivan's contributions to these exchanges are as difficult as they are insightful. I will, therefore, devote some time to expounding Sullivan's view, and I shall do so with the caveat in place that I am alive to the possibility of my having misunderstood him.

I shall employ a definition of transcendental idealism given by Moore⁴:

By *idealism* I mean the view that some aspect of the form of that to which our representations answer depends on some aspect of the representations. We can distinguish between *empirical idealism* and *transcendental idealism*. Empirical idealism includes the rider that this dependence is immanent. Transcendental idealism includes the rider that it is transcendent.⁵

Empirical idealism involves the view that the dependence of 'some aspect or form of that to which our representations answer' upon 'some aspect of the representations' is a fact *about the arrangement of items in the world*; certain features of the world depend, as a matter of empirical fact, upon our representations of them. Transcendental idealism, by contrast, does not involve commitment to any such fact. Rather, that some features of the world depend upon our representations of them constitutes a *precondition* of our appreciating empirical dependencies in the way that we do. So stated, transcendental idealism appears problematic, for its endorsement apparently involves asserting some fact about how things are from a perspective external to the space of possible representation, such that the relationship between that space and the rest of the world be truly described. The attempt to describe the relevant relationship involves taking, as it were, a sideways look at that relationship from without. The description of the relationship, though, precisely involves denying that there is a perspective from which such a sideways look may be had. That endorsing transcendental idealism involves saddling oneself with these and other difficulties explains why the question of whether Wittgenstein held to the relevant position is interesting. Ascribing to Wittgenstein commitment to transcendental idealism involves holding that Wittgenstein has committed a mistake. Sullivan, I take it, does

²See Sullivan (2003, 2011, 2013) and Moore (2003, 2011, 2013).

³See, for example McManus (2015: 126–127).

⁴Sullivan's (2013: 257) misgiving regarding this definition notwithstanding.

⁵Moore (1997: 16).

hold that Wittgenstein commits a mistake of this kind, but that he is led to do so through an eagerness to dispense with Platonist views which he finds still more objectionable.

It is symptomatic of one's holding to transcendental idealism, Sullivan makes clear, that one employs the notion of a 'limitation' as opposed to that of a 'limit'. To chart the *limits* of what we can represent involves, on this view, giving the essential features of representation. In giving the essential features of representation, one will *thereby* have described, in a nonenumerative fashion, the space of possible representation. Importantly, the notion of a limit is not a contrastive one. In giving essential features, one does not (mistakenly) present the limits of representation as a kind of boundary line beyond which we find alien and inhospitable terrain. To present limits in this way is to misconceive limits as limitations, where the notion of a limitation *is* a contrastive one. To give the limitations of representation is to draw a line separating the sensible *from* the insensible. Endorsing transcendental idealism involves conceiving of the limits of representation as limitations, according to Sullivan, for it involves, as we saw, the attempt to take a sideways look at the space of possible representation from a position *beyond* an imagined boundary, in order that the relationship between that bounded region and the world be characterised accurately. To view the space of possible representation as bounded is to view that space as possessing limitations.

I have said that it is symptomatic of transcendental idealism that one conceives the space of possible representation as possessing limitations. This is, though, as Sullivan points out⁶, *merely* symptomatic, rather than constitutive of transcendental idealism. Having drawn a boundary line, one has then to ask what determines the character of such limitations. The idealist then gives the answer that the limitations of representation are determined by us, rather than by features of the world available independently of our representation of them. The question of whether Wittgenstein was committed to transcendental idealism chiefly involves asking whether he conceived of the space of representational possibilities as bounded by limitations, for if Wittgenstein *did* conceive of that space as relevantly bounded, then the further question of how the boundary is determined seems clearly, from the perspective of his later work, to admit of an idealist explanation.⁷ It is, moreover, indicative of one's viewing the space of possible representation as possessing limitations determined by us that one views those limitations as contingent. To hold that the space of possible representation might have been configured otherwise if, for example, we had been different, is to draw a boundary line separating our space of possible representation from some other imagined space.

⁶Sullivan (2011: 172), (2013: 259).

⁷See Sullivan (2011: 172).

Sullivan draws our attention to passages in which Wittgenstein appears to point beyond our linguistic practices, and so where he appears to implicate himself in an illicit attempt to look sideways at a bounded region of representational possibilities:

How do I know that this colour is red? — It would be an answer to say: “I have learnt English.”
(PI, §381)

Then I am inclined to say: “This is simply what I do.”
(PI, §217)

Sullivan says of these passages that

[N]either of these responses is a justification. Instead, they are allusions to all that could be found in the place where further justification might be sought. But if what we have reached is properly a limit, there is simply no such place, and only confusion can come from alluding to what is found there.

A “cartoon sketch” of my view of Wittgenstein's later work is that this confusion is exactly what we find.⁸

If repeatedly asked how it is that one knows the words they have just employed have been used correctly, or what justification one can give for using them like so rather than thus, one's response, as Moore notes,⁹ will soon degenerate into the mere issuing of a blank. In Sullivan's words:

[T]he best I can offer is simply to repeat, in description of my action, the description the rule itself offers of what it requires: you asked me to bring a *red* flower, and the flower I have brought is *red*.¹⁰

What one mustn't do, or *can't* do, is attempt the assessment of one's linguistic practice from a position outside of that practice. According to Sullivan, Wittgenstein comes close enough to doing just that in §381 and §217 to count as falling under the spell of transcendental idealism. Sullivan is clear that he does not view Wittgenstein as doing anything so obvious as, for example, judging that his application of the word ‘red’ enjoys advantages over some *other* practice against which ours stands in sharp relief. Rather,

⁸Sullivan (2011: 174).

⁹Moore (2011: 193).

¹⁰Sullivan (2011: 174).

Wittgenstein's insistence that there *isn't* anything to which he appeals, beyond what he can demonstrate in further correct applications of the word, is itself an illegitimate nod to a perspective outside of our linguistic practice. For Sullivan, Wittgenstein's insistence that there is no justification one can give for carrying on in the way that one does is a confused gesture towards a place beyond one's language. Sullivan describes it as an unhelpful metaphor that characterises our following of rules as 'blind', for it encourages our thinking of the following of such rules as being carried out in the absence of some imagined aid. The fact that there is no such aid is a point insisted upon by Wittgenstein, but the insistence betrays, in Sullivan's view, recognition of a place beyond our linguistic practices within which we are inclined, in vain, to search for justification of our behaviour. This, Sullivan suggests, commits Wittgenstein to viewing our linguistic practices as bounded by limitations, and consequently to transcendental idealism.

In an explanation of why it is that Wittgenstein succumbs to transcendental idealism, Sullivan writes:

And the consequent construal of this limit as a limitation must be intended to contribute positively to the understanding his discussion induces, if freedom from the alleged "mythology" of Platonism is to be a component of it.¹¹

Sullivan holds that Wittgenstein's viewing the space of representation as bounded by limitations is an inextricable component of his assault on a Platonist mythology. Commitment to the mythology here involves commitment to the view that our application of concepts reflects a world characterisable without reference to the possibility of that application. Sullivan's thought is, I think, that Wittgenstein views it as essential to the effort of showing that such a world is mythical that we are brought into a position to see that beyond our linguistic practices lies *nothing* to which we defer when engaged in them.

There certainly are passages from Wittgenstein's later period which support Sullivan's reading. Take these, from *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

So much is true when it's said that mathematics is logic: its moves are from rules of our language to other rules of our language. And this gives it its peculiar solidity, its unassailable position, set apart.

(Wittgenstein, 1978: §165)

¹¹Sullivan (2011: 174).

What, then – does it just twist and turn about within these rules?
– It forms ever new rules: is always building new roads for traffic;
by extending the network of the old ones.

(Wittgenstein, 1978: §166)

But then doesn't it need a sanction for this? Can it extend the network arbitrarily? Well, I could say: a mathematician is always inventing new forms of description. Some, stimulated by practical needs, others, from aesthetic needs, – and yet others in a variety of ways. [...]

(Wittgenstein, 1978: §167)

The mathematician is an inventor, not a discoverer.

(Wittgenstein, 1978: §168)

And

[...] For I can of course form the expression: “class of all classes which are equinumerous with the class ‘infinite series’” (as also: “class of all angels that can get on to a needlepoint”) but this expression is empty so long as there is no employment for it. Such an employment is not: yet to be discovered, but: still to be *invented*.

(Wittgenstein, 1978: §38)

Here, Wittgenstein insists upon the fact that the development of new mathematical techniques does *not* depend upon the discovery of a worldly feature characterisable independently of our linguistic practices; the ‘invention’ of a use for some expression does not involve our judging that usage equal to the task of reflecting some Platonic feature or other. Wittgenstein's claim here involves his drawing a contrast between what mathematics involves and, importantly, what it doesn't involve. Appealing to a contrast of that kind involves conceiving of our practices as bounded by limitations, for it involves an attempt to see beyond those practices, and to recognise a place beyond them, if only to show that nothing inhabits that place.

III | WITTGENSTEIN, PLATONISM, AND SAMPLES

Here, I shall outline the reasons for my disagreement with Sullivan's interpretation of Wittgenstein. First, though, I shall briefly mention a response already made which, I argue, fails to address a central component of that interpretation.

Moore writes:¹²

But I see no such confusion in Wittgenstein. Nor do I see any casting of limits as limitations. We earlier considered a chain of questions that can arise when I am following a rule: “What justifies you in doing that?”; “What justifies you in doing that?”; and so forth. And it looked as though Wittgenstein’s appeal to “what I do” was introduced in response to the last question in this chain, when no further justification of the relevant kind was available—as a way of deflecting the question, if not of answering it. [...] Admittedly, the metaphor of blindness, which Wittgenstein also invokes here, is not entirely happy. For indeed I might equally have been inclined to say, once I had reached bedrock, “I can now just see what to do.” Sullivan is absolutely right to draw attention to the limitations (not the limits!) of this metaphor. Nevertheless, I take it that part of the force of the metaphor is to emphasize that, at this basic level, I do not need to exercise any choice; I do not need to reflect on alternatives; I do not need to reckon with any justification.¹³

Moore interprets the point of Wittgenstein’s remarks at §217 and §381 of the *Philosophical Investigations* as precisely aimed at dispelling the view which Sullivan describes as exhibiting the marks of transcendental idealism. Sullivan evidently finds those remarks of Wittgenstein’s unfit for purpose.

Recall, it was a component of Sullivan’s reading of Wittgenstein that the construal of our practices as bounded by limitations is an essential feature of a broader assault on Platonism. Moore’s responding to Sullivan in the above fashion cannot be wholly successful if Sullivan is correct in his diagnosis of just what role is played by transcendental idealism in the later work. What is required, therefore, is an alternative understanding of how Wittgenstein approaches the issue of Platonism in the *Philosophical Investigations*. If it can be shown that the construal of our practices as bounded by limitations is not central to Wittgenstein’s treatment of Platonism, then we will no longer have a good reason to read passages §217 and §381 in the way Sullivan recommends.

Sullivan views Wittgenstein’s assault on Platonism as involving the attempt to look outside of our practices to a place beyond them, in order to show that *nothing* to which we may appeal in our use of language inhabits such a place. The ‘dismantling’ of Platonism consists, on this view, in our *not* finding a Platonic landscape beyond our linguistic practices to which we

¹²Moore’s response is echoed by Schönbaumsfeld (2013: 86).

¹³Moore (2011: 194).

may appeal in an explanation of why one employs a certain concept in this way rather than that. I do not think that this is an accurate characterisation of the way in which Wittgenstein addresses the spectre of Platonism in the *Philosophical Investigations*. For one thing, this understanding of Wittgenstein seems more naturally to involve our viewing Platonism as false, rather than nonsensical. The understanding asks us to imagine a Platonic world which, as it happens, isn't there. It is, I think, a *desideratum* on any reading of the *Philosophical Investigations* that it not deliver such a result. Wittgenstein says:

In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. “But it must be like this!” is not a philosophical proposition. Philosophy only states what everyone admits.

(PI, §599)

Philosophy states what everyone admits, on the conception of philosophy Wittgenstein here advances, because engaging in philosophy consists in our examining the use of expressions from close-to, such that the range of circumstances in which such expressions *have* a use are made perspicuous. What everyone admits, here, is that such-and-such expressions are used in such-and-such ways, and there will not, in Wittgenstein's view, be intractable, millennia-old disputes about *that*. The aim will be to show that philosophical problems emerge when expressions are uprooted, and the attempt is made to employ them in a context within which they have no established use. As Wittgenstein says

For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*.

(PI, §38)

Treating of a philosophical problem consists in our identifying the place at which a given expression is employed in a way alien to its customary use, and where sentences within which that expression is so employed degenerate into nonsense. The metaphor used in §38 is apt, for philosophical problems emerge when expressions are, so to speak, employed in ways *foreign* to those in which they have an identifiable use.¹⁴

Wittgenstein discusses the rationale that underlies Platonist thinking where he says,

“Something red can be destroyed, but red cannot be destroyed, and that is why the meaning of the word ‘red’ is independent of the

¹⁴See §116.

existence of a red thing.” – Certainly it makes no sense to say that the colour red is torn up or pounded to bits.

(PI, §57)

One way in which we are led to think of the word ‘red’ as referring to a universal is through consideration of the fact that we can *use* the word red throughout variations of circumstance, in particular those circumstances in which red things cease either to be red any longer or to persist at all. The *meaning* of the word ‘red’, we might therefore conclude, is separable from red things, and lacks the vulnerability to circumstance possessed by those things. The meaning of the word is therefore a necessary existent upon which the capacity to use the word ‘red’ depends. Wittgenstein goes on to identify a confusion in the thinking which leads to belief in this Platonic myth. Woven into this identification is an objection to a separate explanation of that confusion which is at times remindful of Wittgenstein's earlier way of thinking. Wittgenstein says:

“I want to restrict the term ‘name’ to what cannot occur in the combination ‘*X* exists’. – Thus one cannot say ‘Red exists’, because if there were no red it could not be spoken of at all.” – Better: If “*X* exists” is meant simply to say: “*X*” has a meaning, – then it is not a proposition which treats of *X*, but a proposition about our use of language, that is, about the use of the word “*X*”.

(§58)

The interlocuter here who opens the passage represents perhaps something of the *Tractatus* view that we cannot substitute for ‘*X*’ in ‘*X* exists’ a noun referring to an entity the non-existence of which would render the proposition nonsensical. Wittgenstein describes a motivation for adopting this view where he writes:

One might say: if everything that we call “being” and “non-being” consists in the existence and non-existence of connexions between elements, it makes no sense to speak of an element's being (non-being); just as when everything that we call “destruction” lies in the separation of elements, it makes no sense to speak of the destruction of an element.

(PI, §50)

If something's existing *consists* in the changing arrangement of some ‘elements’, then, according to this view, it ‘makes no sense’ to attribute existence to such elements. The thought is, I think, that the ascription of existence to such elements constitutes a category error akin to the suggestion that a single note either is or

is not harmonious. If something *must* exist in order that an existential sentence makes sense, then that thing is not a candidate for being sensibly described as existing. From this line of thought, the conclusion expressed by Wittgenstein's interlocuter in the opening sentence of §58 follows.

The difficulty with this kind of approach to Platonism is, from the perspective of the later Wittgenstein, that it proceeds via the kinds of metaphysical consideration which the argument itself seeks to undermine:

It looks to us as if we were saying something about the nature of red in saying the words “Red exists” do not yield a sense. Namely that red does exist ‘in its own right’. The same idea – that this is a metaphysical statement about red – finds expression again when we say such a thing as that red is timeless, and perhaps still more strongly in the word “indestructible”.

(PI, §58)

According to the explanation just given, the sentence ‘the words “Red exists” do not make sense’ appears to follow from a metaphysical appraisal of the colour red. The offending explanation in fact appeals to the same kind of metaphysical thinking we saw play a key role in generating the myth to which the explanation is opposed. Concluding, on the metaphysical basis described, that ‘red exists’ is nonsensical is a remedy at least as undesirable as the disease.

Wittgenstein offers the following corrective:

One would, however, like to say: existence cannot be attributed to an element, for if it did not *exist*, one could not even name it and so one could say nothing at all of it. – But let us consider an analogous case. There is *one* thing of which one can say neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard metre in Paris. – But this is, of course, not to ascribe any extraordinary property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the language-game of measuring with a metre-rule. – Let us imagine samples of colour being preserved in Paris like the standard metre. We define: “sepia” means the colour of the standard sepia which is kept there hermetically sealed. Then it will make no sense to say of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not.

We can put it like this: This sample is an instrument of the language used in ascriptions of colour. In this language-game it is not something that is represented, but is a means of representation. [...] And to say “If it did not *exist*, it could have no name” is to say as much and as little as: if this thing did not exist, we could not use it in our language-game [...] It is a paradigm in

our language-game; something with which comparison is made. And this may be an important observation; but it is nonetheless an observation concerning our language-game – our method of representation.

(PI, §50)

The availability of certain ‘paradigmatic’ items constitutes also the availability of ‘samples’ against which the correctness of word usage may be judged. Of these samples, it ‘makes no sense’ to say that they either are or are not that which they are samples of. Just why Wittgenstein holds that one cannot say that the metre-rule in Paris is or is not a metre long is a matter of considerable controversy.¹⁵ I offer here just one plausible interpretation of that claim, and I do not hold that just one line of thought is responsible for the conclusion Wittgenstein gives. I don’t, therefore, view my interpretation as necessarily mutually exclusive with those given by others.

It is useful first to ask what one purports to be doing when one attempts to say, of the metre-rule, that it is a metre long; the answer is that one is purporting to *measure* it. Wittgenstein’s claim therefore is tantamount to the claim that one cannot measure the metre-rule in Paris. To understand why this should be so, let us imagine the following attempt to carry out a measurement of that kind. Someone intending to measure the metre-rule in Paris, let us imagine, selects another metre-rule with which to perform that measurement. This person then places their metre-rule against the standard and checks to see whether the two objects are equivalent in length. Here, two alternatives are possible: the two objects are equivalent in length, or they are not. Has the subject, in either case, successfully measured the standard metre-rule? There is reason to think that they have not, for in either case, we might reasonably suggest that what has in fact been measured is the *subject’s* metre-rule, and not the Parisian standard. In the former case, it has been confirmed that the subject did indeed select a *metre*-rule, and in the latter, it has been confirmed that they did not. This much is just what it means to say that the metre-rule in Paris is a *standard*. In other words, attempting to measure the Parisian standard, so long as it is a standard,¹⁶ collapses into the measurement of whatever instrument one employs in that effort.

The words ‘is a metre long’ are used to make empirical claims; *that* is their role. The sentence ‘the standard metre-rule in Paris is a metre long’, though, cannot be used to effect an empirical assertion. This much is suggested by what

¹⁵For alternative interpretations of §50, see Avital (2008); Baker and Hacker (1980: 292); Dolev (2007); Fogelin (1995: 54); Gert (2002); and Pollock (2004). Note here that I do not defend Wittgenstein’s claim, that one cannot describe the Parisian standard as a metre long, against the objections given by, for instance, Kripke (1980: 54) and Salmon (1988). My aim is principally exegetical.

¹⁶And this, as is now well known, is not in fact the case.

has just been said, that one cannot, in Wittgenstein's view, *check* whether the standard metre-rule is a metre long. The words 'is a metre long', therefore, as employed in the sentence 'the standard metre-rule in Paris is a metre long', are not being used in the way in which they are customarily used by speakers of English. It is unclear what use the relevant adjectival phrase can be put to if not its customary one, and it is therefore unclear what meaning that phrase can have outside of its customary use. The conclusion that Wittgenstein appears to reach is that the relevant phrase has no meaning in such a context, and that the sentence 'the standard metre-rule in Paris is a metre long' therefore fails to make sense.

The standard metre-rule in Paris plays a 'peculiar role' in language; it is not an object to be measured but rather a means by which the practice of measuring may proceed. Wittgenstein extends his treatment of the standard metre-rule to further samples playing related roles in other linguistic practices. Of a hypothetical standard for *sepia*, he writes:

We can put it like this: This sample is an instrument of the language used in ascriptions of colour. In this language-game it is not something that is represented, but is a means of representation.

(PI, §50)

The myth of an indestructible 'meaning' emerged from the consideration that we might still use the word 'red' in the circumstance that there were no red things. Defeating Platonism does not, on the present proposal, involve suggesting that Platonism is *false*, but rather proceeds through undermining the attractiveness of the thought that leads to it. In this context, it is the thought that we might still use the word 'red' in the circumstance that there were no red things which must be revealed as nonsensical. Understanding how it is that the practice of using the word 'red' depends upon the availability of samples figuring as means of representation promises to deliver us from an inclination to think along the lines just described. The key insight is this. When construing the meaning of 'red' as independent of the existence of red things, one attempts to *include* within the set of red things items which are in fact *samples of red*. Only including samples of red within the set of red things, and subsequently concluding that the meaning of 'red' survives the destruction of everything so included, could lead to the view that the meaning of 'red' is contrastively *indestructible*. For reasons analogous to those we considered in the case of the phrase 'is a metre long', it is nonsensical, in Wittgenstein's view, to describe a sample of red as itself being red. The seductive thought, that the meaning of the word 'red' enjoys a kind of invulnerability not enjoyed by red things emerges from the attempt to say, of red things *and* red samples, that one could continue to use the word 'red' even if *they were not* red. On a closer examination of our linguistic practice, one will come to realise that it is nonsensical to conjecture as to the circumstances which might obtain if red things *and* red samples

were not red. This is because it doesn't make sense to say either that red samples are or are not red. More precisely, one will simply not be tempted to compare 'the' meaning of 'red' with both red things and samples of red. The attempt to make that comparison will issue in nonsense, and the recognition of that nonsense *as* nonsense will constitute an inoculation against the confusion of Platonism.

For present purposes, it is vital to note the following two features of Wittgenstein's treatment of Platonism in the *Philosophical Investigations*. First, no role is played by *metaphysical* reflection in the treatment Wittgenstein recommends. This in contrast with the view we have seen him reject, on which the nonsensicality of 'red exists' is owed to specific characteristics of the relationship between *redness* and the word 'red'. Rather, the inclination towards Platonism is cured through our coming to appreciate samples *as* parts of language, as well as the particular role played by those samples *in* language. Wittgenstein says, of a sample, that

It is a paradigm in our language-game; something with which comparison is made. And this may be an important observation; but it is nonetheless an observation concerning our language-game – our method of representation.

(PI, §50)

Wittgenstein is clear that the understanding we gain when we grasp the role played by samples consists in our making an observation 'concerning our language-game'. What we appreciate more fully when we make that observation is not the character of some metaphysical item, but the method by which we construct representations.

Second, and of crucial importance for the broader context of this discussion, no use has been made of *limitations* in the cure for Platonism I have represented Wittgenstein as prescribing. The suggestion is not, for instance, that one acquires an understanding of the contingencies upon which our linguistic practices depend, and consequently one sees that some given word *doesn't* have an 'indestructible' meaning. Platonism is not shown to be false through an observation of the way in which our linguistic practices are determined. To demonstrate that Platonism is false by these means would involve the attempt to view the relationship between our practices and that which determines them from a position outside of that relationship. Rather, Platonism is eradicated through our coming to appreciate certain facts about the way in which language proceeds and through our *thereby* recognising certain utterances as failing to count as sensible. Recognition of these sentences as nonsense involves our no longer being tempted to utter them in ways conducive to the formulation of a Platonist myth. The strategy Wittgenstein recommends is not, then, to show that Platonism is false, but rather to bring us into a position of understanding whereby the route towards philosophical mythology merely peters out into nonsense.

Obviously, *my* description of that position involves the error Sullivan ascribes to Wittgenstein, of describing a place occupied by nothing. Wittgenstein does not, though, according to the reading I have here endorsed, view it as constitutive of receiving the cure he recommends for Platonism that one also commit the relevant error.

My view is, therefore, that transcendental idealism does not feature in the *Philosophical Investigations* as part of Wittgenstein's strategy for dismantling Platonism. Here, I have focussed on the way in which, in Wittgenstein's view, the myth of Platonism emerges from a confused use of the word 'red'. Doubtless, the myth has more sources than just this one. The preceding discussion has not involved rooting out that myth on a case-by-case basis. Instead, the aim has been to show the character of Wittgenstein's approach, according to which a close understanding of language itself serves to deliver us from the temptation to attempt the kind of thinking which leads to philosophical mythology. That transcendental idealism does not figure in Wittgenstein's treatment of Platonism serves to undermine the claim that commitment to such a doctrine figures in §381 and §217.

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