THE PRIMACY OF PERSONS:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE
AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE
ASCIPTION OF MENTALISTIC TERMS

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(Abstract)

This paper is about the philosophical problem of other minds, more specifically it is about recent treatment of scepticism about other minds, treatment of issues involved in the other minds problem which attempt to show the sceptical position logically untenable. I will try to show such treatments themselves untenable, how they fail to do justice to the claims of the sceptical philosopher, while distorting or failing to account for the important features of our mentalistic vocabulary upon which his position rests. In the course of this discussion various well-known and well-worn arguments and positions will be assailed. But I will attempt to show that though all the anti-sceptical arguments considered fail we need not, for all that, embrace scepticism. What is required, and what I will try to accomplish, is a shift in the anti-sceptical position. Nor is the only benefit of this shift an escape from scepticism. This move also takes us into a new way of seeing the subjects of the controversy, persons and their behavior, which opens up for further investigation the important and much neglected subject of Personal Knowledge.
"You will vainly wipe the window-pane
and peer through the glass for the wires"

John Wisdom: "Other Minds" (VI p.135.)
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WHAT IS THE SCEPTIC SAYING?

The sceptic, as I see and shall represent him, begins by noticing and fully appreciating facts such as these:

- that I may think, believe, intend, desire, will, be depressed or in pain etc.
- that it may be the case, and sometimes is, that no one else knows these things about me.
- that such things may, and sometimes are true of others without my knowing it.

and reaches the conclusion that I am not, can never be, fully justified in ascribing such "mentalistic terms" (M.T.s) to others for, as it is often put, all I can observe is their "behavior." But the force of this way of putting it is hard to assess. For besides what I hope to show is the decisively significant question, 'what is "behavior"', one might ask:

(a) what more is required?
or (b) why isn't "behavior" enough?

It might appear that the "more" the sceptic wants is the "experience." It is said that I can't know that another is, for example, depressed because all I have to go on is that he is behaving in certain ways. I can't feel what (if anything) the other feels, so I can't know what he feels or whether he feels anything at all. I can't feel, for example, another's pain so I can't know that another is in pain. What are we to make of this? Does the fact that I can't feel another's pain in any way involve the conclusion that I can't know whether he has it? The facts the sceptic is asserting here can be expressed in the following statements:
"Only I can have my pain."

"Two persons can't have the same pain."

which themselves seem true if quite harmless, i.e. it is yet to be made out that from the truth of these statements there follows the sceptic's conclusions. But these statements have been attacked, not only with respect to their truth but also with respect to their very meaningfulness. The argument (presented by Norman Malcolm in his article "The Privacy of Experience") states, roughly, that insofar as these statements are meaningful, they are false. Malcolm's argument is in many ways typical, in its approach and aim, of many recent anti-sceptical arguments. And it is the first of which I will attempt to dispose.

II. EARACHES & EARWIGS

The fact, (if it is one) that the "contents" of the mind of another are, at least sometimes hidden from me, starts the sceptic on the way to his conclusion. He expresses the fact, in this particular case, in the assertion that:

"Two persons can't have the same pain."

Malcolm, in the article named above denies the sceptic even this starting place. He says that the idea that two persons can't have the same pain is a "pure illusion" (p.138), that "there is no sense of the expression 'same pain' such that it is impossible for two persons to have the same pain" (p.145).

If this could be shown it would be a significant refutation of at least this part of the sceptic's argument. But Malcolm does not show it.
I will argue that the sceptic's claim here is not only significant but true. How does Malcolm attempt to show the contrary? Roughly his argument is that there is no sense in which pains can be individuated apart from their description, that the concept of "numerical identity" has no application to pain.

"There is no sense of 'different sensation' such that your sensation and my sensation must be different; just as there is no sense of 'different color' such that the color of two areas must be different (p.142) ... Descriptions of sensations provide the criteria of identity for sensations. Since your sensation can have the same description as mine, you and I can have the same sensation. (p.143)

Sensations, such as pains, Malcolm is saying, can only be descriptively different, not numerically different. But the consideration of a simple example will suffice to show him wrong on this.

Say you and I both have pet earwigs. There is a sense in which we can be said to have the same pet, i.e. an earwig (rather than, for example, one of us having a flea) and also a clear sense in which we can be said to have different pets. You have yours and I have mine. If we name them, they will likely have different names, yours Irving, mine Richard; but of course it wouldn't make them the same earwig if they were both called Richard. This distinction, between senses of "the same" is roughly that which is marked by the terms "qualitative identity" and "numerical identity." Our two pets may be qualitatively the same, yet numerically different. Now consider their color. Say they're both black. Then they are the same color, are "qualitatively identical" with respect to color. Could a further question be asked whether they had numerically the same color? It could, if for example, each was a unique shade of
black - Irving Black and Richard Black. Each of our earwigs would have its own color. But if they were exactly the same shade of black, then could there be a further question whether the color of the one was numerically identical to the color of the other? No. "Same color" here means "qualitatively the same." Qualitatively identical colors are the same. There is no sense of "same color" such that two earwigs can't have the same. As Malcolm notes:

"It is one of the most truistic of truisms that the very same shade of color can be in many places at the same time. In such cases there are numerically different colored areas colored the same shade." (p.141.)

So it is, he says, with pains. But we can see that it isn't by turning our attention from earwigs to earaches. If Malcolm is right there could be no answer to the question whether my earache is the same, (numerically) as yours. Indeed, according to him it could make no sense to ask the question. But there is a clear answer to the question whether my earache is numerically the same as yours. And the answer is that of course it isn't. Earaches are, in this respect, more like earwigs than colors. Say our earaches are descriptively the same, both answering to a certain definite description, which might even be labelled by the medical profession, for example, "Hendrix! Earache". We both have qualitatively the same pain. But not numerically. Yours might be treated, get worse, or subside, or bother you when you talk on the telephone, none of which may be true of mine. And regardless of how sympathetic either of us may be there remains a clear sense in which only I can suffer from my earache, and only you yours. Despite Malcolm's disclaimers there is a clear sense in which the notion of numerical identity applies to earaches. If we are both in the doctor's waiting-room, a correct and appropriate answer to the
's question, "How many earaches have we to treat today?" would be "Two." This of course is not to deny that there is a sense in which we can be said to have the same pain, e.g. an earache, or even the same earache e.g. "Hendrix' Earache." But the fact remains that there is an equally valid sense of "same pain" in which we can't.

Strawson points this out by saying that "states or experiences owe their identity as particular to the identity of the person whose states or experiences they are." ("Individuals" p.93.) (Malcolm, in his article gives the wrong page reference here - he footnotes p.97. Malcolm: op.cit.,p.156.) So Malcolm's attempt to undermine the sceptic by saying that two persons can have the same pain fails. And the sense in which two persons can have the same pain (same sort of pain) is irrelevant to whether one can know whether another feels what I feel or feels anything at all. Granted that we can both have earaches. This doesn't tell me how or whether I can know when you do.

III. IDENTITY AND TELEPATHY

I said (above) that the sense in which two persons can have the same pain, that is, qualitatively the same is irrelevant to the question whether one can know what or whether another feels. This raises the question whether the sense in which the sceptic claims we can't have the same pain (numerically the same) is relevant to whether I can know what or whether another feels. I will attempt in this section to answer that question and will go about it in this way:
First I will try to answer the question whether it is possible that two persons could have the same pain.

and Second I will try to say whether the answer to the first question is relevant to the question the sceptic has put to us.

(1) To the first question I want to respond with a carefully qualified "yes." But, (and this is what I will be at great pains to point out) the sense in which it is possible is strictly irrelevant to the "Problem of OTHER MINDS." I will argue, that is, that the sort of situation which would have to occur in order for it to be true that two or more persons could have (numerically) the same pain would be too far removed from the ordinary situations in which we speak of knowing that another is in pain to serve as a possible counter-example to what the sceptic claims to have discovered in just these ordinary situations. What would be gained by the actualization of the imagined possibility would, at the same time and for the same reasons not be what the sceptic says we lack in the ordinary situation. What I mean is this.

If, as I suggested above, earaches are logically more akin to earwigs than they are to colors as regards the question of their identity and individuation, then it appears that to the extent they are like earwigs it ought to be possible for two or more persons to have numerically the same one. For clearly two or more persons can be said to have the same earwig. I might go together with a friend to buy one, we might co-sign its registration papers and so on. And if earwigs were particularly expensive or I and my friend particularly poor, several of us might go together in buying it, all have our names on its papers etc., thus making it a
Could there be an analogous situation with pain? I think there could be, that is, that such situations might arise where we would be at least sorely tempted to describe them as cases of two or more persons having numerically the same pain. I will now consider one such situation, and for simplicity's sake, limit my example to two persons.

Very frequently in discussions of the "privacy of sensation" the possibility of telepathy is considered as a possible counter-example to the claim that two persons can't have the same pain. The sort of situation imagined is generally something like this:

Whenever person A is in pain, person B is too, and for no clear reason. For example, A sits on an ice-pick and B feels pain in his posterior too, possibly cries out, utters oaths and so on. Now clearly such an unfortunate ability on B's part might be a way of telling from his own sensations what A is feeling. But is this really essentially any different from the ordinary ways we say we tell from our own sensations (amongst other things) what another is feeling, that is, from our observations of him in certain situations behaving in certain ways? Why, for example, wouldn't such a telepathic experience be just another bit of evidence on the same level as the kind of evidence we say we now have and which the sceptic has questioned the sufficiency of? Might not a sceptic simply regard such evidence as every bit as much the contents of my mind and as such insufficient as evidence concerning the contents of another's? (Like, for example, the possibility of the word "pain" appearing on the forehead of another when he sits on ice-picks etc.) To take this position would be to say that the possibility of telepathy would at best give us an experience which we might have every reason we now have to believe is
constantly correlated with another's pain and this experience is every bit as questionable as everything else we now offer as reasons for believing another is in pain.

But I introduced telepathy to consider the possibility of two persons having numerically the same pain. Could we say that were it to occur, they did? Do A and B feel the same pain? Well, what pain is being asked about here? Say we say, "the pain produced by A's sitting on an ice-pick." They both feel the same pain, that one. At least I don't see why or where we would be wrong in so saying. But doesn't this admission contradict the claim defended above, that experiences owe their identity as particulars to the person whose experiences they are? It doesn't. The identity of pain as a particular does not rule out its being shared. It might be plausibly said that either:

(1) if A and B feel the same pain, the one produced by A's sitting etcetera. Then they both feel A's pain. B's feeling A's pain does not make it B's pain. If we say it does make it B's pain on the grounds that all pains B feels are B's, then we no longer have the situation of B's feeling A's pain, but rather B's feeling his own pain. An event, A's sitting etcetera, causes two pains, A's and B's, which are different.

or (2) (which denies that a pain owes its identity as a particular to the sole individual whose experience it is) that the pain owes its identity as a particular to the (two or more) persons whose experience it is. Here the pain would be identified as "A's and B's pain."

But however we see fit to describe the situation, (and we might describe it
differently for different purposes, for example, if only B were in our presence, we might then refer to it as "B's," if only A, "A's" or if both, "A and B's," or if it could only be treated by attending to A, "A's,"

does this give us a situation where, contrary to what the sceptic has been arguing, it is possible B knows that A is in pain? Would such a case satisfy the sceptic, meet his demands? I suggest it shouldn't for however described, the pain in question is not fully A's. "A's pain" does not here individuate the pain in the way "A's pain" does in ordinary circumstances, where there is not this kind of telepathy. Whatever we call what B feels it is not, strictly speaking, A's pain. It might be objected here that this claim on my part is a purely gratuitous one, that so saying forces the description of the situation into an unnecessary, arbitrary and inadequate mould, that what I have conceded in conceding the example I have taken away by grammatical fiat. But this "grammatical fiat" is not an arbitrary imposition upon, but rather an account of, a fact of our talk about pain. "A's pain" to be his in the full sense is just that pain which he and he alone feels. If such a situation were to occur as the one imagined where it is at least not obviously wrong to say that B feels it too, then, and to the same extent that we are tempted to say that, it is not in the full sense A's pain at all, but rather "A and B's" or (perhaps) not in the full sense pain (not in our sense "a pain"). Each, it might be said, would have his own feeling of "the pain." But precisely this shared feeling of "the pain" would, in publicizing pain, make "pain" mean something different, pain be something different, from what we mean by "pain," what pain is like for us. Pains would then be more like colors and "pain" function in our language more like "color." To revert briefly to earaches:
if when A had an earache, another, several others or even everybody had it too, for no clear reason, we might well come to talk of earaches as we now talk of, for example, sunsets. Everyone who, under normal circumstances looks, sees, we say, the same sunset. But the sunset is not the property of any one of fifteen beholders (observers), (perceivers). It is public property. Similarly, there might be a "public earache," so that everybody felt it. But here we are a long way from our ordinary concept of an earache. Far enough away, I think, to show how the imagined case of "sharing the same pain" would not give what the sceptic denies we can have. For such an account of B feeling A's pain could not allow, would positively disallow "A's pain" having its proper place, its normal, ordinary place. "A's pain" would not be enough "his" and A not enough "other." The example does not give us an account of what we mean by "knowing another is in pain" and hence the example filled out and extended would not give us what we mean by "knowledge of other minds." Such a situation would be a bridging of our separation from others, an alteration of central facts about our situation. And it is this, our situation the sceptic finds problematic and which one who wishes to refute the sceptic must show unproblematic, or at least not in the way the sceptic argues. So the situation offered as being that which the sceptic wants, or needs to give us knowledge of other minds while not "logically impossible" is irrelevant to his, and to what we have made our problems.

To repeat and summarize the argument of this section then: a situation might occur which we might well describe as two persons having the same (numerical) pain, but were a person to have the same pain as another, that pain would be not enough the other's to give us what we mean
by knowledge of other minds. And nor would his having it be enough to say
the other had it too, that is, the question how B could know that A shared
the pain seems answerable only in terms of whether B is justified in taking
an experience of his own (to the degree it is his own) as sufficient
evidence for making a knowledge claim about A's experiences. And it is
not at all clear that any such experience should be more privileged, or
taken as being on a different level, than any other of B's experiences,
all of which the sceptic has called into question.

Telepathy then, could not satisfy the sceptic's demands, could not
answer his questions about other minds.

IV. SOULS

The preceding remarks concerning identity, individuation and so on
lead conveniently into the topic of the identity and mode of individuation
of those individuals to whom we primarily ascribe M.T.s, namely persons.
I said that to the extent experiences were, in the relevant sense, shared
with another, that being with whom they are shared is not enough "other"
to count as "another mind," that the sort of situation we would have to
imagine for such sharing, to be possible is too far removed from our
normal situation in which the sceptic's problems arise and which they are
about. In so doing, I stressed the uniqueness and individuality of persons
and the separation between them. In this section I wish to emphasize this
essential separation by pointing out certain features of persons. I will
not attempt to give in any way a full account of what a person is but
rather to show what a person isn't (and cannot be) by saying what is
necessary to make sense of the identity and individuality of persons. I will attempt to show that the human body is a necessary condition of personal identity and individuation and so a necessary condition of the applicability to persons of M.T.s.

The picture, or concept of a person I wish to argue against has come to be known, with perhaps some degree of historical injustice, as "Cartesian." It is the idea that a person is a combination of two types of entity, material body and immaterial soul, or ego. (Ryle's ghost in the machine). This Cartesian idea of "soul" is radically mistaken. It is, as Kant argued, and as Strawson neatly puts it in 'The Bounds of Sense,' "a result of confusing the unity of experience with the experience of unity" (p. 73.) Let me explain. The soul is said to be immaterial, yet the subject of experience. It is, I think, a fair question what "experience" can mean here. Wittgenstein (as many before and after him) has constantly reminded us of the dangers of employing our concepts beyond the boundaries of their legitimate use, which is precisely, it seems, what the Cartesian has done here. He (at least) implies that the soul could exist and have experiences apart from any body. But how can an immaterial thing have (how are we to make sense of its having) experiences in the absence of any sense organs, nervous system etcetera? Has it immaterial sense organs? Do they function in the same way material ones do? How? Or is the experience of the soul different from what we call experience? How different? Why call whatever it might have "experience" at all? For example, the "seeing" of the soul: is it from a point of view? Then what one? The soul, remember is immaterial and not spatially located. Is the soul itself a point of view? How then can a point of view have experiences? The seas
of language, as Wittgenstein put it, run mighty high here. Such questions, if not unanswerable, do raise extremely difficult problems for the Cartesian, difficulties which, to my knowledge, have not been anywhere adequately dealt with. But there is a further, perhaps more fundamental question about the propriety of calling the soul a "thing" at all. The problem is this: if the soul is a particular thing (individual), it must in principle be possible to make an identifying reference to it. Were this not possible, there would be no grounds for calling it an individual. Now we can't identify or individuate the soul in the same way we could a material thing, for the soul is an immaterial thing. Is there perhaps another way this might be done? To see that there isn't let us try to distinguish the soul of say Descartes (D) from that of his mistress (M).

In the case of material things we can always make at least one identifying reference to that thing, that is, one could distinguish two apparently identical horses by referring to one as, for example, "the steed now nearest the king." Here the beast is identified through, by means of its spatio-temporal location. But we can't do this with souls because they are not spatially anywhere. Nor will it help here to refer to the bodies to which the souls are (mysteriously) related. We know how to; that is, we have workable criteria of identity which, were the occasion to arise, would enable us to distinguish (D) from (M). The problem is that the souls themselves must be distinguishable. And the appeal to a "unified consciousness" the consciousness a soul has of a unique and unified set of experiences gets us no further. It is just such an appeal which Strawson diagnoses as

\[1\] Descartes did have at least one mistress.
the cause of the illusion of the individual immaterial subject of consciousness. Both Hume and Kant pointed out that a unified consciousness does not entail the existence of an immaterial entity. (Hume: 'Treatise' I IV, p. 6.) Kant: 'Critique of Pure Reason' pp. 413-420.)

There could, I think, be no criteria of identity for a subject of consciousness entirely unrelated to a body. That this is so can be seen by considering the possibility that not one but an indefinite number of souls existed each having the same consciousness at the same time. It is possible to imagine an indefinite number of persons with identical consciousnesses simultaneously. (Mass hypnosis might accomplish this) and in such a case we could distinguish them through their different spatial locations. But this way is closed to us with souls and there appears to be no other. And here we mustn't fail to notice the full force of this example. Its point is not that there might happen to be an indefinite number of souls which could not in fact be distinguished but rather that it is quite vacuous to speak here of individual souls in the way the Cartesian does. Where individuation is logically impossible, it makes no sense to speak of individuals. A persistent Cartesian might reply here that the soul itself is anyway aware of its own individuality. But whatever evidence was brought forward to support this claim would equally support the claim that what we have here is an indefinite number of souls in series, each passing on consciousness to the next. (Kant: Ibid, p. 363).

So in addition to the problem of giving content to the idea of the soul having experiences there are, it seems, insurmountable difficulties concerning the possibility of its very identification and individuality. No sense has been given to its being an appropriate or even possible subject of
experience, or of the ascription of M.T.s. Nor, I think, could there be.

V. EVIDENCE, CONCLUSIONS AND PARADIGM CASES

The aim of the preceding section was to reject a certain picture of a person and to get us to look at the concept we have and with which we must deal. We have seen that to speak of a subject of experience is to speak of a body. And we don't ascribe M.T.s to all kinds of bodies but only (seriously and sincerely) to bodies which appear and behave in certain ways, that is human bodies and those which resemble and behave like (to varying degrees) those bodies we call human. So let us consider the familiar assertion that "behavior is the grounds (basis) of our ascription of M.T.s to others." This seems obviously true (what else could be?), but has been thought problematic and puzzling. Why? Largely because of an ambiguity in the term "grounds" between necessary and sufficient conditions. To regard behavior (B) as sufficient seems to commit us to too much, for example, to applying M.T.s in situations where it would be mistaken to apply them, when for example, another pretends to be worried, angry, in pain etcetera, or perhaps to commit us to the view that such behavior is what is meant by the M.T. (a view stigmatized or embraced as logical behaviorism) or it might

1 This ambiguity arises also if other terms are substituted here for "grounds" for example "basis," "criteria" and so on: or, if the ambiguity is done away with the problems which either interpretation carries with it remain.
be thought that in ascribing an M.T. to another one is making an inference to an experience from an observed correlation (known from one's own case) between that sort of behavior and the experience the M.T. denotes.

To regard B as a necessary condition for ascribing M.T.s to others may be seen as committing us to not enough, that is, to not ascribing M.T.s to others when it would be correct to do so (when, for example, the characteristic behavior is held back) or to not applying them in one's own case when the behavior is held back or irrelevant to, not used in, the ascription.

So long as "grounds" is ambiguous between necessary and sufficient conditions it is not clear what the assertion that behavior is the grounds of our ascription of M.T.s to others is saying.

And once the ambiguity is resolved, either way, there seem to be serious, if not insoluble problems involved. To say that behavior is either necessary or sufficient for the ascription of M.T.s to others seems highly problematic if not outright false. Both views, it seems, fail to account for our ordinary use of our mentalistic vocabulary. Are we then misconstruing the claims of one or both views? Or is there a further notion of "grounds" somewhere between necessary and sufficient condition and is this what is meant? Before discussing this apparent dilemma further it will be useful to introduce a distinction between two sorts of questions concerning the relation between behavior and the ascription of M.T.s which following Terry Forrest ("P - Predicates") will be called "Internal" and "External" Questions. Internal questions are those which arise legitimately within the "language-game" of ascribing M.T.s and concern the justification
of ascribing a particular M.T. in a particular case. External questions concern the legitimacy of the language-game itself, that is, of ascribing M.T.'s \textit{generally}. Let us then apply this distinction to a case where a M.T. ("pain") is ascribed to another person and where the justification of that ascription is challenged first by an internal question and second by an external one.

We see a young girl, call her Helga, set upon and bitten by a Scottish Terrier. Upon loosening the creature's jaws from her ankle and disposing of the beast we notice Helga's ankle badly swollen, blood oozing through the wound. Her face is contorted, she is screaming, trembling, gasping and so on. We ask her if it hurts and she manages to blurt out that it does. I then rush to a doctor relate to him the story of what I saw, finishing with, "and she is in terrible pain." Now suppose my last remark were challenged by the doctor, that is, that he accepts as true my account of what happened to Helga, how she carried on and so on but he questions my ascription to her of pain. (If necessary we can suppose the Doctor a Ph.D. in Philosophy). How can he do this? What might he mean by saying, "all the same she might not be in pain." If his question is the kind I have characterized as internal there are a number of possible suggestions he might make, for example, that Helga was pretending, or under anaesthetic, or merely in a state of shock, the terrier toothless and so on. Any of these might have been the case and indeed the doctor might proceed to show me that one or more of his suggestions was the case.

But if his question is an \textit{external} one, he turns the tables on me (or at least intends to) by putting the burden of proof on me to justify
my assertion that she was in pain. The internal questioning proceeds by a kind of process of eliminating possibilities suggested by him; if she's not pretending perhaps she's numbed by anaesthetic and if not that, then ... and it is up to him to establish that one of these is the case or my assertion stands. But in asking the external question he challenges not merely my right to suppose such conditions as he suggests absent, but more fundamentally, my right to ascribe pain to her at all. How can I assert my right to do so in the face of this challenge? It seems that I can do little more than repeat my gruesome tale and this the doctor may well accept as true yet he may still question my ascription to her of pain, this time on the grounds that pain behavior and pain itself are different and distinguishable and that it is always possible that the one occur without the other. He points out that there are two ways we might be mistaken: we may ascribe pain to others when all the characteristic behavior is present but no pain or we may fail to ascribe pain where there is no pain behavior but still pain.

There are, I think, two main points to the sceptic's remarks here. The first concerns the notion of "logical possibility", the second an argument to the effect that "what sometimes happens could always happen." I will consider these in turn.

(a) Logical possibility: The sceptic has said that it is possible that Helga was not in pain, meaning not that she might be pretending etcetera, for then his question, "How do you know?" would be an internal one. He means something else, but what else? It might be suggested that all he is suggesting by asking the external question is that it is logically possible
that she not be in pain, that there would be no contradiction involved in asserting all I did in denying that she was in pain. But if this is all he is suggesting, then he is merely pointing out in a misleading way that my statement that Helga is in pain is a statement of fact (an empirical statement). And of course this is true but hardly problematic in the way the sceptic intends. And it seems that a plausible argument can be constructed to show that this is all he could be suggesting and that what seems problematic about his claim here is merely a result of a rather simple-minded confusion about the word "possibility." The outline of such an argument would be: my statement, "she is in pain" the sceptic says is possibly false. But there are two senses of "possibly false."

(1) by "possibly false" it might be meant that the falsity of my statement (S) is not self-contradictory, that is, that S is possibly false in that the falsity of S is consistent with the laws of logic,

(2) by "possibly false" it might be meant that S is false for all we know, that is, "S is possibly false" is consistent with all the evidence we might have.

If by "possibly false" the sceptic means (1), then we must agree with him but to do so is merely to agree to the trivial point that S is not necessarily true; that its denial is not contradictory. But while we wouldn't want to deny this we needn't. For if the sceptic is saying (as he intends and purports) something substantial, then he must be making the stronger claim that the falsity of S is consistent with all the evidence we could have. But this (the argument goes on) is just false.
The falsity of $S$ is not consistent with all the evidence we have. If evidence is to count as evidence for anything it must count for the truth of $S$ and so be inconsistent with the falsity of $S$. What the sceptic has done is to substitute (2) for (1), the substantive claim for the trivial one. Having cagily got us to agree with (1) he substitutes (2) for (1) thus attempting to persuade us of the truth of (2) which is here just false.

So goes the argument. But is this really an adequate diagnosis of the sceptic's claim? Isn't it precisely his point that we never do in fact have evidence for the truth of such statements as "she is in pain." The sceptic, that is, is calling into question the central notion of evidence itself, challenging our very right to call the kinds of things we call evidence, evidence. It is at this point a rather curious anti-sceptical argument might be employed, the so-called "Paradigm Case Argument." On any ordinary understanding of evidence, it is said, the kinds of things Helga did are the very paradigms of the kinds of things we call evidence, which count as evidence; the situation as described is a very paradigm of someone's being in pain. But of course, the sceptic knows this, knows that this is what we ordinarily call evidence, call "being in pain." What he is saying is that such "evidence" falls short. The Paradigm Case Argument just fails to take the sceptic seriously enough, or even to take him at his word, and so fails as an adequate response to him. But, it might yet be replied, when the sceptic says such evidence "falls short", still, all he is saying is that this evidence falls short of proving $S$ in the logical sense of proving. Clearly the sceptic is
operating throughout with criteria drawn from the language of logic rather than with criteria drawn from discourse about matters of fact. But is it really so clear that this is what the sceptic is doing? He certainly doesn't mean to do so. But what else could he mean? Here a passage from John Passmore's "Philosophical Reasoning" seems to the point. Passmore says, in discussing the Paradigm Case Argument:

"Don't ask what the philosopher could mean. Look and see what he did mean - if that is our motto we shall not find much use for the Paradigm Case Argument" (p.118.)

I think the following points are clear about what the sceptical philosopher does mean: when he says that what we call paradigm cases of evidence for knowledge of other minds fall short and paradigm cases of what we call knowledge of other minds are insufficiently justified he is not saying merely that the denials of statements like S (above) aren't self-contradictory. He is saying that behavior and experience are distinguishable and separable and that all we have access to in the case of others is behavior and that therefore we can't claim to know that another has the experience. All we can claim to know about is how the other behaves. But what is the point of speaking of the lack of conclusive evidence if it is unattainable? The sceptic however is not saying it is unattainable. He is quite free to maintain that conclusive evidence is attainable, but only to a limited number of persons, in this case the limit being one and the person Helga herself. She (he says) has access to certain evidence which no one else has or can have. So it appears that we are back in the position where we must prove or somehow show that such evidence (the experience) isn't necessary, that what we can and do have is sufficient.
And it isn't sufficient to show this to merely point out that it is a paradigm of what we call "sufficient" here. We must find another and different approach to the problem. But before going on to consider other approaches the sceptic's second argument (above p.2.) must be dealt with.

VI. POLAR CONCEPTS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-VACUOUS CONTRASTS

In this section I want to dispose of another form of anti-sceptical argument, one which purports to be a refutation of the sceptic's claim (p.19) that "what sometimes happens could always happen." The discussion here will lead us to a consideration of further anti-sceptical arguments and of the problems raised near the end of the preceding section.

"What sometimes happens could always happen": we are, the sceptic argues, sometimes mistaken in ascribing M.T.s to others, therefore we might always be. Is this right? An argument designed to show that it isn't can be found on p.73 of Anthony Kenny's "Action, Emotion and Will." Here Kenny is arguing against the suggestion that it would be possible for all emotions to be concealed, a different suggestion from the sceptics but similar enough for our purposes and, more importantly, based on similar reasoning. Kenny says:

"It is possible for feelings of emotion to be kept to oneself and in that sense, to be private. But it does not follow from the fact that some emotions are private events that all emotions could be private events. "what sometimes happens could always happen' is a fallacy. It is the case that some money is forged; it could not be the case that all money was forged. Some men are taller than average; it could not be the case that all men were taller than average." (p.73).
Is "what sometimes happens could always happen" a fallacy? Well, it isn't always a fallacy. It is certainly true that some of us are sometimes mistaken about certain things, for example the distance from earth to Pluto. And it is also certainly possibly true, (and almost certainly in fact true) that we are always mistaken about this. But lest this example be thought trivial or irrelevant (though I don't see why it should) let us look at one of Kenny's own examples. Some money, he says is forged, but all money couldn't be. Why not? Why, for example, couldn't all "real" money suddenly just disappear or decompose? Peculiar but possible. Or again, suppose all nations agreed to adopt a policy of universal currency and having fixed what denominations and values etcetera, of coins and bills to be produced, destroyed all the old money in preparation for manufacturing the new, so that for a while there was no money, period. And suppose further that some enterprising fellow (call him Bennett) decided in the interim to make his own (after the proposed models) then, for that period, while the only money in existence was Bennett-made, all money would be forged. And I think that Kenny's other example about average height could be dealt with in a similar way. Not all men, he says could be taller than average. Say the present average height of a man is 5'10" and that suddenly all men under 6' were to dissolve, die, or rapidly grow to over 6'. It might be argued here that were this to happen, the average height of a man would then be perhaps 6'3" instead of 5'10" as it used to be. But to say so seems quite gratuitous. We might well want to continue saying that the average height of a man was 5'10" even though there were, now no members of the class of men of average height, especially if we had reason to believe this condition of universal tallness would be short-
lived, or perhaps for so dubious a purpose as the build-up of the collective male ego. At least I don't see that or why we should have to decide one way or the other. So "what sometimes happens could always happen isn't always a fallacy."

What lies behind the belief that it is a fallacy? I think perhaps a (rather common) confusion between what might be called the "Principle of Non-Factual Contrast" and the "Principle of Non-Vacuous Contrast." Kenny seems here to have confused the former principle, which states, falsely, something like, "a predicate is significant if and only if it is instantiated and has a significant and instantiated contrast" with the latter, which states that "a predicate is significant (non-vacuous) if and only if it has a significant (non-vacuous) contrast." Now, while the principle of Non-Vacuous Contrast is true and can be rather useful in disposing of some sorts of arguments, it won't do the job Kenny requires of it. This can be illustrated by considering the probable parent of Kenny's "Forging example" in Gilbert Ryle's "Dilemmas." Ryle says:

"A country which had no coinage would offer no scope for counterfeitors. There would be nothing for them to manufacture or press counterfeits of........ there can be false coins only where there are coins made of the proper materials by the proper authorities ...... a judge who has found all too many witnesses in the past inaccurate and dishonest may be right in expecting today's testimonies to break down under examination, but he cannot declare that there are no such things as accuracy and honesty in testifying." (p.94-5).

But if my Bennett-story was intelligible, or would be with perhaps more colorful details added, then Ryle is just wrong here. For what that story showed was that there needn't be "coins made of the proper materials by the proper authorities." All that is required is possible legitimate coinage or, better, actual legitimate currency, legislation and models.
And Ryle's other example works no better. It is quite intelligible to say that there is in fact no accuracy or honesty in testifying. Each and every individual who testified might be in fact a muddle-headed hypocrite or a forgetful liar, at least while testifying. But to admit this is not to say there couldn't be. Accuracy and honesty may be unrealized yet possible attributes of testifiers. All Ryle has shown, (if this) is that, for "there is no honesty etcetera" to be significant, "there is honesty etcetera" must also be. This is the Principle of Non-Vacuous Contrast. A predicate which failed to meet this requirement would be vacuous, that is its predication of a subject would make no difference, would say nothing about the subject. If (a) "No men are honest" is to count as a significant proposition, then (b) "Some men are honest" must also be a significant proposition. But (b) need not be a true proposition. (b) might well be false without (a) being meaningless, for (a) could be asserting something (truthfully) of men, that they are not what they might be. So Kenny's and Ryle's arguments do not, as they stand, refute the sceptic. If "what sometimes happens could always happen" isn't always a fallacy it might not be one here. That there is something conceptually wrong with the sceptic's assertion that we might always be wrong or mistaken in ascribing M.T.s to others requires further argument. And in fact several arguments attempting to do just this have appeared in recent years. We will now go on to consider some of these anti-sceptical arguments.
VII. NON-CONTINGENT CONNECTIONS

The sceptic asserts (and this is for him the crucial premiss) that experiences and their behavioral manifestation are distinguishable and separable, that the connection between them is a contingent one, at the strongest a causal one. Thus he could claim that all the statements I offered in support of my claim that Helga was in pain might be true without my claim itself being true. Pain, he says can occur independently of (what is called) pain behavior and one can behave as if one were in pain when one in fact isn't. All of this can be summed up by saying that there is no logical connection between statements about behavior (B.S.) and statements ascribing mentalistic terms (M.S.) This seems plausible but has recently been frequently challenged. These challenges have taken various forms but most seem to have this in common: that they attempt to refute scepticism by showing that there are logical ("non-contingent, or "conceptual relations" or "ties") between B.S. and M.S. and furthermore that this logical relation is not an entailment relation. The views I wish to consider do not hold, for example, that a B.S. (or set of B.S.) entails an M.S., or that an M.S. entails a B.S. (or set of B.S.). These views wish to allow for such possibilities as a person's feeling pain without expressing or in any way manifesting it and a person's behaving as if he were in pain when in fact he is not. They want to admit the propriety of speaking of concealing or feigning feelings etcetera in the way we sometimes do, that is to admit and account for the separability of B.S. and M.S. in some cases. But they also want to deny what the sceptic insists on; that the relation between B.S. and M.S. is contingent. I will now consider two such attempts, those of Malcolm and Strawson, and attempt to show that
both attempts fail. But it should be re-emphasized here exactly what it
is they fail to do. My argument is quite simply that they fail to establish
that there is a non-contingent relationship between B.S. and M.S. and in
failing, fail to refute the premiss which is essential to the sceptic. I
will not argue that the arguments of Malcolm and Strawson are total
failures. They aren't any more than they have single aims. Indeed both
make what seem to me important points, even if the importance of these points
has been overstated (and not only by them) and while primarily concerned
with undermining their claims about non-contingent connections I will not
hesitate to make what seems to me a more reasonable if less far reaching use
of some of these insights.

VIII. THE "PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT" ACCORDING TO NORMAN MALCOLM

Malcolm's views, the ones I wish to consider here, are set forth in two
articles, his "Review of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations" and
"Knowledge of Other Minds." His attack on what I have said is the crucial
sceptical premiss (S.P.) that B.S. and M.S. are contingently related is
contained in his version of the "Private Language Argument" (P.L.A.).
Briefly his argument is that S.P. presupposes a "private language" (P.L.)
and that since a P.L. is impossible, S.P. is false. This bears scrutiny.
Malcolm says:

"The idea of a P.L. is presupposed by every program of inferring or
constructing the external world or other minds. It is contained in
the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical
British Empiricism as well as in recent phenomenalism and sense-
datum theory. At bottom, it is the idea that there is only a con-
tingent and not an essential connection between a sensation and its
outward expression - an idea that appeals to us all." (Rev. p.66.)
But as appealing and widespread as this idea may be it is nonetheless, Malcolm says, mistaken, for there cannot be a P.L. or, as he puts it (with characteristic clarity) a P.L. "is not a language" (Rev. p.75.) So Malcolm is maintaining that S.P. presupposes the impossible (the existence of a P.L.) But what precisely is it S.P. presupposes? And how does it "presuppose" this? Malcolm explains what he means by a P.L. (with numbered references to the "Investigations.")

"By a P.L. is meant one that not merely is not but cannot be understood by anyone other than the speaker. The reason for this is that the words of his language are supposed to refer to what can be known to only one person, to his immediate private sensations (p.243.) What is supposed is that to associate words with sensation and use the names as descriptions. I fix my attention on a sensation and establish a connection between a word and a sensation (p.258.)" (Rev. p.66.)

Now, Malcolm's P.L.A. can only show S.P. false if the argument, itself is sound and also if the truth of S.P. does depend on their being a P.L. That is, to show S.P. false Malcolm must prove both:

(a) that a P.L. is impossible
(b) that unless there is a P.L., S.P. is false.

I believe he does neither.

(a) Why should a P.L. be impossible or "not a language"? Malcolm employs two arguments to show why:

(1) he attempts to prove, by a reductio ad absurdum, that a P.L. is not a language. This he calls the "Internal Attack" (Rev. p.75.)

(2) he attempts to prove that one couldn't "know from one's own case what pain, tickling, consciousness etcetera are and then transfer these ideas to objects outside myself". This he calls the "External Attack" (Rev. p.75.)
1. THE INTERNAL ATTACK

Malcolm's internal attack on the idea of a P.L. is essentially the idea that "there can't be such a thing as following a rule in a P.L., no such thing as naming something of which only I can be aware, "pain," then going on to call the same thing pain whenever it occurs. (Rev. p.73.) Why can there be no such thing? Because, he says, there could be no way of deciding whether the word was being used consistently. He asks "what would be the difference between my having used it consistently and its seeming to me that I have? Or has this distinction vanished? What is going to seem to me right is right. And that only means we can't talk about 'right.'" (Rev. p.68.)

For "pain" to be a word rather than a mere sound it must be used consistently according to a rule. This much seems unobjectionable. But why shouldn't one be able to follow a rule privately? What Malcolm said was "Whatever is going to seem to me right is right. And that only means that we can't talk about 'right'."

Why couldn't a speaker of a P.L. have the distinction between "seeming right" and "being right?" He could surely have it in the sense that he could say things like "this seems to me to be the same feeling." That is he could make such utterances if he could make any at all. What Malcolm means however is that this distinction would be for him, idle, that it would have no legitimate use, could do no work. Why? Say the speaker of a P.L. says upon having a certain sensation, "this is pain" and later, upon the occurrence of a very similar sensation says the same thing. Now it seems quite clear that either he is right and the sensation is the same, or wrong and it is not. But Malcolm's argument is that no-one could know which:
another person couldn't (the language is logically private) and the speaker himself couldn't because he could never prove himself right (or wrong).

"There could not be in a F.L. any conception of what would establish a memory claim as correct, any conception of what "correct" would mean here." (Rev. p.70).

But why couldn't one, for example:

(1) make a claim; "This is what I call 'pain'."
(2) on the basis that "I called this 'pain' before."
(3) have as reason for (2) "I remember that I did."
(4) and be able to claim that (3) is sufficient reason for (2).
(5) and be right?

Malcolm's "argument" to show one couldn't is distressingly terse and not even remotely conclusive. It is that "memory is not a court from which there is no appeal." (Rev. p. 69.) Just that; though I think it fair to credit him with the clearer, if hardly more successful claim, that 'there must be independent checks on memory'. But then he does not say why we must or even how we could have independent checks on memory itself. How do we check particular memory claims? Here are a few ways: (This brief account makes no attempt at conclusiveness but is, I think, important here.)

We check memories by other memories:

(a) of temporally preceding events etcetera. For example, I might check on my memory impression that I was cold this morning by remembering that I crawled sleepily into the ice-box last night.
(b) of simultaneous events etcetera, for example I might check my memory that I was in pain at a certain time by remembering that my ankle was in the jaws of a Scottie.
(c) of subsequent events etcetera, for example I might check my memory of hearing Nixon's acceptance speech in Miami by recalling my severe nausea shortly thereafter.

(d) by concentrating on it, reasoning about it, considering alternatives etcetera, for example when asked whether I'm sure it was a Volks-wagen in the pool I might think; was it really? What else might it have been? Might conjure up images, try to remember how much I I had had to drink, whether I had recently had the pool cleaned and so on. (This sort of checking would involve combinations and complications of the other kinds and further considerations, the whole matter becoming dreadfully complex and possibly quite expensive). And as more and more details are added my memory claims become increasingly reliable, they will begin to fit together into a coherent if somewhat unpleasant story, for example, I might remember being cold this morning because I slept in the ice-box having been ill as a result of hearing Nixon, whom I couldn't turn off due to my intense pain from having been bitten by a Scottie, etcetera, etcetera.

But Malcolm would argue that though this is the sort of thing we do, we cannot think of these as independent checks on memory and it is these latter we really need to prove our memory claims. The sort of things I have been mentioning, one can hear Malcolm mutter, is analogous to checking one copy of the morning paper, by reading another copy of the same paper. (Rev. p.68.) But of course it is not quite like this, but more like checking one paper, for example "The Sun" against another, for example "Gramma" where the checking is not only against something independent, but against something which may and frequently does conflict as perhaps in the two
papers' accounts of Cuba's sugar production or Canadian sales of arms to the U.S. or the death of Che Guevara, in a way analogous to how my memory impression may conflict, for example my impression that I had paid the dentist with my (better supported) impression that I had spent my last penny on a flight to Europe.

But Malcolm's more striking and overriding claim is that just as there must be independent checks on newspapers as such (the facts) so there must be on memory as such. But there are cases where even a particular memory claim is uncheckable. There might be no way to check on my memory impression that I had thought of W.B. Yeats while lost and alone atop Mount Fuji. Indeed it is hard to see how this could be checked even if there were others present if I had kept my exotic thoughts to myself. But surely it is either true or false that I had these thoughts and that it makes sense to say that I did. Here Malcolm would very likely appeal to the general reliability of memory while insisting on the dependence of this general reliability on the possibility of independent checks. It might have been the case that I wrote my thoughts in the snow. The "independent check" that I had then would be then perhaps to return to the peak to see whether they were still there. If not, this doesn't show they never were. Obviously it might have snowed on them, etcetera. Or if the writing I had expected or predicted was there, this doesn't prove my memory impression correct, nor, and this is the important point, could it in the way Malcolm wants. This can be seen by simply asking a few questions such as how do I know the writing was put there by me, that this is Mount Fuji, that I am the same person who made the original memory claim etcetera. The knowledge of these sorts of things, that writing doesn't just appear on mountains, themselves
endure through time, don't move around from place to place etcetera involves further and more general beliefs about the world and the past which also involve memory. Any check on memory seems to involve memory. So we can't have independent checks on memory itself. But neither do we need them. As A.J. Ayer suggests in "Can There Be a Private Language?" unless something is recognized without being referred to a further test, nothing can be tested:

"Since every process of checking must terminate in some act of recognition, no process of checking can establish anything unless some acts of recognition are taken as valid in themselves." (p.42)

Malcolm at least has given no reason to suppose that memory is not an independent check beyond which there are no checks. Indeed he himself is very fond of citing Wittgenstein to the effect that justification comes to an end, that we need a bedrock beyond which there can be no appeal other than "this is simply what I do" (Rev. pp.88, 92.) Why shouldn't such a bedrock be memory? I check my belief that this present sensation is what I call pain by appealing to my memory of its previous occurrence. So in postulating memory as a check it doesn't follow that I can't identify and name a sensation and subsequently reidentify a qualitatively similar one; correctly or incorrectly. Malcolm's "internal argument" fails to show that I can't follow a rule privately and that there cannot therefore be a P.L.

(2) THE EXTERNAL ATTACK

Malcolm's second argument against the possibility of a P.L. (the external attack) is directed against "the assumption that once I know from my own case what pain, tickling, consciousness is then I can transfer the ideas of these things to objects outside myself" (Rev. p.75). His objection
to this assumption is that it leads, necessarily to solipsism, (an outcome which, of course, would be quite amenable to the sceptic). But does this assumption, that one learns the meanings of M.T.s from one's own case have solipsism as a necessary consequence? Malcolm has two arguments which attempt to show that it does, the first of which appeared in the original version of his review of the *Investigations* the second in a later revision of that article and in *Knowledge of Other Minds*. The first attempts to show that the above assumption would make it "contradictory" to speak of the pains etcetera of another, the second that it would make it "unintelligible." These two arguments differ in certain interesting ways but both rest ultimately on the same claim that:

"If I were to learn what pain means by perceiving my own pain then I should, necessarily, have learned that pain is something that exists only when I feel it - it will be part of my conception of pain that I am the only being that can experience it."

(Rev., pp. 75-6.)

This, Malcolm explains, is because I would have no "criterion" of the mental phenomena of another, no criterion, for example, for the existence of a pain I do not feel. (Rev., p.76., K.0.M., p.379.) To evaluate this we must find out (1) what Malcolm means by "criterion" (2) why one must have "criteria" (3) why one who learns the meaning of M.T.s from his own case could not have criteria for ascribing them to others.

(1) In his Review of the *Investigations* Malcolm says, in introducing his discussion of "criterion" that it is "with some reluctance" that he goes into this "most difficult region of Wittgenstein's philosophy". It is somewhat surprising then that this reluctance to discuss the notion doesn't carry over into his own use of the term which rather than being employed
reluctantly and with care we find Malcolm using with breathtaking abandon in just those crucial areas where a clear explanation would seem essential.

What he says is that if $Y$ is a criterion of $X$ the satisfaction of $Y$ establishes the existence of $X$ beyond question. This is a matter not of experience but of definition. (Rev., p. 84.) Yet the satisfaction of $Y$ does not logically imply $X$ for (he says) "a criterion is satisfied only in certain circumstances" (Rev., p. 85.) a complete list of which can't be formulated. But the list is not infinite but indefinite. Therefore entailment conditions can't be formulated. There are none. (Rev., p. 86.) These remarks are hardly as clear as they might be (at least as one would hope they might be). Let us then focus on the most unclear and see what can be made of them.

If $Y$ is a criterion of $X$ (Malcolm says) the satisfaction of $Y$ puts the existence of $X$ beyond question, but does not logically imply $X$. Why? Because criteria are satisfied only in certain circumstances. Very well, but what circumstances? Malcolm says we can't say. How does he know this? How, specifically, does he know that the list of such circumstances is "indefinite" rather than "infinite"? And why, if not infinite, can't such a list be formulated? Why couldn't it be made definite and formulated? Why does Malcolm say "indefinite" rather than simply "very long". Because, presumably, he wants to deny that entailment conditions could possibly be formulated. No set of B.S. in any circumstances entail the ascription of a M.S. On this Malcolm and the sceptic agree. Where they disagree is in the accounts they give of why this is so. And it seems
to me that the sceptic's account is more convincing. He says that entailment conditions can't be formulated because B.S. and K.S. are contingently related. Malcolm says because the list is indefinite. But his failure to give an account of why this is so (an account different from the sceptic's) would make it appear that we must so far accept the account offered by the sceptic, if only by default.

(2) But leaving in abeyance for the moment the question of whether Malcolm (or anybody else) could give an alternative account of why the list is indefinite let us recall what Malcolm says criteria are and consider whether they are necessary in ascribing M.T.s to others. A criterion is something the satisfaction of which puts the existence of whatever it is a criterion for "beyond question" without entailing it. The sceptic of course denies that any such set of statements puts the ascription of a M.T. beyond question. Why does Malcolm say they must do? The clearest account of his reasoning here is this; from "Knowledge of Other Minds" where he says of a philosopher who believes that one must learn the meanings of M.T.s from one's own case that it is the essence of his viewpoint to reject circumstances and behavior as a criterion of mental phenomena in others. And what else could serve as a criterion? He ought therefore to draw the conclusion that the notion of thinking, fear, or pain in others is in an important sense meaningless. He has no idea what would count for or against it. "That there should be thinking or pain other than my own is unintelligible" he ought to hold. This would be a rigorous solipsism and the correct outcome of the assumption that one can know only from one's own case what the mental phenomena are. (K.O.M., p.379.)
So if a person doesn't have "criteria" for the use of a M.T. that term is for him meaningless, that is, if a person doesn't know what would "completely verify" a statement ascribing that term (Rev., p. 87.) or put it beyond question (Rev., p. 84.) then that statement is for him unintelligible. This seems to be a correct account of what Malcolm has to say in the remarks quoted above, and if it is what he is saying, then what he says is just false. It is false that for a statement to be intelligible for a speaker he must know what would completely verify it or put it beyond question. It is false that Malcolmian criteria are necessary in order to use words (generally) intelligibly. Consider the following statements:

(a) Heraclitus believed in periodic universal conflagration.
(b) There are extra-terrestrial conscious beings.
(c) Trolls drink milk.
(d) Witches were burnt in Salem.
(e) Heidegger believes in God.
(f) Martha loves Willy.

All of these are intelligible. But I don't have, here and now, such knowledge as could be formulated in any number of propositions which would "completely verify" or put any of them "beyond question." If criteria are what Malcolm says they are, then they aren't necessary for a term or expression to be meaningful. And unless M.T.s and expressions ascribing M.T.s are logically unique in this respect (and Malcolm nowhere asserts or in any way indicates they are) then criteria aren't necessary in order for M.T.s to be meaningful either. The unavailability of Malcolmian
criteria, then, cannot be a reason for denying either the intelligibility or possibility of ascribing M.T.s to others.

(3) Our third question (above) was why a man who learned the meaning of M.T.s from his own case couldn't have criteria for ascribing them to others. Our answer to this might be that such criteria can't be had, period. But this obviously wouldn't suit Malcolm. And we have just seen that a speaker of a public language (English) even if he could have criteria needn't and in fact often doesn't. By the same token it seems a speaker of a P.L. needn't. But is it ever true (as Malcolm says) that he couldn't have? It isn't. Consider what Malcolm says about putting a claim beyond question:

"What we sometimes do is to draw a boundary around this behavior in these circumstances and say, 'any additional circumstances that might come to light will be irrelevant to whether this man is in pain'."

(Rev., p. 88.)

As an interpretation of Wittgenstein's:

"But if you are certain isn't it that you are shutting your eyes in face of doubt? - They are shut."

(P.I., p. 224)

Malcolm's remarks leave more than a little to be desired. And as an account of what we do they are just false. (When would it be justifiable to say that?) But if Malcolm can "draw a boundary" so can the speaker of a P.L. If the attaining of criteria is merely a matter of stipulation the P.L. advocate is as free to stipulate as is Malcolm.

So Malcolm fails to show that the philosopher who believes one learns M.T.s from one's own case is committed to solipsism, that criteria for M.T.s is a necessary condition of their intelligibility. But what if he
had succeeded? What if it were the case that for other ascriptions of M.T.s to be meaningful one would have to have criteria for their use? Would this refute the sceptic? Clearly it would if "having criteria" means (as Malcolm says) completely verifying. But this equation of conditions of intelligibility with conditions of making a true assertion is itself false. What if we view "criterion" in a less restrictive sense (as in most contemporary discussions) so that having criteria for x is a necessary condition of using x intelligibly where "using x intelligibly" does not necessarily involve knowing what would make x true, put x beyond question or completely verify x. Would this be sufficient to refute the sceptic? It wouldn't; even were it true, for example, that there must be public criteria (in this sense) for an expression to be intelligible this doesn't mean we must use the expression to say something true. There may have to be public criteria for the use of such terms as "witch" or "troll" for these terms to be intelligible, but this doesn't mean that in using these terms in an expression, for example, "witches were burnt in Salem", even if I use them correctly, that is, in perfect accord with these public criteria, that I say something true. The righteous citizens of Salem were wrong when they asserted of certain old hags or young adultresses that they were witches, but their mistake was a factual one, not a grammatical one.

Malcolm's external argument then fails, as did the internal one, to show that there couldn't be a P.L. Thus his attempt to disprove S.P. by showing a P.L. impossible fails. It might be the case, however, that though Malcolm has failed to show it, a P.L. is impossible. But this possibility is a threat to S.P. only if its truth is dependent on there
being a P.L. If, then, it can be shown that the truth or falsity of S.P. is logically independent of the possibility or impossibility of a P.L. then further anti-sceptical arguments will be needed to disprove S.P. and in this way show scepticism senseless. And I think S.P. is in this way independent.

The impossibility of a P.L. would, if shown, establish the impossibility of our learning M.T.s, of acquiring our mentalistic vocabulary, unless inner experiences had characteristic behavioral expressions or manifestations. (It would not if the forgoing is correct show the necessity of having Malcolmian "outer criteria"). But would this prove the relation between B.S. and M.S. non-contingent, that is, prove S.P. false? It is not obvious that it would and Ayer, for one, argues that it wouldn't:

"For even if one grants the premiss that we should not in practise be able to acquire our understanding of words which refer to inner states or experiences unless these inner states were outwardly detectable it does not seem to follow that once our understanding of these words has been acquired we cannot divorce them from their original associations. Indeed it is admitted that we can do so in particular instances and it is not clear what should prevent us from doing so in all. If the suggestion is that we should then be landed in a contradiction I can only remark that I do not see where this contradiction lies."

("The Concept of a Person," p.101.)

Even if a P.L. were impossible, that is, even if the only way we could acquire our mentalistic vocabulary were through our inner states having behavioral expressions, why just the behavioral expressions they do have? What, for example, if persons with earaches acted utterly differently from how they now do? Would what they had and expressed (by say, laughing) no longer be an earache? Surely it is not necessary that people with earaches behave as they do. And if they didn't, then what we call criteria for ascribing earaches to others wouldn't be, might cease to have anything to do
with earaches. Still, it might be argued, there must be some outer-expression. But note that the concession that there is a merely contingent relation between what we now call earache - behavior and earaches allows that there be no outer expression at all, or no consistently related one. Would we then lose our concept of an earache? Whether or not we would seems also a matter of contingency rather than of logic. (We will have more to say about the possibility of such dramatic alterations of human behavior and its significance later). Let us for now merely summarize what has been said, which was that even if a P.L. were impossible, even if we couldn't acquire our mentalistic vocabulary unless our inner states had outward manifestations or expressions, this doesn't show that the relation between B.S. and M.S. is not contingent; and such possibilities of radical alterations of human behavior as suggested above suggest, rather strongly, that the relation between them is contingent. Thus far, then, the S.P. appears logically sound, and the sceptic's starting position unshaken.

IX  MALCOLM: AVOJALS

We saw earlier (II) how Malcolm attempted to undermine the sceptic's position by denying that there was a sense of the expression "same pain" such that two persons could not have the same pain. There he attempted to show that a statement important to the sceptic's position was "senseless". That attempt was, I argued, a failure. Malcolm also attempts to undermine another fundamental assumption of the sceptic (or at least the importance the sceptic attaches to that assumption) namely the assumption
that a person knows (of himself) that he is in pain. In a way similar to the way he said that two persons can have the same pain, Malcolm attempts to show that a person doesn't know he is in pain. I want now to investigate what Malcolm says, show where and why he is wrong in what he says and how what he says fails to undermine the sceptic in the way he intended.

Malcolm's arguments here involve a suggestion that we look at first-person psychological sentences (avowals) in an "entirely different light" (K.O.M., p.383.) from the view (implicit in the closing remarks of the previous section) that avowals are statements referring to inner states. It is Malcolm's view that avowals are not statements, do not refer to inner states, or, more correctly, that insofar as they do, this is unimportant or irrelevant to their "logical status" which is the same as that of our primitive natural expressions of these inner states:

"My sentences about my present sensations have the same logical status as my outcries or facial expressions."

(Rev., p.82.)

This suggestion, that first-person ascriptions of M.T.s, for example, "I am in pain" are to be thought of as on a logical par with natural non-linguistic expressions of psychological states and that "the use of this sentence has nothing to do with recognizing or identifying or observing a state of oneself" (K.O.M., p.382.) has, Malcolm claims, at least two important merits:

First, it breaks the hold on us of the question, 'How does one know when to say "my leg hurts"?' for in the light of the analogy this will be as nonsensical as the question "How does one know when to limp, cry, or
hold one's leg? *Second*, it explains how the utterance of a first-person psychological sentence by another person can have importance for us although not as an identification for in the light of the analogy "it will have the same importance as the natural behavior which serves as our preverbal criterion of the psychological states of others." (K.O.M., p.383.)

What can be said for Malcolm's suggestion? Much more could be said about it than for it and much more about it than I will say here. Malcolm's "different light" illuminates at best only a partial view of first-person psychological sentences and that area of their use it leaves in the dark is just that area in which we are most concerned. That is, Malcolm gives only a limited account of the function and nature of avowals and in ignoring the other aspects of their use and nature, those aspects the sceptic points out and uses, he makes his argument irrelevant to the real issue. As a way of avoiding scepticism, Malcolm's argument is a mere evasion of the troublesome facts and claims the sceptic builds from those facts.

An initial difficulty in evaluating Malcolm's view is the difficulty of knowing what it is, that is, the difficulty of knowing to what extent Malcolm wants to "assimilate" first-person psychological sentences to non-linguistic expressions of psychological states. **Complete** assimilation would leave Malcolm open to his own objections:

"By saying the sentence one can make a statement, it has a contradictory, it is true or false, in saying it one lies or tells the truth and so on. None of these things exactly can be said of crying, limping, holding one's leg." (K.O.M., p.383.) and those of Bruce Aune (*Knowledge, Mind and Nature*, Ch.4.) Aune correctly points out that were a child merely able to utter "I am in pain" in response to certain stimuli, his linguistic sophistication would be on
a level with a "Skinnerian Parrot" conditioned to utter the sounds "Ai am in pein" in response to painful stimuli. The ability to do this is not sufficient to constitute an understanding of these words in a common language.

"To understand the conventional significance of a group of words is at least to understand what one who says them is saying or doing. Yet, merely to exercise a habit of responding with special noises in special circumstances is not, by itself, to use language at all. One typically uses something for a purpose or end, one uses it to inform, to amuse, to deceive and so on." (p.87.)

It might be objected here that crying, limping etcetera can also be used to inform, deceive, amuse and so on. This is true, but does not support Malcolm's assimilation of avowals to natural expressions; or rather, the truth of the objection equally supports a reverse assimilation; that is in the same way and to the same extent avowals can be assimilated to natural expressions, natural expressions can be assimilated to sentences. "It hurts!" can escape from one, like a scream, but so can a scream be used to inform someone else that one is in pain. Avowals can be used non-propositionally, but they clearly aren't always so used. And natural experiences can be used propositionally. To say of the former that they aren't even propositional would be as mistaken and misleading as to say of sentences in the indicative mood that they are always so used. Thus the "assimilation" Malcolm speaks of can't be taken as complete but only partial; that is avowals are like natural expressions in that they are used like them sometimes and to varying degrees. But then the analogy does not have the first merit Malcolm claims for it; that is it does not show the
question how I know when to say my leg hurts is a nonsensical one. Indeed, it should be quite obvious that the question is perfectly sensible in certain contexts, which is all one can fairly ask of any question. Any question that has a place can also be, and just therefore, out of place. For example, I may know that I should say "I am in pain" when asked sincerely whether I am, or when I seek compassion or condolence, or help, or when I want to get out of doing something, or to attract attention to myself etcetera. And, it might be pointed out, it is largely just because avowals do have the variety of uses they do that they have what Malcolm mentioned as the second merit of his view, that is the importance they have for us, the importance of which incidentally Malcolm seems to considerably and not altogether artlessly, simplify:

"I react to his suffering. I look at him with compassion and try to comfort him." (Rev., p. 91.)

the suffering of another may bring us to compassion and comforting, but of

1Of course, even if complete assimilation could be carried out, this would not show the question nonsensical unless it were also showing that the question, how does one know when to cry is in fact nonsensical, a claim which Malcolm merely takes for granted. I'm not even sure that the latter question is nonsensical. An answer might, for example, be "when it hurts." At least it can be said that Malcolm hasn't shown the question or such an answer "nonsensical." Or indeed what "nonsensical" means; a fact which ought to make us prick our ears if not actually bare our teeth.
course it doesn't always. I may be indifferent to it, or delighted. Nor
one such reactions always inappropriate, for example a surgeon would in all
likelihood make frequent unfortunate slips were he not to remain indifferent
to the suffering of his patient, likewise a parent might well be considered
not inhuman were he to be delighted that his previously totally paralyzed
or apparently dead child felt pain. (Such considerations as these, which
complicate the often narrow view Malcolm seems to take of inter-personal
relationships will take on more importance later when considering "forms of
life.") Different uses of avowals may have different importance for us.
And it is by no means clear that only because they sometimes function as
mere expressions of pain that they are important. When they function dif-
ferently they will and do have different importance for us.

But we seem to have strayed far from the issue of "Other Minds" which
first led us in this direction. We have, but it is important to see why
and in so doing to throw ourselves back into confrontation with the sceptic.

The sceptic in Wittgenstein says:

"Only I can know I am really in pain, another person can only
surmise it." (P.I., p.245.)

Disregarding for now (what will become important later) the use of "another
person" here, let us concentrate on "only I can know....." Malcolm takes
issue with this, not (primarily) by denying the "only" but by denying the
"I can know". This argument is not that it is not the case that I (only)
can know but that I can't know, not because this is something I must remain
ignorant of but because it makes no sense to say either that I do or don't
know this of myself:

"I know I am in pain' and 'I don't know whether I'm in pain' are
both senseless. Wherever it is meaningless to speak of 'false belief'."
it is also meaningless to speak of 'knowledge' and wherever you can't say 'I don't know' you also cannot say, 'I know.' Of course a philosopher can say of me that I know I am in pain. But what is this supposed to mean except perhaps that I am in pain?" (Rev., p.81.)

Now, however, the issue is as to whether "I don't know whether I'm in pain" is or isn't a significant expression (and I believe it can be). It seems that even if it were nonsensical, this in itself, would be insufficient to show "I know I am in pain" nonsensical.

The ability to speak a language is surely neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of one's ever being in pain. Snakes, aardvarks, any young infants or deaf-mutes don't usually speak a language, but this doesn't prevent them from feeling, being in pain. Illiteracy is no anaesthetic. The question is, do (can) they know they are in pain? It seems we can answer yes or no. We might, for example want to say they can know what they feel (be aware of it) yet not know what it is they feel. I don't think we would want to deny (at least not deny the significance of saying) that the snake feels pain and yet does not know that what it feels is called "pain." Similarly, a person may be aware that he is in pain (that is feel pain) and still not know that it is pain he feels. And if this is possible, then of him anyway it can be said, significantly and truthfully,

¹ For example, a person who had never felt pain, but had heard others speak of it, seen others suffer, read about it and so on suddenly feels what he thinks is pain, but isn't sure. Why couldn't he say "I don't know whether I am in pain" and why wouldn't this be significant or even true?
that he is in pain but doesn't know it, that is doesn't know that it is pain he is in (feels). The distinction here marked between being in pain and knowing one is in pain is the difference between being in pain and being able to say, significantly, that one is. A similar account of the distinction between being in pain and knowing that one is in pain has been given by Ayer:

"Knowing what one's thoughts and feelings are as distinct from merely having them may be taken to consist in being able to give a true report of them." ("Privacy", p.63.)

And, as proof that one can give a true report of them Ayer notes the fact (also noted by Malcolm!) that one can lie about them:

"To tell a lie is not just to make a false statement, it is to make a statement one knows to be false; and this implies denying what one knows to be true." ("Privacy", p.60.)

If a proof that one can know that one is in pain is required, this certainly seems to be an adequate one. But Malcolm has tried to show elsewhere ("The Privacy of Experience": note No.40, p.157) that it isn't. It is worth quoting Malcolm here, to show to what depths of evasion and mystification the effort to refute scepticism has reached:

"Ayer gives the following proof that if we are in pain we know it, namely that one can tell lies about one's sensations.... I should take this as a proof that telling a lie is not, in all cases, stating what one knows to be false. The word 'lying' like the word 'game' is applied over a broad range of diverse cases." (p.157.)

The first thing to note about this is that it distorts what Ayer is saying. He does not intend this as a proof that "if we are in pain we know it" as is painfully obvious from his distinction between having sensations and being able to give a true report of them (Ayer: "Privacy", p.63.) Rather, what Ayer is attempting to show (and succeeds in showing) is that it makes
sense to say "I know I am in pain." And as for Malcolm's remark that he "should take this as a proof that lying is not, in all cases, stating what one knows to be false" I can only say that he certainly should not so take it. It is just no argument to say that "the word 'lying' like the word 'game' is applied over a broad range of diverse cases." Minimally, Malcolm should have said in what respects the wide range of cases are diverse, specifically, whether the two cases mentioned are, in this respect, diverse. Malcolm has not shown Ayer's argument invalid and his conclusion, I shall take it, stands. "I know I am in pain" is a significant statement. And though there is something odd about it, its oddity can be accounted for in those cases where it is odd and it can be shown that there are situations where it would be a (the) most natural thing to say. I will try to briefly indicate the source of the feeling of oddity surrounding "I know I am in pain" and to alleviate some misgivings about it. I will then attempt to show what I think is a real oddity about the denial of its significance and indeed to aggravate whatever misgivings we might have about this denial.

\(^1\)One should also mention in passing (quickly) Malcolm's ever-present reliance on Wittgenstein ("lying" like "game"...) whose words he seems somehow to twist into wands hoping to conjure away all problems and thought. One would have hoped the time had passed for solutions to problems consisting in the mere invocation of authority, however illustrious.

"I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But if possible to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own." (Wittgenstein, P.I. preface, p. VIII.)
I will try to show that the denial of the sense of "I know I am in pain"
is less a fact about our language than an unsuccessful and perhapsobfuscatory attempt to evade some of the genuine difficulties about know-
ledge of other minds which the sceptic correctly picks out, even if he
makes too much of them.

I suggested above that we seem to have drifted away from the problems
which originally engaged us to bring us back to the central consideration,
the problem that, as the sceptic puts it, one cannot know the minds of
others as one does one's own and that what commonly passes for knowledge of
other minds is in important and significant ways inadequate, not worthy of
being called "knowledge" at all. The attempt, suggested by Wittgenstein
and made much more of by Malcolm was to undermine the sceptic by denying
that I have in my own case what he says I lack in the case of others, that
is knowledge of my own mind. A somewhat intuitive resistance to the idea
that it makes no sense to say of myself, for example, that "I know I am in
pain" is (can be used as) a significant assertion was supported and estab-
lished by Ayer. The attempt to show that the problem the sceptic brings up
is illusory on the grounds that I don't have in my own case what the sceptic
maintains I do have, fails. This does not, of course, vindicate the
sceptic's further claims that such knowledge is something I only have in
my own case (and in no others) and something, that only I have in my own
case (and no one else).

But if "I know I am in pain" isn't nonsensical, there is something odd
about it, and to fully satisfy ourselves about it's legitimacy some account
of this oddity should be given. An important feature of this "oddity" has
been pointed out by Ayer:
"What is true is that we seldom, if ever, find occasion to use such sentences as, 'he knows that he is in pain!' or 'I know that I am thinking about a philosophical problem', or even, 'I know that I am looking at a sheet of paper'. The prefixing of the words, 'I know that' or 'he knows that' make what would otherwise be respectable if not very interesting sentences appear somewhat ridiculous. But the reason for this surely is not that the claim to knowledge is inapplicable in these cases but rather that it is superfluous."

("Privacy", p.59.)

If "I know I am in pain" is odd it is not because, as Malcolm argues, it is senseless but because what it asserts is and generally can be taken for granted. If a person can assert that he is in pain, has the concept of pain, knows what "pain" means, then if he is in pain he knows it. And when a person says "I am in pain" such facts are generally taken for granted. We assume, that is, that he knows what he is saying. And as knowing one is in pain as distinct from merely being in pain is a matter of being able to say that one is, or give a true report to that effect the superfluity of prefixing "I know that" should be hardly surprising.

Malcolm admits that philosophers might say such things as, "he knows he is in pain" but strangely seems to regard this as irrelevant to the philosophical discussion of other minds or perhaps as an indication of the perversity of such usage. But there is nothing perverse about replying to Malcolm's false philosophical remark that it makes no sense to say, "I know I am in pain" with the true philosophical remark that it does. But it isn't even true that "I know I am in pain" makes sense, has a use, only in the context of philosophical discussions. Wittgenstein points out that the expression might be used as a joke. Other not so rare cases could be as an expression of exasperation, a confession, an answer to the question, "what do you know?" or, "who here knows they are in pain?"
to agree, to admit, to acknowledge, to deny that one isn't, to indicate who does know this and so on. To limit its use merely to philosophical discussions (as Malcolm does) not only doesn't establish the meaninglessness of the expression, it doesn't give a true account of its possible range of uses. No close and unprejudiced look at language could, it seems, have left Malcolm with the conclusions he makes here. And our conclusions about this if they are not to cast suspicion on his intentions must be simply that he is wrong. "I know I am in pain" and similar expressions are not only not nonsensical, they are not even all that unusual.

Before going on it will be worthwhile to reiterate the sceptic's main worries here, which are eloquently condensed in John Wisdom's remark:

"The peculiarity of the soul is not that it is visible to none but that it is visible only to one."

(Other Minds, p.226.)

The sceptic's claim, yet to be shown mistaken, nevermind nonsensical, is that I myself am in the best possible position to know whether I am in pain and that furthermore no one else is in a good enough position to know this. There is, in my own case, the crucial fact that I have access to what you don't, that is, the experience (feeling) and this is necessary to justify a knowledge claim. With the experience there is adequate grounds, without it there cannot be.

It is with "facts" such as these that we must deal.
In "Persons", that remarkably dense third chapter of P.F. Strawson's *Individuals*, there is an argument which purports to repudiate scepticism about "Other Minds" on logical grounds. I think this argument, like the others so far considered, is unsuccessful though it does bring us a step closer to what might be a solution, even if not in the way Strawson intends. The argument I wish to consider can be called the "Ascription Argument" and seen as a further development of the argument of VIII (above) that an avowal such as "I am in pain" is not merely an expression of pain, on a level with cries and grimaces but also a statement, an ascription. It was argued there that for "I am in pain" to be used as an expression in a language, that expression must be understood by the speaker as saying something and the speaker, on at least some occasions to be using it to give a true report. This is part of what it is for the utterance to be a speech action rather than a mere reaction to certain stimuli. Such conditions were seen to be necessary to give substance to, and explain the substance of, the sceptic's claim that one knows that and when oneself is in pain. Strawson's ascription argument reveals what this involves, the claim being that it involves being able to ascribe M.T.s to others as well. But what is the force of "being able to ascribe them to others?" I mention the following possibilities:

(1) that one have the ability to do so.
(2) that one have and exercise that ability.
(3) that one have and exercise that ability and in so doing makes true ascriptions.

Each of these are possible readings of Strawson's scattered remarks.
in "Persons." But before determining which of these different claims Strawson is making it must be noted that only (3) will suffice to refute the sceptic. He can maintain, as he does, that one can and does truthfully ascribe M.T.’s to oneself, admit that this involves either the ability to ascribe them to others or the ability to do so and its exercise and still be sceptical about other minds on the grounds that for all he knows (and of course for all we know) his other ascriptions may not be veridical. So, for the ascription argument to serve as a repudiation of scepticism it must be taken as claiming (3). But so taken it is, I believe, unproven.

That there is such ambiguity in Strawson’s remarks can be seen by considering the following quotations:

"It is a necessary condition of one’s ascribing states of consciousness experiences to oneself, in the way one does that one should also ascribe them or be prepared to ascribe them to others." (p.94.)

Which? "ascribe"? or "be prepared to ascribe"? Strawson seems to opt for the former:

"One can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can ascribe them to others." (p.96.)

But how is "can" to be taken here? The problem becomes clearer in a later, stronger version of the argument:

"There is no sense in the idea of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself unless the ascriber already knows how to ascribe at least some states of consciousness to others." (p.102.)

But the sceptic could admit Strawson’s claim that in order to ascribe M.T.’s to himself he must know how to ascribe them to others. In fact he
agrees that one knows how to do so and also agrees with Strawson about how this is done:

"One ascribes P-predicates to others on the strength of observation of their behavior."

(p.102.)

And right here the sceptic hesitates. It is, he says, just because we so ascribe M.T.s that we can never know our ascriptions are veridical.

We do ascribe M.T.s to ourselves and it may be that it is a necessary condition of our being able to do so that one also be prepared to or actually ascribe them to others. But we are still left with determining the substance of Strawson's claim. He makes the following remark in a footnote:

"The main point here is a purely logical one; the idea of a predicate is correlative with that of a range of distinguishable individuals of which the predicate can be significantly though not necessarily truthfully affirmed.

(p.95.)

What are we to make of this "significantly though not necessarily truthfully, affirmed"? It seems, on the face of it not incompatible with the sceptic's claims, for what he wants to say is that it might well be the case that we might never ascribe M.T.s to others truthfully. He doesn't deny that they are ascribed to others, nor does he deny another of Strawson's claims "that the ascribing phrases are used in just the same sense when the subject is another as when the subject is oneself." (p.95.)

These points must be noted for it is essential to the force of the sceptical argument that he be taken as denying that what we do we can (justifiably) do. His denial that we can know that an M.T. applies truthfully to another would become quite uninteresting were he arguing that what we do isn't ascribing M.T.s to others, or that we didn't mean the
same in self as in other ascriptions. Why the sceptic is worrisome is because he admits we do what we do and mean what we mean but denies that we are justified in so doing.

But is Strawson making the strong claim that in order to ascribe M.T.s to oneself one must actually ascribe them veridically to others? This is the claim he must make to refute the sceptic. And in fact Strawson does take his argument to be a refutation of the sceptic. He says of the ascription argument that:

"The point is not that we must accept this conclusion in order to avoid scepticism but that we must accept it in order to explore the existence of the conceptual scheme in which the sceptical problem is stated. But once the conclusion is accepted, the sceptical problem does not arise. So with many sceptical problems; their statement involves a pretended acceptance of a conceptual scheme at the same time the silent repudiation of one of the conditions of its existence. That is why they are in the terms they are stated, insoluble." (p.103.)

So Strawson does take his argument as repudiating scepticism. But the argument fails. The acceptance of the conclusion of the ascription argument, that I must be able to ascribe M.T.s to others does not show that I must be able to do so truthfully. Strawson has not shown that a person could not be invariably mistaken in ascribing M.T.s to others.

In "The Concept of a Person" Ayer imagines a child brought up in a community of automatons, from which he learns how to apply the concept of a person and satisfies Strawson's requirement of being able to ascribe M.T.s to others, but the others are all automatons, Ayer goes on:

The example shows not only that one might be able to ascribe experiences to oneself which being invariably mistaken in ascribing them to others but also that the criteria which are taken to be logically adequate for ascribing experiences to others may determine no more than that some location is correct, that in such and such conditions this is the proper thing to say; it does not necessarily follow that what he says is true." (Ayer, p.108.)
And what if the child were an infant philosopher and wondered whether the others around him really had experiences? Ayer says:

"Whatever conclusion he came to in his scepticism would not be senseless. How could it be if it were actually justified?" (p. 108.)

It might be quite correct, right, justifiable, appropriate or whatever for the child to say of the automatons things like "he is in pain" yet what he says be false. He may be perfectly right to say of an automaton, "he is in pain" in terms of his criteria for applying "pain" to another, yet perfectly wrong in what he said. Strawson has not only not shown that the sceptical problem does not arise for the child; he hasn't shown that it can't arise for the sceptic. Even if an understanding of M.T.'s involves the ability and exercise of that ability to ascribe them to others, this doesn't prove that one must do so successfully, that is truthfully. The acceptance of the "conceptual scheme" in which we ascribe M.T.'s does not have as a necessary condition, of either the acceptance or the existence of that scheme, the actual existence of other persons. The existence of a potentially interpersonal language does not prove the existence of other persons. The having of a concept and its actual instantiation are two different matters.¹

¹This is of course, the substance of Kant's refutation of the "Ontological Argument" which, Norman Malcolm notwithstanding, is still valid. And what in Strawson is vaguely reminiscent of the Ontological Argument becomes in Malcolm an undisguised and apparently blandly admitted variation of it. But then Malcolm thinks the Ontological Argument itself works. (See below).
Both sceptic and anti-sceptic agree that I do ascribe M.T.'s to others which I anyway take to be persons. But the force of Ayer's argument was that it is conceivably the case that I merely take them to be persons, that I might, for all I know and for all the anti-sceptical arguments so far considered have said, be invariably mistaken. It seems then that, so far, all those beings around me which I take to be persons, which behave like I do, might be mere automata. There seems to be nothing about me, not the fact that I speak a language, have a mentalistic vocabulary, have the belief that these beings are, as I take them to be, persons, which rules out this possibility. In fact, if the state of affairs Ayer describes is a possible one, then all the anti-sceptical arguments to show scepticism impossible, incoherent or nonsensical necessarily fail. How could it be nonsensical, if, as Ayer succinctly remarks, it were justified? And again it seems the state of affairs Ayer describes is possible. But it seems that its seeming possibility is in some way a function of my own situation, here and now (musing in a philosophical sort of way) and that were my situation radically different the "possibility" of Ayer's example would seem to me to alter radically (were I, for example, telling a joke to some people, or making love). Such things are undoubtedly true, but are they of any significance and if so, what? Wittgenstein, for one, thought such facts extremely significant. In fact, in one place in the Philosophical Investigations, he describes his whole technique as bringing words back from their "metaphysical" to their everyday use, to their "original home" (P.I., p.116.)
He says that philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday (P.I., p.38.) when it is idling, not doing work (P.I., p.132.) We are beckoned "back to the rough ground" (P.I., p.107.) and told to "look and see" (P.I., p.66.) rather than merely think if we are to understand the workings and meanings of our words, our concepts, our language and our thinking.

Now it is true that we learn and use our mentalistic vocabulary to talk about "other persons" and in our day to day dealings with them. What Ayer has shown is that one could have learned to use and go on using M.T.s even if these "others" weren't persons but rather automata, which appears to show the problem of "Other Minds" at least not a pseudo-one. Can the technique of "bringing words back home" dispel this appearance? And, if so, how? Interestingly, Wittgenstein considers a suggestion very similar to Ayer's. He asks:

"But can't I imagine that the people around me are automata, lack consciousness even though they behave in the same way as usual? If I imagine this now - alone in my room - I see people with fixed looks (as in a trance) going about their business - the idea is perhaps a little uncanny. But just try to keep hold of this idea in the midst of your ordinary intercourse with others, in the street, say! Say to yourself, for example, 'The children over there are mere automata; all their liveliness is mere automatism!' And you will either find these words become quite meaningless or you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling or something of the sort.

Seeing a human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another; the cross-pieces of a window as a swastika, for example." (P.I., p.420.)

Now it is probably true that Ayer thought up his example alone in his room. (I don't know about Ayer). But what we must ask is whether he or anyone else, must have imagined it in such or similar circumstances.
Why couldn't one have done it in the street, in his ordinary intercourse with others? Because one can't philosophize on streets? Socrates would have something to say about this! Because to do so would interfere with "normal intercourse"? But one's normal intercourse with others on streets frequently belies this claim; think, for example, of Wall Street. Indeed such situations are perhaps amongst the most conducive to thinking of others as automatons. But what is happening when this happens? - "You will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling" - Perhaps. But it might make no difference as to how one feels. This depends to a large degree on how one felt about "other people" before, or normally. It might be the case that a particular person felt about others in much the way most people feel about automatons. Thinking of others as automatons might leave him cold, or even give him warm feelings of security (one might imagine Sartre to be such a person; one could hardly feel "ashamed" before the "look" of what one thought was an automaton). But, for all that, it is probably pretty safe to say that many people would feel somewhat uncanny at the thought: "These others in the street - all automatons!!" Yet it seems that the most that can be made of this is that scepticism would be uncomfortable, or unconventional.

Wittgenstein's more interesting claim was that, "in the street" the words "the children are mere automata, all their liveliness mere automatism" (henceforth abbreviated 'C') would "tend to become quite meaningless."

It is also of course a far stronger claim and one that is far more difficult to establish.

What does Wittgenstein mean by "meaningless" here? Without going
into a detailed study of "meaning" I think we can get a good idea of what he was getting at.

It is a cardinal point of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that meaning is best investigated by looking at the use to which expressions are put rather than their form. And it is possible to think of many situations where "C" might be used quite meaningfully, for example,

(a) at an I.B.M. exhibition
(b) at a large high school
(c) at a Hitler Youth Rally

(a') to say that those things which look and carry on like children are really very complex machines

(b') to say that the children there are incapable of any but the most mechanical, uncreative thought

(c') to say that the children move and appear like machines

And it is just as easy to think of cases where "C" would be quite meaningless, for example, were it given as a reply to the question, "How old are you?" Here "C" would be a meaningless thing to say. It might of course be objected here that "C" would be meaningful even here, that what the speaker meant by it was, for example, "I refuse to answer such a question." But it is important to note that in giving such an account of what "C" means one is forced to say that and how it means something other than what it (C) says. We might speak of its "hidden meaning" but the hidden meaning is hidden by the non-hidden meaning of the utterance. And it is the very meaninglessness of saying C in this situation that allows it to function as it does.
Now, if an expression which is meaningful in certain contexts can be meaningless in others because it says nothing in this latter context or the speaker who utters it says nothing in uttering it, then we can see how an expression can become meaningless, that is, by being uttered in a situation where it is contextually inappropriate. This is what Wittgenstein claims happens when C is used in the street. An expression is meaningful only in certain situations, not in others. And as the situation and circumstances of a speaker change an expression may become quite meaningless in its new surroundings. It may become useless, come to say nothing. An example might help clarify this: "This sentence is red" is meaningful and true when used to refer to a given sentence written in red ink. The same expression is meaningful but false when used to refer to a sentence written in green ink. But it would be quite meaningless to use it to refer to a spoken sentence, a string of meaningful sounds which are neither colored nor not colored. This is to ignore the phenomena of synesthesia, but such complications can, I think, be safely ignored here. And such examples can be multiplied till they become tiresome which they already probably would have to the sceptic whom we may imagine to impatiently interject at this point saying: "O.K., certain expressions are sometimes meaningful, sometimes not which may be philosophically interesting, even important. But this is all beside the point. You haven't shown "C" meaningless in the street and Ayer has shown that it is meaningful there. So I suggest that you add to your list of examples this: C is meaningful in the street. If Wittgenstein denies it, he is just wrong."
We must try to answer this challenge, which I will try to do by speculating as to what Wittgenstein's own reply might be. ("Speculation" here doesn't mean idle speculation. I will attempt to support my remarks and claims. I just don't want to give the impression that my remarks are to be taken, or that I take them to be authoritative accounts of "what Wittgenstein meant").

"Just try, in a real case - to doubt someone else's pain or fear" (P.I., p.303.) This acid comment of Wittgenstein's is often taken as a clear vindication of "common-sense", as a forceful refutation of scepticism. It is important to see that and why it isn't. For, first, the sceptic needn't be taken as actively doubting that another is in pain, or afraid. It would be more accurate to characterize his position as simply saying that it cannot be proven that he is. And this may make no difference whatsoever to his own behavior. The expression, "Perhaps he isn't in pain" needn't be an expression of doubt (though of course it can be). An enlightening comparison can be found in religion. It is quite consistent with a person's maintaining that he cannot prove the existence of God, that this make no difference whatever to him insofar as his actions are concerned. He may act just as if he knew or could prove there were a God. And he may believe there is (faith), or even withhold belief. Similarly, a sceptic who denies we can know things like that another is in pain, may believe that they are, or withhold judgement. None of these positions is incompatible with scepticism. Nor, it is worth noting, did Wittgenstein think they were;

"But after all, neither does the solipsist want any practical advantage when he advances his view." (P.I., p.403.)
But what if doubt were essential to the sceptic? Would Wittgenstein's challenge then refute him? Not if one succeeded in doubting in real cases. But even if he didn't succeed, it is not clear that this would refute him either. Such inability to doubt in real cases might have any number of explanations. Here it is worth recalling Hume's remarkable discussion of the relationship between scepticism and our common beliefs in the Treatise (Bk.1, pt.4.). He mentions several factors which, he says prevent him from exercising his scepticism in ordinary life, for example, carelessness and inattention (p.218.) solitude, abandonment, disconsolation (p.264.) even the pleasure of back-gammon (p.269.) And there are, of course, many other possibilities. He could reasonably maintain it was his weakness, that his emotions and conditioning invariably overcame his better judgement, or that he feared the behavior of others towards him if he did exercise his philosophical doubt (these he fears need not be, of course, believed to be persons) or he might think his doubt though reasonable, insufficient reason to remain indifferent to what might be the actual sufferings of others; a kind of Pascalian wager on other-minds.

So the fact that it is extremely difficult in many cases to doubt another's pain etcetera, doesn't upset the sceptic's position. For (a) he needn't doubt or (b) if he does he needn't exercise it.

But Wittgenstein's significant attack on the sceptic's position is in his assertion that "C" in a real case becomes meaningless in that it asserts nothing and denies nothing in such ordinary circumstances, that

Ironically? Perhaps. But irony, remember, cuts more ways than one.
is, that one who asserts or denies "C" could give no answer to the question "What do you mean?" which would amount to anything more than a repetition of that assertion or denial. This *sounds* very much like the attack brought against the sceptic in Section IV (above). Wittgenstein writes:

"Suppose I say of a friend; 'He isn't an automaton' what information is conveyed by this and to whom would it be information? To a human being who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information could it give him? (At the very most that this man always *behaves* like a human being and not occasionally like a machine) 'I believe that he isn't an automaton', just like that, so far makes no sense."

(P.I., p.173.)

But note he says "so far makes no sense." But of course the sceptic claims to have *given* it, and "C" sense. What sense? Just that suggested by Wittgenstein in P.I., p.420., that is, that in saying of the children or the friend they aren't automata one is saying that they have what automata lack, that is, consciousness.

So the meaning of the sceptic's statement "C" is that (again) the children might lack consciousness, or better, that what one *believes* to be real children might not be, that the grounds for that belief are inadequate. But right here Wittgenstein makes a striking and significant move.

**XII PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE**

"My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul."

(P.I., p.173.)

Why "not of the opinion"? And what does Wittgenstein mean here by "attitude"? How is this cryptic passage to be understood? Answering these
questions would be a real step towards an understanding of Wittgenstein and, I think, towards a solution to the problems of other minds.

Let me begin by saying that I can't help but think "attitude" too weak a word to express Wittgenstein's thoughts here, a fact which might lead to a misunderstanding (or complete missing) of the distinction being marked. What, exactly, is this distinction? I want to say something like: my opinions are something I merely have or don't have and to varying degrees; my attitude is constitutive of me. My opinion of a person is what I think of him. I may be of the opinion that he is dependable, trustworthy, overweight, somewhat pretentious, a good guitar player, more interested in money than philosophy and so on. Opinions are on the same scale, and lower than belief and knowledge. They may be altered in the face of further evidence, may change from mere opinion to belief or even knowledge. If I have an opinion I may be reasonably asked to give a justification of it, reasons for holding it. But can't the same be said of my attitudes toward another person? I may have various attitudes towards him: respect, contempt, fear, hatred, friendliness to mention just a few. My attitudes too may change and I may be asked to justify them, to give reasons for having them, for example, "Why do you respect that hypocrite?"

Now, all of this is true but here also misses the point. And an explanation of why these facts miss the point will be an explanation of why I said "attitude" seemed too weak a word. Perhaps this can be seen by trying to understand what kind of attitude an "attitude towards a soul" is. It is not a particular kind of attitude towards another but a category encompassing all the particular attitudes I might have towards
another in terms of which such particular attitudes are to be understood, without which they would not be understandable. It is a matter of stance towards or commitment to another, not type of stance or form of commitment. Nor is it primarily a matter of thought about another. I may fail to have an opinion about another as I may fail to have any particular attitude towards him. But I may not fail to have towards him an attitude towards a soul. Even utter indifference is, in this sense, an attitude and one for which we have various names, distinguishing its various modes, for example, "callousness", "coldness", "mauvais fois."

Any stance I take towards another person is an attitude towards a soul, even turning away. It is a matter of how I look at people, how I treat them, how I am towards them and with them.

A man confronts another, a perfect stranger. He may have, as yet, no opinions about him, no particular attitudes. Another man may immediately form opinions, have attitudes, for example, he may think the other looks threatening and fear him. But both men betray and cannot fail to betray an attitude towards a soul. And it's not that they can't as a matter of fact fail, but that they can't is a matter of what Wittgenstein called "grammar." And this is at the same time a matter of how they see, or fail to see the man. This tells us what kind of attitude "attitude towards a soul" is, what "attitude towards a soul" means. It consists in seeing and taking other individuals as persons, as human beings. And this is not a matter of opinion.

Say they do, as the sceptic says they may, regard the stranger as an automaton. Wittgenstein says;
"being a living human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another, the crosspieces of a window as a swastika for example." (P.I., p.420.)

What do you see? Likely a window. Possibly a swastika, or a cross, or the corner of a chess board, or part of a chocolate bar. Say a person looks and does see a swastika. Possibly he is a Nazi, is used to seeing them. He sees them everywhere and they mean something to him. A painter may see forms everywhere. What one sees depends to a large extent on what one is interested in, on one's history, education, background and so on. Most people would see a window as a window probably because they learn about windows before politics and religion. This is not to say that those who see swastikas are wrong. These things can be seen there, but all the same a window is a window. It is not really a swastika.

Compare spoken words. These can be taken as mere sounds, or even as vibrations. A person who did so would probably have a special interest in them as sounds. (He might be a linguist) or, he might not know the language in which they are spoken (or any language at all). But the spoken words of a language are not, for all that, mere sounds or "really" mere vibrations. And one who so took them who failed to take them, for whatever reason, as words, would not understand what was being said, what the words said, or meant.

What about seeing a person as an automaton? Well, this is a possible if impoverishing, way of looking at others. Ayer has shown that the supposition that what we take as persons are really automata is not nonsensical. But to do so is to take another as a "limiting case or variant of
another," a person as an automaton. And to say that either way of taking them is to have an attitude towards a soul is to say that the concept of person is primary, basic, and so taken inescapable. One might say that no matter how we take them, persons are persons. Failure (for reasons) to so take them is to fail to understand them (as with words as words) and we are held responsible (not only morally but grammatically) for any alternative way of taking them.

One might learn that what are in fact persons are "really" only automata, be taught that they are automata and grow up so taking them. (Tragic similarities can be seen in the cases of what was taught or learned by young Greeks of slaves, Nazis of Jews, young Alabamans of blacks). But unless the others learned this too, and accepted their roles he would have a difficult time keeping his belief (could he really ignore their laughter, contempt, desires, words, females, mental institutions...) But if one would have a hard time keeping the belief that others were automata when originally taught that they were, how much more difficult to unlearn that they are persons. For this would involve taking, seeing as basic, as there, mere bodily movements rather than what we do see, that is, expressive behavior and actions, human behavior. What is it to see, what is involved in seeing human behavior?

Imagine a young man awaiting the arrival of his beloved. There is a knock at the door, he rushes to answer.....the officer standing there sees the face of the young man as he opens, sees his expression of joyous expectation change to bewilderment, then to unspeakable grief as he tells him of the wet road and how the truck driver tried to swerve out of the path of her madly skidding car... There is no doubt that the officer does not see
mere movements of facial muscles. He sees the expression of the face as having a certain significance sees it as grief, human grief. And grief is a concept acquired, as concepts are, with the acquisition of language. Wittgenstein constantly emphasizes and takes seriously the fact that we begin our lives as children (a surprisingly little emphasized aspect of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: a notable exception, Stanley Cavell, "Existentialism and Analytic Philosophy"). We learn to use words, and this is particularly true of M.T.s, in situations where we are more active participants than passive observers. We sympathize with grief, return love recoil from hatred and so on. Of course we also react in ways other than these typical ways (though it is important that these ways are typical). But the point is that we don't merely observe, or observe then infer. Learning to see human behavior as expressive is like learning to read, and human behavior is like language.

But to say "we see grief in the face of the other" while true may be misleading. It may, for example lead us into the "denial of feelings." But were one to believe he could literally see all there was to grief, he wouldn't know what it was, that "grief" meant. This truism brings out, I think, the important truth in the traditional argument from Analogy. For if the officer in the previous example had never felt grief, or anything like it, he wouldn't really understand what was being expressed. Such examples can be multiplied indefinitely, in fact many are themselves almost cliches about human feelings - the rich don't know what hunger is, most of us don't know what love is, or suffering, weightlessness and so on. (Though there are other ways of finding out about these feelings without having them; art is perhaps the supreme example). And it is important to
realize, if the officer had felt grief and knew what it was he experienced, what he must know about it. He must know what it would mean to say of another that he felt grief, for the meaning of "grief" is the same in first and other person ascriptions (above, p. 56) must know that others ascribe it to him on the basis of his behavior and that he must ascribe it to others on the basis of their behavior. He feels his grief but doesn't necessarily see it, others see it and necessarily, don't feel it. Such facts are taken into account by the Argument from Analogy. Does this mean we need the argument to justify our claims about knowledge of other minds? Despite the large number of arguments and attempts to show the Argument for Analogy inadequate, incoherent etc, I'm not sure that it is. Ayer, in several articles has given what seem to me plausible, if not fully convincing defenses against these attacks. These issues are beyond the scope of this paper. But it can be said that whether or not the Argument from Analogy can work we don't need it. For the simple truth is that we don't use it and were we to use it there is no reason to think we would (or should) be any more certain that it is a valid argument then I would be that Helga, bitten by the Scottie, was in pain. Bluntly I couldn't be more certain than I am about that. And it is this certainty, which I have (and had without even hearing of the Argument from Analogy) which the sceptic challenged. It is with the grounds of this certainty we are concerned.

The way in which I acquired my mentalistic vocabulary, that is as child-actor in situations rather than as spectator at exhibitions allows for the possibility of my being able to ascribe M.T.s to others without having had the relevant experience myself. But I wouldn't fully know what
I was saying of others wouldn't know what the expressive behavior was expressive of. What we learn and corroborate in our own experience is that, for example, grief-behavior is expressive of grief. We don't learn that such behavior is always expressive of grief or that grief is always expressed. But if not expressed, then it is held back. To not express one's grief is to do something.

Yet the fact that certain behavior is expressive of grief is contingent. Our bodies being how they are we could express grief various ways. And were our bodies radically different we would behave differently. If, for example, everyone resembled rather large eggs we would have to express grief differently. How different our bodies could be for us to remain persons I don't know. To decide this question would require a full investigation into the concept of a person. But it is clear that our bodies could be somewhat different and that some differences would make a difference in how we behave but not necessarily in how we feel. More to the point is that given the bodies we do have it is quite possible, even readily conceivable that grief-stricken people, or people with earaches, cease behaving in the way they do and either (a) behave in a different yet characteristic way (a new characteristic way) or (b) come to behave in no characteristic way at all or (c) behave in various different and characteristic ways.

Such possibilities are suggested by Wittgenstein (P.I., p.142) where he speaks specifically of (b):

"And if things were quite different from what they actually are - if there were, for instance, no characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy; if rule became exception and exception rule; or if both became phenomena of roughly equal frequency - this would make our normal language games lose their point - the precedent of
putting a lump of cheese on a balance and fixing the weight by the turn of the scale would lose its point if it frequently happened for such lumps to suddenly grow or shrink for no obvious reason."

Nothing insures that such things don't occur, that is, there is no logical or philosophical reason why these things must be and remain as they are. That they are as they are, that is, that there are the characteristic expressions of grief, pain, joy, fear etcetera. That there are, is, as is the fact that lumps of cheese don't suddenly and haphazardly grow or shrink is what Wittgenstein referred to as a "general fact of nature" (note: p.56, Pt.1, P.I.2, Sec. XII.) Upon such general facts, such widespread contingencies as these rests the formation and significance of our concepts. They give our language games their point. Wittgenstein writes that the interest of the philosopher in these general facts of nature is not that of the natural scientist or historian, for "we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes" (Pt.2, Sec.XII.) What purposes? To answer this question would be to say what Wittgenstein understood as "the purpose of philosophy", a question to which there is no (one) answer. But one of the purposes and one of the points of Wittgenstein's fictitious natural history, of his parables and jokes and imaginary language games is to get us to see differences\(^1\) and in so doing to acquire "perspicuous representations" of "the way we look at things" (P.I., p.122.) We do look at certain behavior as expressive of grief, ...

\(^1\) I owe to Michael Tanner knowledge of the significant fact that Wittgenstein had thought of using, as the "motto" of the Investigations this quotation from King Lear, "I will teach you differences."
though there is no necessity about either the fact that we do or that it
is. The crucial question is what it would be like if we didn't or if
there wasn't. What difference would this make to our concepts, language,
thought and lives and what can we learn from such considerations about
what we say and do, about our way of looking at things.

In Part II, p.233 of the Investigations Wittgenstein says this;

"We also say of some people that they are transparent to us.
it is also important however as regards this observation that
one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn
this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange
traditions; and what is more even given a mastery of the country's
language. We do not understand the people. (And not because of
not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot
find our feet with them."

In his penetrating and useful article,"The Availability of
Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" Stanley Cavell notes that in German the
last sentence of the above employs an idiom which literally says:

"We cannot find ourselves in them." (Cavell, p.179; my emphasis)

Personal knowledge consists in finding ourselves in others, being able
to speak to and for others. How do we find ourselves in others and
others in ourselves? To refer back to our example of grief; to under-
stand the grief of another is to acknowledge it. (In some unpublished
notes Wittgenstein says that knowledge, in the end, comes to acknowledgment.)
And while I am free to respond in any number of ways to another's grief,
I am not free not to acknowledge it. Again, whatever stance I take
towards a person is an attitude towards a soul. I said before that this
was a "grammatical" remark, not an empirical one. It is now time to see
more fully just what that comes to.
Our relationships to others, take the early situations in which we acquired our mentalistic vocabulary are not static relationships of mutual observers but dynamic ones of mutual actors or agents, of persons. This notion of agency or personhood is more than deeply inbedded in our language. Our language is a language of agency, a human language. Nor is "agency" revealed only in our mentalistic vocabulary. We speak of houses, roads, tools, viewpoints, horizons, natural resources, food, obstacles... We see those aspects and features of things, those uses of things with which we inter-relate in countless ways and in which we have an interest.

Our language is saturated in and animated by our humanity (not my humanity.) Language bespeaks the existence of others.

The "Private Language Argument" attempted to prove, from the fact that there is a language, that there must (logically) be "other minds." What I have been saying is that, if you like, the fact that our language is like it is reveals to us that there are other persons. But the facts I note are not to be taken as a "proof", in any ordinary sense of the word. I have tried to show that such a "proof" is not to be had. But it doesn't have to be; which brings us back to Wittgenstein.

Probably the most famous, misunderstood and misapplied notions in Wittgenstein's later philosophy are the closely related ones of "language games" and "forms of life." Applying these concepts to what I have been saying, I might have said that to understand the nature and justification of the ascription of M.T.'s to others it is necessary not to explain why, to justify what we do but to note the language-games we play with our
M.T.s, that the proper reply to the sceptic's incessant questioning is simply to point out to him what we do and if asked to justify that to rush out my copy of the *Investigations* and declare:

"If I have exhausted the justification I have reached bedrock and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say 'this is simply what I do'." (P.I., p.217.)

To explain to him (preferably in solemn voice) that;

"What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life." (P.I. II, p.226.)

What I have been trying to say might have been said like this, and if I'm right, what I have been saying is at least in the spirit of what Wittgenstein meant. This doesn't prove the existence of other minds, or justify our claims to know them. But nor does it fail to do so. What I mean by this can be seen by showing (a) why it doesn't prove anything, and (b) what it does do. And in so doing I hope to show what I think are two seriously mistaken ways of taking Wittgenstein remarks. I will then conclude by saying what I think to be a more correct way of taking them and showing why even if not a "true" interpretation of Wittgenstein it is one which will repay investigation.

My first example of how not to read and use the notions of "language-game" and "form of life" comes from Norman Malcolm's "Anselm's Ontological Arguments" (in A. Plantinga (ed) *The Ontological Argument*). Here we find Malcolm discussing the proposition "God necessarily exists" specifically attempting to defend it against what he (mistakenly) takes to be Hume's objection to the "Ontological Argument," namely the claim that "logical necessity merely reflects the use of words." "God necessarily exists," says Malcolm, claims to be an exception to that view and must be examined
on its own merits. He says "we must look at the use of words and not manufacture a prior thesis about it" (p.153) which he proceeds to do in the following remarkable passage on the Nineteenth Psalm.

"'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' Here is expressed the idea of the necessary existence and eternity of God, an idea which is essential to the Jewish and Christian religions. In these complex systems of thought, these 'language games,' God has the status of a necessary being. Who can doubt that? Here we must say, with Wittgenstein; 'The language-game is played'. I believe we might rightly take the existence of these religious systems of thought in which God figures as a necessary being to be disproof of the dogma that no existential proposition can be necessary." (p.153.)

An incredible bit of reasoning. Of course we can say with Wittgenstein (or anyone else for that matter) that "this language-game is played." Obviously it is: if it weren't the problems and questions about the "Ontological Argument" and God's "necessary existence" wouldn't arise. But nothing is gained by saying this. Of course there are "religious systems of thought" in which God figures as a "necessary being" but so are these "systems of thought" in which God doesn't so function and in which he doesn't function at all. On Malcolm's reasoning these might just as well be taken as proofs of "the dogma that no existential proposition can be necessary." On his reasoning any language-game in which the proposition "no existential proposition can be necessary" has the status of a true proposition proves, merely by being, that no existential proposition can be necessary.

Furthermore there are language-games in which two, three, many Gods flat earths, witches, control of human action by the position of the heavenly bodies, Super-Sargasso Seas enveloping the earth are essential. (See Charles Fort: 'The Book of the Damned' for all sorts of essential
features of various fascinating language-games). Malcolm gives no reason for claiming the Judeo-Christian language-game more ontologically privileged in this way than any other. And on his argument, if God comes they all come; if any go, so must God. The fact that there is a language-game does not prove that any being essential to that game exists. Nor does the fact, made much of by Malcolm in this same article, that as Wittgenstein noted, "our language-games have a point." Of course the Christian language-game, if it must be so-called, has a point, has meaning for Christians (not to mention non-Christians). But belief, however meaningful or fervently held just doesn't establish truth.

But neither are things made any better by saying, as for example, David Pole does in 'The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein':

"That a language-game is played is no more than a matter of fact, it is always conceivable that it should not have been played. It may be said that the question raised is as to whether it ought to be played and this formulation - one that Wittgenstein does not discuss - comes nearer I believe to the heart of the matter."

Wittgenstein doesn't discuss whether our language-games ought to be played and it should be clear that such a question is nowhere near the heart of the matter with which we (or Wittgenstein) be now concerned. Cavell remarks that asking whether our language games ought to be played would amount to asking whether human beings ought to behave as the creatures we think of as human or whether the world ought to be different from what it is ("The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," p.158.) Wittgenstein's concern is with what difference it would make if the general facts of nature by which the formation of our concepts can be explained and which explain the significance of our concepts were
different, and what the consideration of such possible alternatives shows us about the concepts we have, about our language and our lives. The questions with which Wittgenstein is concerned are not whether we ought to believe in God or ascribe M.T.'s to others but what these things mean, what it is we are doing when we do; to get us to see clearly what we do and how we look at things. To see what we are.

One of my objections to Malcolm's use of the notion of a "language game" was that if the Christian language-game proves the existence of God, another language-game can disprove it and we end up proving both His existence and non-existence by the same argument. This, besides being absurd in itself also implies that Malcolm sees (here anyway) language-games as being, as it were, separate and autonomous quasi-organisms ("systems of thought") with sharply demarcated boundaries, in the case of Christianity for instance clearly dividing a sacred inside from the profane outside. But this is not only wildly unfaithful to Wittgenstein's words (see especially P.I., p.65 - 75 on "games" and "family-resemblances") but just false. Our language-games are, on the contrary, inter-related, inter-dependent with no clear boundaries. And the whole; human language and the actions into which it is woven is as complex as is human life.

Most serious Christians would, I daresay, be more than a little offended at Malcolm's picture of them as enclosed with their tightly isolated, wholly insulated, "language-game." A Christian is at the same time a person and (at the risk of being misunderstood I'll say) a person first and a Christian after the fact, and as a person is a participant in a more encompassing, all-encompassing "language-game", that is, his
whole language. Now, as God figures as an essential feature of the Christian language-game, so persons figure as essential features of what might be called the human language game, or less pretentious-sounding, our language-game. And just as the Christian language-game doesn't prove by its mere existence the existence of God, neither does our language-game prove the existence of other-minds, though it is just worth noting that while God is a feature of only the one game, relating to and frequently conflicting with others, persons are presupposed in language itself. Nor does the point of our language-game prove the existence of other-minds any more than the point of the Christian one proves the existence of God. What, anyway, could be called the point of either language-game?

The sceptic says we believe in other minds; then questions that belief. Malcolm asseverates that we do, and says therefore there can be no question. To say that our problems about other-minds (if we go so far to admit them as problems) presuppose an unproblematic context ("language-game", "form of life") within which or against which such problems arise is to leave unexamined and unclarified the very meaning of "context", "language-game" and "form of life." To carry out such an examination is to ask what it is to take something as unproblematic. And this requires a shift in perspective, away from an attitude of acceptance to an attitude of reflection, of investigation.

From such a perspective it then becomes possible to see our use of words, language-games, forms of life; to gain a perspicuous representation. We see the connections which there are between words, between words and
actions, and all the things which go to make up our life. We see how we look at things. Among the things we look at are persons.

We see certain beings as persons, some of their movements as actions, the sounds they make as words, the changes in their countenances as expressive. Taken this way, to say that all we have direct access to in the case of other minds is what they say and do, their behavior, is just to say that we have all we need and could possibly have. To see another saying and doing anything is to see another person and not to observe that various sounds are escaping from a moving object which is merely before me.

There is no necessity in this (logical or philosophical) beyond or beneath what we do. And that we do it doesn't prove we aren't mistaken. But the fact that there is no necessity doesn't mean we can sensibly ask whether we ought to do what we do, be what we are. There is no question of our gathering together and deciding either to continue in our way or try something else. The sceptic's suggestions aren't nonsensical, but nor were they intended to be practically applied either in how we see others or as linguistic recommendations to cease saying things like "I know she's in pain" or perhaps to cross our fingers when we do so. He does point out that personal isolation is as real a fact and as must a problem of intersubjectivity as are the facts of communication and community. And taken seriously he forces us to come to terms with both.

But if the sceptic's claims are not nonsensical they are unbelievable. The philosophical reflection which consists in the attempt to gain understanding of what we take for granted brings to the surface the hidden,
or forgotten roots of our knowledge of other-minds, the experiential basis of this knowledge, the common everyday facts about our growing and living together with others, which weave together into the patterns of our lives. We find ourselves there, if anywhere, in others.

XIII. CONCLUSION

The philosophical problem of "Other Minds" is without doubt one of the most maddening, perplexing and exasperating conundrums ever constructed by man. Once it has its hold on one it becomes an obsession. Deny it, and it will leer back at you from the darkness to which you have relegated it. Try to ignore it and it haunts you like the phantom in your childhood closet. It is this perhaps and the shocking absurdity of the sceptic's claims and conclusions which have engendered the somewhat hysterical attempts to solve it, some of which I have discussed in this paper. Imagine trying to prove that other persons exist or that we can know that another is in pain is a peculiar endeavour if ever there was one - I have tried to show it also very likely a futile one. There are problems (real ones) about our knowledge of other-minds and to deny these by misrepresenting them or by distorting or ignoring certain facts about our mentalistic vocabulary is simply to bring the issues which if they don't worm their own way back out will be dug up all over again by others. (Thus are philosophical journals filled).

How can we have knowledge of other minds, ascribe M.T.s to others? This is a question about how we can do what we do. Wittgenstein suggests
that what is required is a description of the kind which gives us a clear
view of words, a "perspicuous representation" which enables us to see
connections and ultimately, the way we look at things and the very general
facts of nature on which these things depend.

I have tried to suggest that we look at things as persons do and at
others as persons. I have tried to show that behavior, understood as
primarily expressive behavior is enough for the ascription of M.T.s to
others and that there is nothing conceivable which could be added to it
to give us a higher degree of what we would be content to call "personal
knowledge." Any description of language which failed to include this
primacy of the personal would not be a description of our language. But
how can a description of language prove there are other persons and that
we can have knowledge of them? I would rather say that it reveals that
there are others, how and what it means to know them. What then is left
of the Problem of "Other Minds" and the worrying assertions of the sceptic?
To each a challenge. The problem is not pseudo or even necessarily silly.
It is real and can be serious. And by this I don't mean as an excuse in
"Going philosophy." Our problems about other minds may serve as invitations
(or make it a tortuous necessity) to investigate and see anew and more
clearly, our language, what we say and do, how we come to know others and
find ourselves in others. It may sound odd or even comic to suggest that
the sceptic within ourselves may be our means to self-knowledge. The quest
for self-knowledge may itself be an odd or even comic affair. But the fact
that we don't even know this seems disturbingly suggestive.
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