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Meeting Other Minds

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Descartes argued that human beings have rational souls, while animals are automata, functioning in a wholly mechanistic fashion. How do we know that God has joined a soul with each human body? In *Discourse on the Method*, part V, Descartes mentions two "tests of a real man":

"[I]f any […] machines had the organs and outward shape of a monkey or of some other animal that lacks reason, we should have no means of knowing that they did not possess entirely the same nature as these animals; whereas if any such machines bore a resemblance to our bodies and imitated our actions as closely as possible for all practical purposes, we should still have two very certain means of recognizing that they were not real men. The first is that they could never use words, or put together other signs, as we do in order to declare our thoughts to others. For we can certainly conceive of a machine so constructed that it utters words, and even utters words which correspond to bodily actions causing a change in its organs (e.g. if you touch it in one spot it asks what you want of it, if you touch it in another it cries out that you are hurting it, and so on). But it is not conceivable that such a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest of men can do. Secondly, even though such machines might do some things as well as we do them, or perhaps even better, they would inevitably fail in others, which would reveal that they were acting not through understanding but only from the disposition of their organs. For whereas reason is a universal instrument which can be used in all kinds of situations, these organs need some particular disposition for each particular action; hence it is for all practical purposes impossible for a machine to have enough different organs to make it act in all the contingencies of life in the way in which our reason makes us act." (CSM I, 139-140; AT VI, 56-57)

This is sometimes (e.g. Plantinga 1967) taken to suggest that Descartes endorsed what is now called an analogical argument for the existence of other minds. However, as Avramides (1996, 2001) notes, Descartes seems to think that only a single judgment is enough to assure us that a fellow human has a mind, because it is a fundamental

assumption for him that all and only beings that have the human shape and form are endowed with a mind. This fundamental assumption prevents Descartes from seeing a need for an analogical argument of the form "this body is a human body (i.e. it moves and talks like human bodies do); therefore, it very probably has a mind".

With his separation of material things from thinking things, Descartes anyway opened up the logical possibility of a mechanical, material body without a mind joined together with it – that is, the logical possibility of a human-shaped automaton. When his aforementioned fundamental assumption is dropped, it seems that the best we can do to justify our everyday belief in the existence of minds in others is to entertain some kind of argument from analogy. This is the basic (and perhaps the most commonsensical) way of explaining how we know about other minds.

A usual point of reference for this argument is John Stuart Mill's exposition of it:

"I conclude that other human beings have feelings like me, because, first, they have bodies like me, which I know, in my own case, to be the antecedent condition of feelings; and because, secondly, they exhibit the acts, and other outward signs, which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings. I am conscious in myself of a series of facts connected by a uniform sequence, of which the beginning is modifications of my body, the middle is feelings, the end is outward demeanor. In the case of other human beings I have the evidence of my senses for the first and last links of the series, but not for the intermediate link. I find, however, that the sequence between the first and last is as regular and constant in those other cases as it is in mine. In my own case I know that the first link produces the last through the intermediate link, and could not produce it without. Experience, therefore, obliges me to conclude that there must be an intermediate link; which must either be the same in others as in myself, or a different one: I must either believe them to be alive, or to be automatons: and by believing them to be alive, that is, by supposing the link to be of the same nature as in the case of which I have experience, and which is in all other respects similar, I bring other human beings, as phenomena, under the same generalizations which I know by experience to be the true theory of my own existence." (*An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), quoted through Malcolm 1958, 969)

For many thinkers, at least those who hold that minds have an essentially subjective element that cannot be reduced into any publicly observable physical facts, the argument from analogy is still the best available account of our knowledge of other minds (e.g.

Chalmers 1996, 246). Anyway, as has been long pointed out, it is problematic in a number of ways. The standard criticisms against the analogical argument point out that it is an inductive generalization based on a single case, as well as an inference to an uncheckable conclusion. (See Hyslop 1995, chapter 4, for a critical examination of these issues.) But in addition to these, the analogical argument also gives rise to a deeper problem having to do with solipsism and the possibility of intersubjective understanding. The argument from analogy assumes that I first come across the notion of experience (mental states) first-personally, as referring to what I feel and experience, and then extend that notion to cover others. But it seems questionable whether, assuming that I only have experiences that are *mine* to start with, I will be able to form as much as an idea of experiences that are *not mine*. So we encounter a problem put forward by Wittgenstein:

"'If you pity someone for having pains, surely you must at least *believe* that he has pains'. But how can I even *believe* this? How can these words make sense to me? How could I even have come by the idea of another's experience if there is no possibility of any evidence for it?" (Wittgenstein 1958, 46)

This aspect of the problem can be referred to as the *conceptual* problem of other minds, distinguishable from the pure epistemological problem. And finally, insofar as the problem of other minds is felt to be a problem with real philosophical weight, it is arguable whether the argument by analogy can in any case be a satisfactory solution to it. The analogical argument concludes that the data provided by my own case gives me a fairly good reason to *assume* that others have mental states too. This ends up as an uncomfortably *detached* view of our relation to others: minds of others lie somewhere beyond what is manifestly in view for us, and we have to infer ourselves into knowledge about them. If our best justification for the existence of other minds only allows us to *inductively infer* or *postulate a theory* that others *probably* have minds, one might be left with a strong feeling that the core of the problem has not yet been touched upon at all. Being left with an answer that gives only probability, albeit a very high probability, is almost as bad as being faced with the original problem. The argument from analogy seems to keep us from meeting on the outermost surfaces of our bodies.

In a way, this final point against analogical argument has an existential flavor to it. It

draws attention to the actual phenomenology of reacting to others as conscious beings. In clear cases of attributing a phenomenal experience – sensation, feeling or such – to another human being, we are not aware of first making a judgment about their physical movement, then an inferential step to a mental state. Of course, it is possible to say that the analogical argument is not necessarily the way we *in practice* proceed when attributing experiences to others; it is merely the way to epistemologically justify our beliefs about those experiences, should we feel the need of such a justification. But this distinction seems an important one to make, since it underlines the fact that in practice, we respond to certain kinds of bodily movements and sounds directly, taking them as manifestations of mentality in their own right, rather than something that allows us to *infer* the presence of mentality.

There is a way of approaching this problem, finding its place of origin in the later works of Wittgenstein, that declares the analogical argument to be wrong-headed and attempts to draw a more adequate picture of our epistemic relation to others. This approach states that some behavioral features serve as *criteria* for mental states. This is taken to mean that these behavioral features are somehow logically linked to mental states, so that they provide a special kind of evidence for such states: they serve as a non-inductive and immediate way of telling that the other is minded.

Wittgenstein uses the notion of criterion in contexts where he is rethinking the role of private objects of experience, stating that "an 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" (Wittgenstein 1953, §580). This kindled an idea that the relation between "inner processes" (experiences) and patterns of behavior typical to them is an intimate one, so that access to the latter could be seen also as providing an access to the former. Bruce Aune characterized in 1963 this Wittgenstein-inspired idea that had been embraced in the then-recent discussion about other minds:

"The traditional assumption that we must make a weakly-justified ontological leap when, on the basis of a person's observed behavior, we conclude that he is having a certain feeling or sensation is completely erroneous. The truth of the matter is rather this: the things we call 'psychological states' are so intimately connected with certain patterns of observable behavior that the occurrence of the latter provide us with

criteria that are logically adequate for determining the presence of the former." (Aune 1963, 187)

What is it for something to be a logically adequate criterion for another thing? As John McDowell (1982) notes, Wittgenstein's own remarks do not give the impression that he is giving "criterion" or "Kriterium" a special technical meaning, except in a singular passage in the *Blue Book*, where he introduces the term to make a sharp between criteria and symptoms:

"Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question 'How do you know so-and-so is the case?', we sometimes answer by giving 'criteria' and sometimes by giving 'symptoms'. If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case 'why do you say this man has got angina?' then the answer 'I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood' gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, 'His throat is inflamed', this might give us a symptom of angina. I call 'symptom' a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion. Then to say 'A man has angina if this bacillus is found in him' is a tautology or it is a loose way of stating the definition of 'angina'. But to say, 'A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat' is to make a hypothesis." (Wittgenstein 1958, 24-25)

The thing that Wittgenstein is calling the criterion for angina in this scenario is its defining criterion. We are able to tell that the patient has angina by observing the bacillus just because it has been defined in language that having the bacillus *is what it means* to have angina. Here the presence of the bacillus is surely a "logically adequate" criterion for angina, because "all people with angina have the bacillus so-and-so in their blood" is an analytic statement. Having the bacillus entails having angina. But this use of "criterion" in the sense of defining criterion is not representative of Wittgenstein's use of the term elsewhere; in other contexts, he seems to be mean by "criteria" conventionally stipulated, adequate ways of telling that something is the case, but such that it is always at least in principle possible that further evidence puts it into question whether that something is indeed the case. According to this latter reading, the relation between the criterion and what it is the criterion of is not an entailment. This latter reading is also the one that is interesting in the context of other minds. Saying that certain patterns of observable behavior are logically adequate criteria for mental states in virtue of being

their *defining* criteria amounts to logical behaviorism; such position defines minds so that they are fully observable, so that any special problems about our access to the minds of others find no place to start with.

When the idea of Wittgensteinian criteria is invoked to explain how our access to the behavior of others could also serve as an access to their mentality, the relevant criteria are accordingly taken to be *defeasible* ones. That is, the satisfaction of criteria for X's being the case is compatible with X's not being the case. It is always possible that someone displaying typical e.g. pain-behavior is actually not in pain (he may be pretending or play-acting, or lacking pain-experiences for some other reason); the hypothesis of his pretending or otherwise lacking pain-experiences can be, depending on the circumstances, more or less implausible, but in no case is there anything *contradictory* in it. However, the relation between the criterion and its corresponding state of affairs is taken to involve more than just *symptoms* or *signs* of that state of affairs. The behavioral criteria for pain, for example, are taken to be such criteria, in some sense, as a matter of "logical" fact.

In Wittgenstein's terminology, that certain behavioral features serve as criteria for someone's being in pain is part of the "grammar" of our pain-language. This makes it seem like a matter of linguistic convention that people displaying pain-behavior are said to be in pain; as if when we are talking about sensations and experiences, our talk is equivalent to talk about bodily and verbal behavior. If the idea of the criterial relation being "logical" or "grammatical" is understood in this straightforward way, in the context of other minds it produces a behavioristic account of our knowledge of minds. As already said, such an account is not very interesting in itself, and not easily attributable to Wittgenstein; it is actually a position he is continually guarding himself against. (E.g. Wittgenstein 1953, §§304-308) The Wittgensteinian idea of behavioral features serving as criteria for mental states is interesting insofar as the "logical" relation of behavioral criteria to mental states is a more subtle one: not entailing them, but being more than mere signs of them.

The outcome of this is an idea of behavioral criteria as not defining criteria, but still as a special kind of "logically adequate" evidence, and furthermore, as (at least sometimes) conclusive evidence:

1) Behavioral criteria are defeasible; but
2) Behavioral criteria provide necessarily good evidence for mental states, and
3) Behavioral criteria are able to settle beyond doubt the question of whether an other is in a mental state.

The third point involves the idea that it is possible to come up with a new kind of solution to the problem of other minds, distinct from an analogical argument, by the help of a Wittgensteinian notion of criteria. The interpretation that criterial evidence is evidence that establishes the existence of something with certainty is what Cavell (1999, 6-7) calls the "Malcolm-Albritton reading" of Wittgenstein's relevant remarks. It is also what Wright (1984, 383-384) calls the "principal point" of criteria in the eyes of most advocates of that notion: recognition of the satisfaction of criteria for P can confer skeptic-proof knowledge that P.

The problem with this is that two mutually exclusive features seem to be expected from criteria: defeasibility and anti-skeptical power. We attribute e.g. pains to others appealing to the typical pain-behavior we observe in them; the pain-behavior serves here as our criterion, as our way of telling that the other is in pain. But the satisfaction of the criterion is not to be taken to be *constitutive* of the fact that he is in pain. That approach would treat the behavioral criterion as a defining criterion, resulting in a behavioristic account. Rather, what we attribute to others appealing to the criterial evidence is a circumstance distinct from the satisfaction of the criteria – an "inner state" or experience. Thus, it is always in principle possible that the other is not having pain-experience, even though the criteria for his being in pain are satisfied. This is what the defeasibility of criteria is meant to ensure. But this simple admission seems to be in an irresolvable tension with the idea that criteria can settle beyond doubt whether the thing they are criteria of is present or not. Skeptic-proof knowledge about the mentality of another person requires me to be

acquainted with such circumstances that are incompatible with the other lacking mentality. But insofar as criteria are defeasible, claiming them to have anti-skeptical power is to say that "knowing that someone else is in some 'inner' state can be constituted by being in a position in which, for all one knows, the person may not be in that 'inner' state. And that seems straightforwardly incoherent (McDowell 1982, 371)".

Probably a direct anti-skeptical solution to the problem of other minds is too much to ask from the notion of criterion. But we can still assess the claim that behavioral criteria constitute a special kind of evidence, an especially adequate way of telling whose connection to persons' experiences is not a contingent matter. What it is that sets up such an assumed connection between certain ways of behaving and "inner" experiences? Wittgenstein has a passage in *Philosophical Investigations* that hints at a possible answer; this answer seems to be based on the insight that our use of language involving pain terminology is itself a sophisticated kind of pain-behavior:

"How do words refer to sensations? – There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connexion between the name and the thing named set up? The question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? – of the word 'pain' for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior.

'So you are saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?' – On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it." (Wittgenstein 1953, §244)

Here Wittgenstein is giving a possible account of how the connection between a sensation – an "inner" experience – and its name in language is set up. The conjecture – arguably not at all implausible – is that verbal expressions of pain, and subsequently the language involving pain-sensations in general, get introduced into language by replacing the natural, involuntary expressions of pain. This serves to set up a connection between pain-language and certain ways of behaving that is not a matter of mere contingency: those behavioral patterns that resemble the natural expressions of pain (aversive behavior, crying out, etc.) are the paradigm cases for the correct application of the concept of pain.

The special connection between criterial pain-behavior and pain resides in the idea that, as Malcolm (1954, 544) writes, the satisfaction of the criterion "repeats the kind of case in which we were taught to say ['pain']".

This goes at least some way towards explaining how Wittgenstein could see it as a matter of "grammar" that some behavioral features serve as criteria for experiences in others. In a way, the connection is a matter of "convention", in the sense that it is set up in language and upheld in language, but it is not a matter of convention in the sense that we had just decided to call certain ways of trembling or crying "pains". Rather, the link between having painful experiences and displaying pain-behavior is a naturally fixed one, and it is via the publicly observable pain-behavior that we introduce a linguistic expression for the phenomenon of pain.

This way, Wittgenstein can be seen to offer an account of our epistemic relation to others such that directly observable bodily states of others – their pain-behaviors – can provide occasions which we *immediately* see as proper for attributing pain to them. Analogical argument to other minds assumes that pain-behavior is something I note to be constantly *associated* with pain in my own case, allowing the inductive inference from pain-behavior to pain in the case of others. According to the Wittgensteinian account, pain-behavior is not just associated with pain; rather, it is the paradigmatic case for correctly applying the concept of pain. Thus, a person mastering this aspect of pain-language is not required to make an *inference* from observing pain-behavior in another person to the conclusion that the other must be in pain. He will be making the attribution of pain to the other in a single judgment. But the fact that some occasions are the paradigmatic cases for attributing pains to others is not, on any occasion, a guarantee against being mistaken in one's attribution. So the assumption that criteria would be able to settle beyond question the presence of the phenomenon they are criteria of is left controversial; the Wittgensteinian account provides an alternative to the framework of the analogical argument, but it hardly can refute other minds skepticism.

Wittgenstein's point relieves us from one problematic assumption of the analogical

argument's framework: if we accept the point, we don't need to construe our judgments about the mentality of others as an inference, starting with a judgment about their bodily behavior and concluding with a judgment about their experiences. The judgment about the mentality of others will be seen as a single judgment, an immediate response to the bodily movements of the other. But it will still be an open question whether any such judgment can be justified without recourse to something like the argument from analogy. I recognize some cases to be paradigmatic occasions for correctly saying that another creature is in pain, but no matter how paradigmatic the case is, for all I know it is still possible that the creature is not experiencing pain; *that* fact still seems to lie outside the limits of my knowledge. And is not the reason I am anyway not too concerned about the possibility of others being automatons simply this: I know that in my own case, this human behavior and this human physiology consistently go together with experiences, so I have reason to be quite reassured that the same is the case with others too? We still seem to have a coherent skeptical question about the existence of other minds that demands an analogical argument as an answer.

It is often pointed out that as soon as skeptical problems are allowed to rise, they seem insoluble. Thus, the most effective anti-skeptical strategy may be thought to be showing that skeptical problems are incoherent or illegitimate to start with. Wittgenstein's own attitude to skepticism, in *On Certainty* (1969) and elsewhere, is of this type: not attempting to meet skepticism in its own terms, but to "silence" the skeptic. This kind of idea seems to be operative in McDowell's "Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge" (1982).

The point of McDowell's approach is that skepticism takes the relationship between "good cases" and "deceptive cases" in the wrong way. We will make a distinction between these types of case like this: in a good case, I perceive some state of affairs such that it looks in all respects like P is the case, and it is actually true that P is the case. In a deceptive case, I (again) perceive some state of affairs such that it looks in all respects like P is the case, but P is not actually the case. Now, following McDowell, we should resist the idea that our gaining knowledge of the world through experience is concerned

only with "looking-like-somethings" that may or may not be veridical. The root of skepticism lies in being concerned only with the common factor that the good and deceptive cases share – their perceptual indistinguishability – and assuming that the common factor is all we can appeal to when assessing whether we have knowledge of this or that thing. The antidote for this is, then, to focus instead on the difference between the good and the bad cases: any instance of perception can be either a situation where X perceives P to be the case or a situation where it merely looks to X as if he were perceiving P to be the case. McDowell presents his account as an alternative to a "highest common factor" view about perception, the latter being the view that only the appearances that are shared by good and illusory cases have epistemic relevance.

This is to insist that perception fundamentally involves a kind of openness to the world; opposing the view that experience forms a "veil of representations" between the subject and the world he lives in. (McDowell 1982, 408n19) The latter is seen as the ultimate motivating thought of skepticism.

McDowell's stance is based on the externalist insight that instances of knowing are, so to speak, world-dependent: it is a philosophical mistake, based on the tradition of skeptical arguments in epistemology, to suppose that we should be able to build knowledge just from the materials that are available in our singular subjective experience.

Perceiving a person displaying typical pain-behavior can constitute perceptual knowledge about the person's experience of pain, provided that he indeed *is* experiencing pain – that is, provided the case is a good case and not a deceptive case. The good case calls for a different kind of characterization altogether from that suggested by the skeptic. The skeptic says that in the good case, I perceive something indistinguishable from what I perceive in the deceptive case. The correct, skeptic-silencing, account is however this: in the good case, I *perceive* another person to be in a mental state, while in the deceptive case it merely *seems to me as if I were perceiving* him to be in a mental state.

If one tries to read McDowell's suggestion as an attempt to meet and refute skepticism

head-on, it seems hardly successful. The reason, pointed out e.g. by Glendinning & de Gaynesford (1998), is that the skeptic can just reformulate his question as a question about second-order knowledge. Maybe we are indeed able to know that the relevant state of affairs obtains in good cases; but how are we supposed to know *when* we are faced with a good case and not a deceptive case?

"We are to suppose that this subject's best theory of his or her current perceptual standing (the appearance that such and such is the case) is that it is *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such and such is the case making itself perceptually manifest. *But no skeptic need deny this*. The skeptic's conclusion is only that, in every case, one must suspend judgment as to *which*." (Glendinning & de Gaynesford 1998, 29; emphases in the original)

But this just confirms the idea that McDowell's argument is better taken as an attempt to undermine skepticism rather than refuting it: it is a suggestion to correct our philosophical intuitions about knowledge so that skepticism can be seen as wrong-headed from the start. The leading idea is the idea of *openness*; we are not radically cut off from the world by a veil of representations, but our perceptions are able to "reach all the way" to the worldly facts themselves, not "falling short of them" in any significant way. It can be asked whether such a position can provide more than a dogmatic, and thus inadequate, response to skepticism (Glendinning & de Gaynesford 1998 argues that it doesn't). I choose here to take the idea of openness at face value, and present some cautious remarks about what the idea might amount to in the case of external world skepticism, on the one hand, and in the case of other minds skepticism, on the other hand.

Following McDowell's clue, we could say that external world skepticism is ultimately motivated by a false philosophical idea like this:

We never encounter worldly objects directly, but always as mediated by images or representations of them; and these representations may always be deceptive.

The same false idea in the case of other minds skepticism would then be:

We never encounter the inner, conscious states of others directly, but always as mediated by observations of their behavior; and there may always be behavior without mentality.

I assume that there is relatively little temptation for anyone with no philosophical aspirations to hold on to anything like the first thesis. In contrary, it seems very natural to think that upon, for example, seeing a tree, it is the tree itself that is affecting the observing subject, not any representational proxy of it. The phenomenology of it, one could say, is that of being in touch with the world directly, characterized by unfaltering certainty. The distinction between the appearance of the tree and the actual tree only finds a place in contexts where we know the circumstances to be somehow abnormal; when we suspect that there is an optical illusion in play, for example, causing the tree to appear as swaying, while actually it is stationary. In that kind of situation, the tree and the abnormal surroundings can be said to cause an appearance of a swaying tree. But in normal conditions, we don't normally say that we see an appearance of a tree caused by a tree. Rather, we simply see a tree.

What about the second thesis? I think it is worth noting that here there seems to be much more prima facie plausibility in saying that *often*, even in normal, favorable conditions, what we see in the other is a behavioral state caused by a mental state. McDowell seems ready to admit this, at least to an extent. According to his idea of openness, in the good cases, where our perceptions of worldly states of affairs are the result of those states of affairs actually obtaining, what is disclosed to us in experience are those facts themselves, not intervening appearances or representations of them:

"Suppose someone is presented with an appearance that it is raining. It seems unproblematic that if his experience is in a suitable way the upshot of the fact that it is raining, then the fact itself can make it the case that he knows it is raining." (McDowell 1982, 388)

And when one's experiences of some states of affairs is, as said, "in a suitable way the upshot of" those states of affairs, then "the fact itself is their object" (McDowell 1982, 389). The talk of one's experiences being the *upshots* of states of affairs make it seem like there might be a sense in which the states of affairs themselves remain detached from our

experiences of them, and thus remain after all external to one's subjectivity. (This point of criticism is pushed in Glendinning & de Gaynesford 1998.) Regarding the case of other minds, McDowell particularly makes a crucial disclaimer: when we say that a worldly fact itself, and no intervening substitute, is disclosed to us in perception,

"[i]n the most straightforward application of the idea, the thought would indeed be […] that the fact itself is directly presented to view […]. But a less straightforward application of the idea is possible also, and seems appropriate in at least some cases of knowledge that someone else is in an 'inner' state, on the basis of experience of what he says and does. Here we might think of what is directly available to experience in some such terms as 'his giving expression to his being in that "inner" state'; this is something that, while not itself actually being the 'inner' state of affairs in question, nevertheless does not fall short of it […]." (McDowell 1982, 387)

It is surely true that when some piece of behavior in another person is presented to us as *an expression of a mental state*, then it would be contradictory hold the behavior to be such an expression *and* also remain skeptical about whether there is a mental state present. In this way, perceiving such an expression would not "fall short of" the inner state of affairs in the sense intended by McDowell. But it seems that some distinction between an expression and what it is an expression of is inevitable, and this introduces a divide which makes it questionable whether we can really enjoy comfortable openness to others. It provides a divide where skeptical doubts find a place to live: it makes it possible to doubt, in any given situation, whether what we take as expressions in another person actually *are* expressions of something.

McDowell talks against an "objectifying conception of the human" (1982, 393), which assumes that insofar as pieces of human behavior are expressive, the expressiveness resides not in the nature of those pieces of behavior, but in their being the observable effects of hidden, "internal" events. But it still seems inevitable that a piece of human behavior's being "expressive" requires its standing in the right kind of relation – maybe causal – to whatever it is expression of; and we seem to be always able to coherently ask whether we can be sure that this relation holds.

Maybe something more or less like this is inspiring Cavell, when he in *The Claim of Reason* (1999) holds that there is a difference in character between external world skepticism and skepticism about other minds. Marie McGinn paraphrases him:

"[T]here is an asymmetry between scepticism about the external world and scepticism about other minds. While the former is strictly unliveable, confounded by our natural inability to own the sceptic's doubts or feel them as real for us, the latter, [Cavell] suggests, has its roots in our everyday experience of others. […] Sceptical doubt about the external world is 'lunatic'; even when we are caught in the sceptical net of philosophical argument, we never lose sight of our ability to put a stop to the fascination by 'joining again … the healthy, everyday world, outside the isolation of the [study]'. In the case of scepticism about other minds […] 'I can live my scepticism', for 'there is no comparable, general alternative to the radical doubt of the existence of others … such doubt does not bear the same relation to the idea of lunacy.'" (McGinn 1998, 45)

Cavell argues against the reading he attributes to Norman Malcolm and Rogers Albritton, which states that observing behavioral criteria for a mental state is sufficient to determine with certainty that another person is in the mental state. Rather, Cavell sees Wittgenstein's demand that we judge others to be in "inner" states based on behavioral criteria as meaning that eventually,

"'criteria come to an end' […]. There is no final assurance that the other is not a machine; we have the power to grant humanity to the other, and something about the other 'elicits this grant from us', but in the end this granting depends upon an act of 'emphatic projection' whose appropriateness can never be a matter of certainty." (McGinn 1998, 46)

Cavell's insight suggests that it is a part of the human condition to live in some amount of fundamental uncertainty about the extent and nature of the inner lives of other beings. I think there is reason to say that this view was shared by Wittgenstein. And one could find from Wittgenstein also support for the idea that humanity is precisely something we *grant* to the other. Observable behavior, considered just by itself, seems inadequate to determine the "inner states" of others because seeing such behavior as meaningful is essentially a result of our own cognitive input: a result of our capacity to take human behavior as expressive.

"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 it 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 becoming quite meaningless; or you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling, or something of the sort.

Seeing a living 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." (Wittgenstein 1953, §420)

The suggestion here is that seeing others as automata is seeing them under a certain aspect. This aspect may suggest itself whenever I consider people as objects of natural-scientific study: as moving bodies whose future movements I am interested in explaining and predicting. Wittgenstein's calling it a "limiting case or variant" indicates that it appears as a weaker or secondary aspect; it is this because it is pragmatically useless, idle, in the normal course of life. I understand the words by which skeptical doubt about other minds is expressed, and I can even attach some kind of idea to that supposition, but I am unable to do anything with that supposition. This kind of point is echoed by P.F. Strawson in his *Skepticism and Naturalism* (1985), where Strawson suggests that it is a respectable naturalist answer to skeptical worries to point out that in some classes of belief, it is just not up to us to decide whether to hold those beliefs or not. Rather, it is an in-built feature of ours that we respond to human faces in a distinctive way that is not applied to inanimate things. It might be appropriate to say that the default case of our knowledge of other minds is not knowing-that, but knowing *how* to interpret happenings on the surface of the bodies of others as manifestations of mentality.

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