CRITERIA, DEFEASIBILITY, AND KNOWLEDGE

By JOHN McDOWELL

Read 24 November 1982

IT is widely believed that in his later work Wittgenstein introduced a special use of the notion of a criterion. In this proprietary use, 'criteria' are supposed to be a kind of evidence.[1] Their status as evidence, unlike that of symptoms, is a matter of 'convention' or 'grammar' rather than empirical theory; but the support that a 'criterion' yields for a claim is defeasible: that is, a state of information in which one is in possession of a 'criterial' warrant for a claim can always be expanded into a state of information in which the claim would not be warranted at all.[2] This special notion is thought to afford—among much else[3]—a novel response to the traditional problem of other minds.

What follows falls into three parts. In the first, I shall express, in a preliminary way, a doubt whether the supposed novel response can work. In the second, I shall question the interpretation of Wittgenstein that yields it. I believe it issues from reading Wittgenstein in the light of tacit epistemological assumptions whose strikingly traditional character casts suspicion on their attribution to Wittgenstein himself. My concern, however, is less with exegesis than with those epistemological assumptions, and in the third part I shall begin on the project of undermining an idea that seems central to them.

[1] I shall put 'criterion' or 'criteria' in quotation marks to signal the supposed Wittgensteinian use that I am about to describe.

[2] A view of Wittgenstein on these lines is unquestioned in W. Gregory Lycan's survey article, 'Non-inductive evidence: recent work on Wittgenstein's "criteria"', *American Philosophical Quarterly* viii (1971), 109–25. Its outlines seem to date from Sydney Shoemaker's *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1963); see P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1972), p. 293. My aim is to capture the common spirit of several readings that diverge in detail; so I shall try to preserve neutrality on nice questions about, for instance, what exactly the terms of the criterial relation are: see Hacker, op. cit., pp. 285–8, and Gordon Baker, 'Criteria: a new foundation for semantics', *Ratio* xvi (1974), 156–89, at p. 160; and, for a contrasting view, Crispin Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', in Godfrey Vesey (ed.), *Idealism: Past and Present* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1982), pp. 225–48, at pp. 233–8.

[3] See Baker, op. cit.

I

It will help me to articulate my epistemological distrust if I let the 'criterial' position define its stance towards our knowledge of other minds in explicit contrast with a possible alternative: namely, a position according to which, on a suitable occasion, the circumstance that someone else is in some 'inner' state can itself be an object of one's experience.[1]

I once tried to capture this idea by suggesting that such a circumstance could be 'available to awareness, in its own right and not merely through behavioural proxies';[2] and similarly by suggesting that

> we should not jib at, or interpret away, the commonsense thought that, on those occasions which are paradigmatically suitable for training in the assertoric use of the relevant part of a language, one can literally perceive, in another person's facial expression or his behaviour, that he is [for instance] in pain, and not just infer that he is in pain from what one perceives.[3]

In the interest of a 'criterial' position, Crispin Wright has protested against this attempt to describe an alternative (which he labels 'M-realism'); he writes as follows:

> But that no inference, via 'proxies' or whatever, should be involved is quite consistent with what is actually perceived being not that someone is in pain, *tout court*, but that criteria—in what I take to be the *Philosophical Investigations* sense—that he is in pain are satisfied. Criteria are not proxies, and they do not form the bases of inferences, correctly so described. But, in contrast with truth-conditions, a claim made on the basis of satisfaction of its criteria can subsequently be jettisoned, consistently with retention of the belief that criteria were indeed satisfied. So the M-realist about a particular kind of statement has to hold not just that inference via proxies is not invariably involved when the assertoric use of those statements is justified, but more: that the occasions which are 'paradigmatically suitable' for training in their assertoric use involve not just satisfaction of criteria—otherwise experience of them will be experience of a situation whose obtaining is

[1] I introduce this position here not in order to defend it (see §III below, especially p. 473 n. 1), but purely with the aim of exploiting the contrast in order to clarify the 'criterial' view.

[2] 'On "The reality of the past"', in Christopher Hookway and Philip Pettit (eds.), *Action and Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1978), pp. 127–44, at p. 135.

[3] Op. cit., p. 136.

consistent with the falsity of the relevant statements—but realisation of truth-conditions, properly so regarded.[1]

For my present purposes, what is important about this passage is not the issue it raises about the formulation of M-realism, but rather its account of the 'criterial' alternative. Wright's remarks bring out clearly the commitment of the 'criterial' view to the thesis that, even on the occasions that seem most favourable for a claim to be able to see that someone else is in some 'inner' state, the reach of one's experience falls short of that circumstance itself—not just in the sense that the person's being in the 'inner' state is not itself embraced within the scope of one's consciousness, but in the sense that what is available to one's experience is something compatible with the person's not being in the 'inner' state at all.

Now is this position epistemologically satisfactory?

M-realism offers a conception of what constitutes knowing that someone else is in an 'inner' state, at least on certain favourable occasions: namely, experiencing that circumstance itself. Wright asks us to consider whether what is experienced on those occasions may not be something less: namely, the satisfaction of 'criteria'. One might incautiously assume that experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' is meant to take over the role played in M-realism by experiencing the circumstance itself: that is, to be what, on those favourable occasions, constitutes knowing that the circumstance obtains. But since 'criteria' are defeasible, it is tempting to suppose that to experience the satisfaction of 'criteria' for a claim is to be in a position in which, for all one knows, the claim may not be true. That yields this thesis: 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.

This line of thought is partly vitiated by the incautious assumption. A 'criterial' theorist can say: experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' is meant to be, not what constitutes knowing that things are thus and so, but rather a 'criterion' for the claim to know it. Its 'criterial' support for the claim to know that things are thus and so would be defeated by anything that would defeat the original 'criterial' support for the claim that that is how things are. So the 'criterial' view is not required to envisage the possibility that

[1] 'Realism, truth-value links, other minds and the past', *Ratio* xxii (1980), 112–32, at p. 123. (Clearly the last sentence should really read '. . . involve the availability to perception not just of the satisfaction of criteria . . . but of the realisation of truth-conditions . . .'.)

someone may be correctly said to know something when what he supposedly knows cannot itself be correctly affirmed.[1]

Nevertheless, the 'criterial' view does envisage ascribing knowledge on the strength of something compatible with the falsity of what is supposedly known. And it is a serious question whether we can understand how it can be knowledge that is properly so ascribed. Rejecting the incautious assumption leaves unchallenged the tempting thought that, since 'criteria' are defeasible, someone who experiences the satisfaction of 'criteria' for the ascription of an 'inner' state to another person is thereby in a position in which, for all he knows, the person may not be in that 'inner' state. And the question is: if that is the best one can achieve, how is there room for anything recognizable as knowledge that the person is in the 'inner' state? It does not help with this difficulty to insist that being in that supposed best position is not meant to be constitutive of having the knowledge. The trouble is that if that is the best position achievable, then however being in it is supposed to relate to the claim to know that the person is in the 'inner' state, it looks as if the claim can never be acceptable.

Of course my characterization of the supposed best position is tendentious. If experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' does legitimize ('criterially') a claim to know that things are thus and so, it cannot also be legitimate to admit that the position is one in which, for all one knows, things may be otherwise. But the difficulty is to see how the fact that 'criteria' are defeasible can be prevented from compelling that admission: in which case we can conclude, by contraposition, that experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' cannot legitimize a claim of knowledge. How can an appeal to 'convention' somehow drive a wedge between accepting that everything that one has is compatible with things not being so, on the one hand, and admitting that one does not know that things are so, on the other? As far as its bearing on epistemological issues is concerned, the 'criterial' view looks no more impressive than any other instance of a genre of responses to scepticism to which it seems to belong: a genre in which it is conceded that the sceptic's complaints are substantially correct, but we are supposedly saved from having to draw the sceptic's conclusions by

[1] This partly undermines n. 29 (pp. 242–3) of my 'Anti-realism and the epistemology of understanding', in Herman Parret and Jacques Bouveresse (eds.), *Meaning and Understanding* (De Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 1981), pp. 225–48. But, as will emerge, I stand by the spirit of what I wrote then.

the fact that it is *not done*—in violation of a 'convention'—to talk that way.[1]

This line of thought may seem to be an indiscriminate attack on the idea that knowledge can be based on an experiential intake that falls short of the fact known (in the sense I explained: namely, being compatible with there being no such fact). That would put the line of thought in doubt; but the objection fails. We can countenance cases of knowledge in which the knower's epistemic standing is owed not just to an experiential intake that falls short of the fact known, in that sense, but partly to his possession of theoretical knowledge: something we can picture as extending his cognitive reach beyond the restricted range of mere experience, so that the hostile line of thought does not get started. But that cannot be how it is in the 'criterial' cases. To hold that theory contributes to the epistemic standing, with respect to a claim, of someone who experiences the satisfaction of 'criteria' for it would conflict with the insistence that 'criteria' and claim are related by 'grammar'; it would obliterate the distinction between 'criteria' and symptoms.

I have granted that experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' had better not be conceived as constituting the associated knowledge. It is tempting to ask: when the ground for attributing knowledge is experience of the satisfaction of 'criteria', what *would* constitute possessing the knowledge? Someone who admits the question might be inclined to try this reply: the knowledge is constituted by experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria'—given that things are indeed as the person is said to know that they are. But does that specify something that we can intelligibly count as knowledge? Consider a pair of cases, in both of which someone competent in the use of some claim experiences the satisfaction of (undefeated) 'criteria' for it, but in only one of which the claim is true. According to the suggestion we are considering, the subject in the latter case knows that things are as the claim would represent them as being; the subject in the former case does not. (In both cases it would be 'criterially' legitimate to attribute the knowledge, but that is not to the present purpose.) However, the story is that the scope of experience is the same in each case: the fact itself is outside the reach of experience. And experience is the

[1] Such responses to scepticism are quite unsatisfying. Without showing that the 'conventions' are well founded, we have no ground for denying that the concession to the sceptic is an admission that we have reason to change the way we talk; and it is hard to see how we could show that the 'conventions' are well founded without finding a way to withdraw the concession.

only mode of cognition—the only mode of acquisition of epistemic standing—that is operative; appeal to theory is excluded, as we have just seen. So why should we not conclude that the cognitive achievements of the two subjects match? How can a difference in respect of something conceived as cognitively inaccessible to both subjects, so far as the relevant mode of cognition goes, make it the case that one of them knows how things are in that inaccessible region while the other does not—rather than leaving them both, strictly speaking, ignorant on the matter?

Proponents of the 'criterial' view will have been impatient with my broaching a query about the notion's epistemological status outside any semantical context. Things would look different, they will suggest, if we took note of the notion's primary role: namely, as an element in a novel, 'anti-realist' conception of meaning, adumbrated in Wittgenstein's later work to replace the 'realist', truth-conditional conception of Frege and the *Tractatus*.[1] In particular, it may be suggested that the question with which I have just been trying to embarrass the 'criterial' view—'What would constitute possession of "criterially" based knowledge?'—seems to need asking only in the superseded 'realist' way of thinking. In the new framework, questions of the form 'What would constitute its being the case that P?' lapse, to be replaced by questions of the form 'What are the "criteria" for the acceptability of the assertion that P?'

I believe that this account of the relation between the truth-conditional conception of meaning and that implicit in Wittgenstein's later work is quite misguided. Of course that is not a belief I can try to justify in this lecture.[2] But it is worth remarking that the 'criterial' view seemed already to be problematic, epistemologically speaking, before I raised the contentious question what would constitute 'criterially' based knowledge. If the supposed semantical context is to reveal that 'criterial' epistemology is satisfactory, two conditions must be satisfied: first, it must be

[1] See Hacker, op. cit., ch. X; Baker, op. cit; Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*'. The general outlines of this conception of Wittgenstein's development, and of the issue between 'realism' and 'anti-realism' in the philosophy of language, are due to Michael Dummett: see *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Duckworth: London, 1978), especially essay 11.

[2] I think what I shall say will contribute indirectly to its justification, by casting doubt on a conception of our knowledge of others that is implicit in the standard arguments for 'anti-realism', and on the attribution of that conception to Wittgenstein. There is more in this vein in my 'Anti-realism and the epistemology of understanding', op. cit., and in my 'Wittgenstein on following a rule', forthcoming in *Synthese*.

shown that the epistemological qualms I have aired—supposing we bracket the contentious question—arise exclusively out of adherence to the supposedly discarded 'realist' framework; and, second, it must be made clear how the supposedly substituted 'anti-realist' framework puts the qualms to rest. It is not obvious that either of these conditions can be met. For the first: my account of the epistemological qualms certainly made implicit play with a notion of truth-conditions, in my talk of 'circumstance' and 'fact'. But the notion involved nothing more contentious than this: an ascription of an 'inner' state to someone is true just in case that person is in that 'inner' state. That is hardly a distinctively 'realist' thought, or one that the later Wittgenstein could credibly be held to have rejected.[1] As for the second condition: we are told to model our conception of 'anti-realist' semantics on the mathematical intuitionists' explanations of logical constants in terms of proof-conditions. But proof is precisely not defeasible, so there is nothing in the model to show us how to make ourselves comfortable with the defeasibility of 'criteria'.[2]

II

Understood in the way I have been considering, the notion of a criterion would be a technical notion; so commentators who attribute it to Wittgenstein ought to be embarrassed by his lack of

[1] See, e.g., Dummett, op. cit., pp. xxxiv–v. Baker, op. cit., pp. 177–8, finds, behind the thought that 'criteria' are epistemologically insufficient, a baroque argumentative structure involving the notion (supposedly characteristic of 'Classical Semantics') of maximally consistent sets of possible states of affairs; but I cannot find that notion implicit in what I have said. (I believe the idea that truth-conditions are a matter of 'language-independent possible states-of-affairs'—Baker, p. 178, cf. p. 171—is a fundamental misconception of the intuition about meaning that Wittgenstein adopted from Frege in the *Tractatus*; and that this is in large part responsible for a distortion in the Dummettian conception of the issue between 'realism' and 'anti-realism', and of the relation between Wittgenstein's earlier and later philosophies. There is more in this vein in my 'In defence of modesty', in preparation for a collection of essays on Dummett's work edited by Barry Taylor.)

[2] In 'Strict finitism', *Synthese* li (1982), 203–82, Wright formulates a position in which defeasibility extends even to proof-based knowledge; see also 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', op. cit., p. 244. I do not believe that this yields an adequate epistemology of proof, on the model of which we might construct an acceptable account of defeasible 'criterial' knowledge; rather, it saddles the epistemology of proof with problems parallel to those I have been urging against 'criterial' epistemology. (Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1969), §651—cited by Wright at p. 244 of 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*'—makes a point about *fallibility*. Reliance on a *defeasible basis* is quite another matter: see §III below.)

self-consciousness on the matter. Mostly he uses 'criterion' or 'Kriterium' without ceremony, as if an ordinary mastery of English or German would suffice for taking his point. The striking exception (*Blue Book*,[1] pp. 24–5: the well-known passage about angina) should itself be an embarrassment, since it introduces the word, with some ceremony, in the phrase 'defining criterion'; there seems to be no question of a defeasible kind of evidence here.[2] The idea that criteria are defeasible evidence has to be read into other texts, and the readings seem to me to be vitiated by reliance on non-compulsory epistemological presuppositions. I shall consider three characteristic lines of argument.[3]

The first is one that Gordon Baker formulates as follows:

> . . . *C*-support [criterial support] depends on circumstances. It might be thought that dependence on circumstances might be reduced or even altogether avoided by conditionalization; e.g. if *p* *C*-supports *q* under the proviso *r*, then one could claim that the conjunction of *p* and *r* *C*-supports *q* independently of the circumstance *r*, and successive steps of conditionalization would remove any dependence on circumstances, or at least any that can be explicitly stated. Wittgenstein, however, seems to dismiss this possibility with contempt. This rejection, unless groundless, must be based on the principle that *C*-support may *always* be undermined by supposing the evidence-statements embedded in a suitably enlarged context.[4]

The idea that criterial knowledge depends on circumstances is obviously faithful to Wittgenstein; but this argument rests on an interpretation of that idea that is not obviously correct. Baker's assumption is evidently this: if a condition[5] is ever a criterion for a claim, by virtue of belonging to some type of condition that can be ascertained to obtain independently of establishing the claim,

[1] *The Blue and Brown Books* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1958).

[2] Baker, op. cit., pp. 184–5, seems to deny this, but I cannot see how he would explain the presence of the word 'defining'. Most commentators in the tradition I am concerned with deplore the passage as uncharacteristic; see, e.g., Hacker, op. cit., p. 288; Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', p. 227. There is a satisfying explanation of its point at pp. 133–6 of John W. Cook, 'Human beings', in Peter Winch (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1969), pp. 117–51.

[3] There may be others; but I think the ones I shall consider illustrate the characteristic assumptions of the reading of Wittgenstein that I want to question. (Baker, op. cit., pp. 159–60, 162, mentions also the ancestry of the criterial relation in Wittgenstein's thought. But he would presumably not suggest that its descent, from a relation of *a priori* probabilification, carries much independent weight.)

[4] Op. cit., pp. 161–2.

[5] Or whatever is the right kind of item to be a criterion: see p. 455 n. 2 above.

then any condition of that type constitutes a criterion for that claim, or one suitably related to it. Given that such a condition obtains, further circumstances determine whether the support it affords the claim is solid; if the further circumstances are unfavourable, we still have, according to this view, a case of a criterion's being satisfied, but the support that it affords the claim is defeated. But when Wittgenstein speaks of dependence on circumstances, what he says seems to permit a different reading: not that some condition, specified in terms that are applicable independently of establishing a claim, is a criterion for the claim anyway, though whether it warrants the claim depends on further circumstances, but that whether such a condition is a criterion or not depends on the circumstances.

At *PI* §164,[1] for instance, Wittgenstein says that 'in different circumstances, we apply different criteria for a person's reading'. Here the point need not be that each of a range of types of condition is anyway a criterion for a person's reading, though an argument from any to that conclusion may always be undermined by embedding the condition in the wrong circumstances. The point may be, rather, that what is a criterion for a person's reading in one set of circumstances is not a criterion for a person's reading in another set of circumstances.

At *PI* §154 Wittgenstein writes:

> If there has to be anything 'behind the utterance of the formula' it is *particular circumstances*, which justify me in saying I can go on—when the formula occurs to me.

I think we can take this to concern the idea that the formula's occurring to one is a criterion for the correctness of 'Now I can go on', as opposed to a mere symptom, 'behind' which we have to penetrate in order to find the essence of what it is to understand a series.[2] And there is no suggestion that the formula's occurring to one is a criterion anyway, independently of the circumstances. It is a criterion, rather, only in the 'particular circumstances' that Wittgenstein alludes to: namely, as *PI* §179 explains, 'such circumstances as that [the person in question] had learnt algebra, had used such formulae before'.

[1] I shall refer in this way to sections of *Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1953).

[2] The word 'criterion' is not used, but the subject is the tendency to think that in reviewing the phenomena we find nothing but symptoms, which we have to peel away (like leaves from an artichoke: *PI* §164) in order to find the thing itself. On the connection with *PI* §354 ('the fluctuation in grammar between criteria and symptoms'), see Cook, op. cit., pp. 135–6.

In a schematic picture of a face, it may be the curve of the mouth that makes it right to say that the face is cheerful. In another picture the mouth may be represented by a perfect replica of the line that represents the mouth in the first picture, although the face is not cheerful. Do we need a relation of defeasible support in order to accommodate this possibility? Surely not. What is in question is the relation of 'making it right to say'; it holds in the first case and not in the second. Since the relation does not hold in the second case, it cannot be understood in terms of entailment. But why suppose that the only alternative is defeasible support? That would require the assumption that the warranting status we are concerned with must be shared by all members of a type to which the warranting circumstance can be ascertained to belong independently of the claim it warrants. (In this case, it would be the type of circumstance: being a picture of a face in which the mouth is represented by such-and-such a line.) That assumption looks in this case like groundless prejudice; perhaps the generalized version of it, which yields the conception of criteria that I am questioning, is similarly baseless. (I shall come shortly to the reason why commentators tend to think otherwise.)[1]

The second line of argument that I want to mention starts from the fact that criteria for a type of claim are typically multiple, and concludes that criteria may conflict. If that is so, the criterial support afforded by at least one of the conflicting criteria must be defeated.[2] This argument clearly rests on the same assumption about the generality of criterial status: that if some condition (specified in a non-question-begging way) is a criterion for a claim in some circumstances, then it is a criterion in any. Without that assumption, we are not forced to accept that the pairs of considerations that stand in some sort of confrontation, in the kind of case the commentators envisage, are both criterial. A condition that fails to warrant a claim in some circumstances—trumped, as it were, by a criterion for an incompatible claim—may not be a criterion for the claim in those circumstances, even though in other circumstances it would have been one. And its failure when it is not criterial is no ground for saying that criterial warrants are defeasible.

[1] This paragraph was suggested by pp. 138–40 of Norman Malcolm's 'Wittgenstein on the nature of mind', in his *Thought and Knowledge* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1977), pp. 133–58.

[2] See Anthony Kenny, 'Criterion', in Paul Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. ii (Macmillan and Free Press: New York, 1967), pp. 258–61 (at p. 260); and Baker, op. cit., p. 162.

The third line of argument, which is the most revealing, consists in a reading of Wittgenstein's treatment of psychological concepts in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In Wittgenstein's view, clearly, there are criteria in behaviour for the ascription of 'inner' states and goings-on (see *PI* §§269, 344, 580). Commentators often take it to be obvious that he must mean a defeasible kind of evidence; if it is not obvious straight off, the possibility of pretence is thought to make it so.[1] But really it is not obvious at all.

Consider a representative passage in which Wittgenstein uses the notion of a criterion for something 'internal'. *PI* §377 contains this:

> . . . What is the criterion for the redness of an image? For me, when it is someone else's image: what he says and does.

I think that amounts to this: when one knows that someone else has a red image, one can—sometimes at least—correctly answer the question 'How do you know?', or 'How can you tell?', by saying 'By what he says and does'. In order to accommodate the distinction between criteria and symptoms, we should add that inability or refusal to accept the adequacy of the answer would betray, not ignorance of a theory, but non-participation in a 'convention'; but with that proviso, my paraphrase seems accurate and complete. It is an extra—something dictated, I believe, by an epistemological presupposition not expressed in the text—to suppose that 'what he says and does' must advert to a condition that one might ascertain to be satisfied by someone independently of knowing that he has a red image: a condition that someone might satisfy even though he has no red image, so that it constitutes at best defeasible evidence that he has one.

Commentators often take it that the possibility of pretence shows the defeasibility of criteria.[2] That requires the assumption

[1] For versions of this line of interpretation, see Kenny, op. cit., p. 260; Hacker, op. cit., pp. 289–90; John T. E. Richardson, *The Grammar of Justification* (Sussex University Press, 1976), pp. 114, 116–17. Baker, op. cit., p. 162, goes so far as to claim: 'This principle, that *C*-support is defeasible, is explicitly advanced in the particular case of psychological concepts.'

[2] The supposed obviousness of this connection allows commentators to cite as evidence for the defeasibility of criteria passages which show at most that Wittgenstein is not unaware that pretence occurs. Note, e.g., Hacker's citation (op. cit., p. 289) of *PI* §§249–50 as showing that criteria for pain may be satisfied in the absence of pain. In fact the point of those passages is not the vulnerability to pretence, in general, of our judgements that others are in pain, but the *invulnerability* to pretence, in particular, of judgements 'connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation' and made about someone who has not yet learned 'the names of sensations' (*PI* §244).

that in a successful deception one brings it about that criteria for something 'internal' are satisfied, although the ascription for which they are criteria would be false. But is the assumption obligatory? Here is a possible alternative; in pretending, one causes it to appear that criteria for something 'internal' are satisfied (that is, one causes it to appear that someone else could know, by what one says and does, that one is in, say, some 'inner' state); but the criteria are not really satisfied (that is, the knowledge is not really available). The satisfaction of a criterion, we might say, constitutes a fully adequate answer to 'How do you know?'—in a sense that prevents an answer to that question from counting as fully adequate if the very same answer can be really available to someone who lacks the knowledge in question. (Of course we cannot rule out its seeming to be available.)

In the traditional approach to the epistemology of other minds, the concept of pretence plays a role analogous to that played by the concept of illusion in the traditional approach to the epistemology of the 'external' world. So it is not surprising to find that, just as the possibility of pretence is often thought to show the defeasibility of criteria for 'inner' states of affairs, so the possibility of illusion is often thought to show the defeasibility of criteria for 'external' states of affairs. At *PI* §354 Wittgenstein writes:

> The fluctuation in grammar between criteria and symptoms makes it look as if there were nothing at all but symptoms. We say, for example: 'Experience teaches that there is rain when the barometer falls, but it also teaches that there is rain when we have certain sensations of wet and cold, or such-and-such visual impressions.' In defence of this one says that these sense-impressions can deceive us. But here one fails to reflect that the fact that the false appearance is precisely one of rain is founded on a definition.

Commentators often take this to imply that when our senses deceive us, criteria for rain are satisfied, although no rain is falling.[1] But what the passage says is surely just this: for things, say, to look a certain way to us is, as a matter of 'definition' (or 'convention', *PI* §355), for it to look to us as though it is raining; it would be a mistake to suppose that the 'sense-impressions' yield the judgement that it is raining merely symptomatically—that arriving at the judgement is mediated by an empirical theory. That is quite compatible with this thought, which would be parallel to what I suggested about pretence: when our 'sense-impressions'

[1] So Hacker, op. cit., pp. 289–90; Kenny, op. cit., p. 260; Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', p. 227; James Bogen, 'Wittgenstein and skepticism', *Philosophical Review* lxxxiii (1974), 364–73, at p. 370.

deceive us, the fact is not that criteria for rain are satisfied but that they appear to be satisfied.

An inclination to protest should have been mounting for some time. The temptation is to say: 'There must be something in common between the cases you are proposing to describe as involving the *actual* satisfaction of criteria and the cases you are proposing to describe as involving the *apparent* satisfaction of criteria. That is why it is possible to mistake the latter for the former. And it must surely be this common something on which we base the judgements we make in both sorts of case. The distinction between your cases of actual satisfaction of criteria (so called) and your cases of only apparent satisfaction of criteria (so called) is not a distinction we can draw independently of the correctness or otherwise of the problematic claims themselves. So it is not a distinction by which we could guide ourselves in the practice of making or withholding such claims. What we need for that purpose is a basis for the claims that we can assure ourselves of possessing before we go on to evaluate the credentials of the claims themselves. That restricts us to what is definitely ascertainable anyway, whether the case in question is one of (in your terms) actual satisfaction of criteria or merely apparent satisfaction of criteria. In the case of judgements about the "inner" states and goings-on of others, what conforms to the restriction is psychologically neutral information about their behaviour and bodily states.[1] So that must surely be what Wittgenstein meant by "criteria".'

It is difficult not to sympathize with this protest, although I believe it is essential to see one's way to resisting the epistemological outlook that it expresses. I shall return to that in the last section of this lecture; the important point now is the way in which the protest exposes a background against which the reading of

[1] Psychologically neutral information: once the appeal to pretence has done its work—that of introducing the idea of cases that are experientially indistinguishable from cases in which one can tell by what someone says and does that he is in some specified 'inner' state, though he is not—it is quietly dropped. We are not meant to arrive at the idea of behavioural and bodily evidence that would *indefeasibly* warrant the judgement that someone is, so to speak, at least feigning the 'inner' state. It is a nice question, on which I shall not pause, how the epistemological motivation for passing over this position should best be characterized. In the case of the 'criterial' view, there is a semantical motivation as well; it is plausible that such evidence could not be specified except in terms of the concept of the 'inner' state itself, and this conflicts with the idea that criteria should figure in the explanation of the associated concepts: see Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', p. 231.

Wittgenstein that I am questioning seems inescapable. The protest is, in effect, an application of what has been called 'the Argument from Illusion', and its upshot is to locate us in the predicament envisaged by a traditional scepticism about other minds, and by the traditional ways of trying to meet that scepticism. The predicament is as follows. Judgements about other minds are, as a class, epistemologically problematic. Judgements about 'behaviour' and 'bodily' characteristics are, as a class, not epistemologically problematic; or at any rate, if they are, it is because of a different epistemological problem, which can be taken for these purposes to have been separately dealt with. The challenge is to explain how our unproblematic intake of 'behavioural' and 'bodily' information can adequately warrant our problematic judgements about other minds.

The first two interpretative arguments that I mentioned depended on this assumption: if a state of affairs ever constitutes a criterion for some claim, by virtue of its conforming to a specification that can be ascertained to apply to it independently of establishing the claim, then any state of affairs that conforms to that specification must constitute a criterion for that claim, or one suitably related to it. What sustains that assumption is presumably the idea to which the protest gives expression: the idea that the question whether a criterion for a claim is satisfied or not must be capable of being settled with a certainty that is independent of whatever certainty can be credited to the claim itself.

With this epistemological framework in place, it is undeniable that the warrants for our judgements about other minds yield, at best, defeasible support for them. We could not establish anything more robust than that with a certainty immune to what supposedly makes psychological judgements about others, in general, epistemologically problematic. So if we take Wittgenstein to be operating within this framework, we are compelled into the interpretation of him that I am questioning. According to this view, the sceptic is right to insist that our best warrant for a psychological judgement about another person is defeasible evidence constituted by his 'behaviour' and 'bodily' circumstances. The sceptic complains that the adequacy of the warrant must depend on a correlation whose obtaining could only be a matter of contingent fact, although we are in no position to confirm it empirically; and Wittgenstein's distinctive contribution, on this reading, is to maintain that at least in some cases the relevant correlations are a matter of 'convention', and hence stand in no need of empirical support.

To an unprejudiced view, I think it should seem quite implausible that there is anything but contingency in the correlations of whose contingency the sceptic complains.[1] And I argued in the first section of this lecture that it is quite unclear, anyway, how the appeal to 'convention' could yield a response to scepticism, in the face of the avowed defeasibility of the supposedly 'conventional' evidence. In fact I believe that this reading profoundly misrepresents Wittgenstein's response to scepticism about other minds. What Wittgenstein does is not to propose an alteration of detail within the sceptic's position, but to reject the assumption that generates the sceptic's problem.[2]

The sceptic's picture involves a corpus of 'bodily' and 'behavioural' information, unproblematically available to us in a pictured cognitive predicament in which we are holding in suspense all attributions of psychological properties to others. One way of approaching Wittgenstein's response is to remark that such a picture is attainable only by displacing the concept of a *human being* from its focal position in an account of our experience of our fellows, and replacing it with a philosophically generated concept of a *human body*.[3] Human bodies, conceived as merely material objects, form the subject-matter of the supposed unproblematically available information. The idea is that they may subsequently turn out to be, in some more or less mysterious way, points of occupancy for psychological properties as well; this would be

[1] See the splendid recanting 'Postscript' to Rogers Albritton, 'On Wittgenstein's use of the term "criterion"', in George Pitcher (ed.), *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (Macmillan: London, 1968), pp. 231–50. (Such regularities are not 'conventions' but the 'very general facts of nature' on which 'conventions' rest: *PI* II xi; cf. §142.)

[2] Without going into even as much detail as I shall about the case of other minds in particular, there is already ground for suspicion of this reading of Wittgenstein in the way it attracts the label 'foundationalist': something that is surely quite uncharacteristic of Wittgenstein's approach to epistemological questions.

[3] This is the key thought of Cook's admirable 'Human beings', op. cit., to which I am heavily indebted in this section. (One tempting route to the substituted notion is the idea that we can cleanly abstract, from the pre-philosophical conception of a human being, the mental aspect, conceived as something each of us can focus his thoughts on for himself in introspection, independently of locating it in the context of our embodied life. This putatively self-standing conception of the mental is the target of the complex Wittgensteinian polemic known as the Private Language Argument. If this were the only route to the sceptic's conception of what is given in our experience of others, the wrongness of attributing that conception to Wittgenstein would be very straightforwardly obvious: see Cook, op. cit. But I think the situation is more complex; see §III below.)

represented as a regaining of the concept of a human being. In these terms, Wittgenstein's response to the sceptic is to restore the concept of a human being to its proper place, not as something laboriously reconstituted, out of the fragments to which the sceptic reduces it, by a subtle epistemological and metaphysical construction, but as a seamless whole of whose unity we ought not to have allowed ourselves to lose sight in the first place.[1]

Such a response might appropriately be described as urging a different view of the 'conventions' or 'grammar' of our thought and speech about others. But it is a misconception to suppose that the appeal to 'convention' is meant to cement our concept of a human being together along the fault-line that the sceptic takes himself to detect. It is not a matter of postulating a non-contingent relation between some of what the sceptic takes to be given in our experience of others, on the one hand, and our psychological judgements about them, on the other. Rather, what Wittgenstein does is to reject the sceptic's conception of what is given.[2]

I have suggested that to say a criterion is satisfied would be simply to say that the associated knowledge is available in the relevant way: by adverting to what someone says or does, or to how things look, without having one's epistemic standing reinforced, beyond what that yields, by possession of an empirical theory. That implies an indefeasible connection between the actual, as opposed to apparent, satisfaction of a criterion and the associated knowledge. But it would be a confusion to take it that I am postulating a special, indefeasible kind of evidence, if evidence for a claim is understood—naturally enough—as something one's possession of which one can assure oneself of independently of the claim itself. It is precisely the insistence on something of this sort that dictates the idea that criteria are defeasible. Rather, I think we should understand criteria to be, in the first instance, ways of telling how things are, of the sort specified by 'On the basis of what he says and does' or 'By how things look'; and we should take it that knowledge that a criterion for a claim is actually satisfied—if we allow ourselves to speak in

[1] I intend this to echo P. F. Strawson's thesis (*Individuals* (Methuen: London, 1959), ch. 3) that the concept of a person is primitive. Strawson's use of the notion of 'logically adequate criteria' for ascriptions of psychological properties to others has often been subjected to what I believe to be a misunderstanding analogous to the misreading (as I believe) of Wittgenstein that I am considering.

[2] Note that seeing behaviour as a possibly feigned expression of an 'inner' state, or as a human act or response that one does not understand, is not seeing it in the way that the sceptic requires. See *PI* §420; and cf. p. 467 n. 1 above.

those terms as well—would be an exercise of the very capacity that we speak of when we say that one can tell, on the basis of such-and-such criteria, whether things are as the claim would represent them as being. This flouts an idea that we are prone to find natural, that a basis for a judgement must be something on which we have a firmer cognitive purchase than we do on the judgement itself; but although the idea can seem natural, it is an illusion to suppose that it is compulsory.

III

The possibility of such a position is liable to be obscured from us by a certain tempting line of argument. On any question about the world independent of oneself to which one can ascertain the answer by, say, looking, the way things look can be deceptive: it can look to one exactly as if things were a certain way when they are not. (This can be so even if, for whatever reason, one is not inclined to believe that things are that way.[1] I shall speak of cases as deceptive when, if one were to believe that things are as they appear, one would be misled, without implying that one is actually misled.) It follows that any capacity to tell by looking how things are in the world independent of oneself can at best be fallible. According to the tempting argument, something else follows as well: the argument is that since there can be deceptive cases experientially indistinguishable from non-deceptive cases, one's experiential intake—what one embraces within the scope of one's consciousness—must be the same in both kinds of case. In a deceptive case, one's experiential intake must *ex hypothesi* fall short of the fact itself, in the sense of being consistent with there being no such fact. So that must be true, according to the argument, in a non-deceptive case too. One's capacity is a capacity to tell by looking: that is, on the basis of experiential intake. And even when this capacity does yield knowledge, we have to conceive the basis as a *highest common factor* of what is available to experience in the deceptive and the non-deceptive cases alike, and hence as something that is at best a defeasible ground for the knowledge, though available with a certainty independent of whatever might put the knowledge in doubt.

This is the line of thought that I described as an application of the Argument from Illusion. I want now to describe and comment on a way of resisting it.

[1] On the 'belief-independence' of the content of perception, see Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1982), p. 123.

We might formulate the temptation that is to be resisted as follows. Let the fallible capacity in question be a capacity to tell by experience whether such-and-such is the case. In a deceptive case, what is embraced within the scope of experience is an appearance that such-and-such is the case, falling short of the fact: a *mere* appearance. So what is experienced in a non-deceptive case is a mere appearance too. The upshot is that even in the non-deceptive cases we have to picture something that falls short of the fact ascertained, at best defeasibly connected with it, as interposing itself between the experiencing subject and the fact itself.[1]

But suppose we say—not at all unnaturally—that an appearance that such-and-such is the case can be *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone.[2] As before, the object of experience in the deceptive cases is a mere appearance. But we are not to accept that in the non-deceptive cases too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, we are to insist that the appearance that is presented to one in those cases is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as in general intervening between the experiencing subject and the world.[3]

This may sound like an affirmation of M-realism, but I intend something more general. The idea of a fact being disclosed to experience is in itself purely negative: a rejection of the thesis that what is accessible to experience falls short of the fact in the sense I explained, namely that of being consistent with there being no such fact. In the most straightforward application of the idea, the thought would indeed be—as in M-realism—that the fact itself is

[1] The argument effects a transition from sheer fallibility (which might be registered in a 'Pyrrhonian' scepticism) to a 'veil of ideas' scepticism: for the distinction, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1980), p. 94 n. 8 and p. 139 ff.

[2] In classical Greek, '. . . *φαίνεται σοφὸς ὤν* [word for word: he appears wise being] generally means *he is manifestly wise*, and *φαίνεται σοφὸς εἶναι* [word for word: he appears wise to be], *he seems to be wise* . . .': William W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* (Macmillan: London, 1894), p. 342.

[3] See the discussion of a 'disjunctive' account of 'looks' statements in Paul Snowdon, 'Perception, vision and causation', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* lxxxi (1980/1), 175–92; and, more generally, J. M. Hinton's *Experiences* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1973)—a work which I regret that I did not know until this lecture was virtually completed, although I expect that this section grew out of an unconscious recollection of Hinton's articles 'Experiences', *Philosophical Quarterly* xvii (1967), 1–13, and 'Visual experiences', *Mind* lxxvi (1967), 217–27.

directly presented to view, so that it is true in a stronger sense that the object of experience does not fall short of the fact. 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 in the sense I explained.[1]

In *PI* §344—which I quoted earlier—Wittgenstein seems concerned to insist that the appearances to which he draws attention, in order to discourage the thought that there is 'nothing at all but symptoms' for rain, are appearances that it is raining. If there is a general thesis about criteria applied here, it will be on these lines: one acquires criterial knowledge by confrontation with appearances whose content is, or includes, the content of the knowledge acquired. (This would fit both the sorts of case I have just distinguished: obviously so in the straightforward sort, and in the less straightforward sort we can say that an appearance that someone is giving expression to an 'inner' state is an appearance that he is in that 'inner' state.)

This thesis about match in content might promise a neat justification for denying that criterial knowledge is inferential. The content of inferential knowledge, one might suggest, is generated by a transformation of the content of some data, whereas here the content of the knowledge is simply presented in the data.[2] But this does not establish the coherence of a position in which criteria are conceived as objects of experience on the 'highest common factor' model, but the accusation that criteria function as *proxies* can be rejected. If the object of experience is in

[1] M-realism might be accused of proposing a general assimilation of the second sort of case to the first. The plausibility of the assimilation in a particular case depends on the extent to which it is plausible to think of the particular mode of expression as, so to speak, transparent. (This is quite plausible for facial expressions of emotional states: see Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1967), §§220–5. But it is not very plausible for 'avowals', except perhaps in the special case of the verbal expression of thoughts.) The motivation for M-realism was the wish to deny that our experiential intake, when we know one another's 'inner' states by experience, must fall short of the fact ascertained in the sense I have introduced; it was a mistake to suppose that this required an appeal, across the board, to a model of direct observation.

[2] But this idea is not available to Wright, in view of his insistence that grasp of criteria should not presuppose possession of the associated concepts: see 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', p. 231.

general a mere appearance, as the 'highest common factor' model makes it, then it is not clear how, by appealing to the idea that it has the content of the knowledge that one acquires by confrontation with it, we could save ourselves from having to picture it as getting in the way between the subject and the world. Indeed, it is arguable that the 'highest common factor' model undermines the very idea of an appearance having as its content that things are thus and so in the world 'beyond' appearances (as we would have to put it).

This has a bearing on my query, in the first section of this lecture, as to whether the blankly external obtaining of a fact can make sense of the idea that someone experiencing a 'criterion' might know that things were thus and so. 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 that it is raining. But that seems unproblematic precisely because the content of the appearance is the content of the knowledge. And it is arguable that we find that match in content intelligible only because we do not conceive the objects of such experiences as in general falling short of the meteorological facts. That is: such experiences can present us with the appearance that it is raining only because when we have them as the upshot (in a suitable way) of the fact that it is raining, the fact itself is their object; so that its obtaining is not, after all, blankly external.[1] If that is right, the 'highest common factor' conception of experience is not entitled to the idea that makes the case unproblematic. It would be wrong to suppose that the 'highest common factor' conception can capture, in its own terms, the intuition that I express when I say that the fact itself can be manifest to experience: doing so by saying that that is how it is when, for instance, experiences as of its raining are in a suitable way the upshot of the fact that it is raining. That captures the intuition all right; but—with 'experiences as of its raining'—not in terms available to someone who starts by insisting that the object of experience is the highest common factor, and so falls short of the fact itself.

The 'highest common factor' conception has attractions for us that cannot be undone just by describing an alternative, even with the recommendation that the alternative can cause a sea of philosophy to subside. The most obvious attraction is the

[1] This fits the first of the two sorts of case distinguished above; something similar, though more complex, could be said about a case of the second sort.

phenomenological argument: the occurrence of deceptive cases experientially indistinguishable from non-deceptive cases. But this is easily accommodated by the essentially disjunctive conception of appearances that constitutes the alternative. The alternative conception can allow what is given to experience in the two sorts of case to be the same *in so far as* it is an appearance that things are thus and so; that leaves it open that whereas in one kind of case what is given to experience is a mere appearance, in the other it is the fact itself made manifest. So the phenomenological argument is inconclusive.

A more deep-seated temptation towards the 'highest common factor' conception might find expression like this: '*Ex hypothesi* a mere appearance can be indistinguishable from what you describe as a fact made manifest. So in a given case one cannot tell for certain whether what confronts one is one or the other of those. How, then, can there be a difference in what is given to experience, in any sense that could matter to epistemology?' One could hardly countenance the idea of having a fact made manifest within the reach of one's experience, without supposing that that would make knowledge of the fact available to one.[1] This protest might reflect the conviction that such epistemic entitlement ought to be something one could display for oneself, as it were from within; the idea being that that would require a non-question-begging demonstration from a neutrally available starting-point, such as would be constituted by the highest common factor.[2]

[1] This is to be distinguished from actually conferring the knowledge on one. Suppose someone has been misled into thinking his senses are out of order; we might then hesitate to say that he possesses the knowledge that his senses (in fact functioning perfectly) make available to him. But for some purposes the notion of being in a position to know something is more interesting than the notion of actually knowing it. (It is a different matter if one's senses are actually out of order, though their operations are sometimes unaffected: in such a case, an experience subjectively indistinguishable from that of being confronted with a tomato, even if it results from confrontation with a tomato, need not count as experiencing the presence of a tomato. Another case in which it may not count as that is a case in which there are a lot of tomato façades about, indistinguishable from tomatoes when viewed from the front: cf. Alvin Goldman, 'Discrimination and perceptual knowledge', *Journal of Philosophy* lxxiii (1976), 771–91. One counts as experiencing the fact making itself manifest only in the exercise of a (fallible) capacity to *tell* how things are.)

[2] The hankering for independently ascertainable foundations is familiar in epistemology. Its implications converge with those of a Dummett-inspired thesis in the philosophy of language: namely that the states of affairs at which linguistic competence primarily engages with extra-linguistic reality, so to speak, must be effectively decidable (or fall under some suitable generalization of that concept). See Baker, 'Defeasibility and meaning', in P. M. S. Hacker

There is something gripping about the 'internalism' that is expressed here. The root idea is that one's epistemic standing on some question cannot intelligibly be constituted, even in part, by matters blankly external to how it is with one subjectively. For how could such matters be other than beyond one's ken? And how could matters beyond one's ken make any difference to one's epistemic standing?[1] (This is obviously a form of the thought that is at work in the argument from my first section which I have recently reconsidered.) But the disjunctive conception of appearances shows a way to detach this 'internalist' intuition from the requirement of non-question-begging demonstration. When someone has a fact made manifest to him, the obtaining of the fact contributes to his epistemic standing on the question. But the obtaining of the fact is precisely not blankly external to his subjectivity, as it would be if the truth about that were exhausted by the highest common factor.[2]

However, if that reflection disarms one epistemological foundation for the 'highest common factor' conception, there are other forces that tend to hold it in place.[3]

Suppose we assume that one can come to know that someone else is in some 'inner' state by adverting to what he says and does. Empirical investigation of the cues that impinge on one's sense-organs on such an occasion would yield a specification of the information received by them; the same information could be available in a deceptive case as well. That limited informational intake must be processed, in the nervous system, into the information about the person's 'inner' state that comes to be at one's disposal; and a description of the information-processing would look like a description of an inference from a highest common factor. Now there is a familiar temptation, here and at

and J. Raz (eds.), *Law, Morality, and Society* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1977), pp. 26–57, at pp. 50–1. For criteria as decidable, see, e.g., Wright, 'Anti-realist semantics: the role of *criteria*', p. 230.

[1] See, e.g., Laurence Bonjour, 'Externalist theories of empirical knowledge', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* v (1980), 53–74.

[2] The disjunctive conception of appearances makes room for a conception of experiential knowledge that conforms to Robert Nozick's account of 'internalism', at p. 281 of *Philosophical Explanations* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1981); without requiring, as he implies that any 'internalist' position must (pp. 281–2), a reduction of 'external' facts to mental facts.

[3] Nozick must be a case in point. His drawing of the boundary between 'internal' and 'external' (see n. 2 above) must reflect something like the 'highest common factor' conception; and in his case that conception cannot be sustained by the 'internalist' intuition that I have just tried to disarm.

the analogous point in reflection about perceptual knowledge of the environment in general, to suppose that one's epistemic standing with respect to the upshot of the process is constituted by the availability to one's senses of the highest common factor, together with the cogency of the supposed inference.

When one succumbs to this temptation, one's first thought is typically to ground the cogency of the inference on a theory. But the conception of theory as extending one's cognitive reach beyond the confines of experience requires that the theory in question be attainable on the basis of the experience in question. It is not enough that the experience would confirm the theory: the theory must involve no concept the formation of which could not intelligibly be attributed to a creature whose experiential intake was limited in the way envisaged. And when we try to conceive knowledge of the 'inner' states of others on the basis of what they do and say, or perceptual knowledge of the environment in general, on this model, that condition seems not to be met.[1]

Keeping the highest common factor in the picture, we might try to register that thought by grounding the cogency of the inferences on 'grammar' rather than theory; this would yield something like the conception of criteria that I have questioned. But that this would be a distortion is suggested by the fact that we have been given no idea of how to arrive at specifications of the content of the supposed 'grammatically' certified warrants, other than by straightforward empirical investigation of what impinges on someone's senses on occasions when we are independently prepared to believe that he has the knowledge in question. The truth is that, for all their similarity to inferences, those processings of information are not transitions within what Wilfrid Sellars has called 'the logical space of reasons',[2] as they would need to be in order to be capable of being constitutive of one's title to knowledge. Acquiring mastery of the relevant tracts of language is not, as acquiring a theory can be, learning to extend one's cognitive reach beyond some previous limits by traversing pathways in

[1] To the point here is Wittgenstein's polemic against the idea that 'from one's own case' one can so much as form the idea of someone else having, say, feelings. On the case of perception in general, see, e.g., P. F. Strawson, 'Perception and its objects', in G. F. Macdonald (ed.), *Perception and Identity* (Macmillan: London and Basingstoke, 1979), pp. 41–60.

[2] 'Empiricism and the philosophy of mind', in Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (eds.), *The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis* (Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science I, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1956), pp. 253–329, at p. 299.

a newly mastered region of the 'space of reasons'. It is better conceived as part of being initiated into the 'space of reasons' itself.[1]

I want to end by mentioning a source for the attraction of the 'highest common factor' conception that lies, I think, as deep as any. If we adopt the disjunctive conception of appearances, we have to take seriously the idea of an unmediated openness of the experiencing subject to 'external' reality, whereas the 'highest common factor' conception allows us to picture an interface between them. Taking the epistemology of other minds on its own, we can locate the highest common factor at the facing surfaces of other human bodies. But when we come to consider perceptual knowledge about bodies in general, the 'highest common factor' conception drives what is given to experience inward, until it can be aligned with goings-on at our own sensory surfaces. This promises to permit us a satisfying conception of an interface at which the 'inner' and the 'outer' make contact. The idea that there is an interface can seem compulsory; and the disjunctive conception of appearances flouts that intuition—twice over, in its view of knowledge of others' 'inner' states.[2]

No doubt there are many influences that conspire to give this picture of the 'inner' and the 'outer' its hold on us. The one I want to mention is our proneness to try to extend an objectifying mode of conceiving reality to human beings. In an objectifying view of reality, behaviour considered in itself cannot be expressive or significant: not human behaviour any more than, say, the behaviour of the planets.[3] If human behaviour is expressive, that

[1] Two supplementations to these extremely sketchy remarks. First: when we allow theory to extend someone's cognitive reach, we do not need to find him infallible in the region of logical space that the theory opens up to him; so we do not need to commit ourselves to the idea that the theory, together with the content of experience, must *entail* the content of the putative knowledge. Second: the rejection of the inferential model that I am urging does not turn on mere phenomenology (the absence of conscious inferences). Theory can partly ground a claim to knowledge even in cases in which it is not consciously brought to bear; as with a scientist who (as we naturally say) learns to see the movements of imperceptible particles in some apparatus.

[2] Am I suggesting that the disjunctive conception of appearances precludes the idea that experience mediates between subject and world? It depends on what you mean by 'mediate'. If experience is conceived in terms of openness to the world, it will not be appropriate to picture it as an interface. (I am sceptical whether such a conception of experience is available within the dominant contemporary philosophy of mind.)

[3] See Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1975), pp. 3–11.

fact resides not in the nature of the behaviour, as it were on the surface, but in its being the outwardly observable effect of mental states and goings-on. So the mind retreats behind the surface, and the idea that the mental is 'internal' acquires a quasi-literal construction, as in Descartes, or even a literal one, as in the idea that mental states are 'in the head'.[1]

Modern adherents of this picture do not usually take themselves to be enmeshed in the problems of traditional epistemology. But the objectification of human behaviour leads inexorably to the traditional problem of other minds. And it is hard to see how the pictured interface can fail to be epistemologically problematic in the outward direction too: the inward retreat of the mind undermines the idea of a direct openness to the world, and thereby poses the traditional problems of knowledge about 'external' reality in general. Without the 'highest common factor' conception of experience, the interface can be left out of the picture, and the traditional problems lapse. Traditional epistemology is widely felt to be unsatisfying; I think this is a symptom of the error in the 'highest common factor' conception, and, more generally, of the misguidedness of an objectifying conception of the human.[2]

[1] This movement of thought can find support in the idea that the mental is conceptually captured by introspective ostensive definition. (That idea is perhaps naturally understood as a response to the obliteration of the notion of intrinsically expressive behaviour). But some versions of the position are not notably introspectionist. (See p. 469 n. 3 above.)

[2] I have profited from comments on an earlier draft of this lecture by Gilbert Harman, Richard Jeffrey, David Lewis, Colin McGinn, Christopher Peacocke, Philip Pettit, Nathan Salmon, and Charles Travis.