MALCOLM ON DREAMING

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
The Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the Department
of
Philosophy

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
June, 1971
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Date June 14, 1971
Norman Malcolm's view that dreams are not experiences in sleep rests in large part on Wittgenstein's attempts to eliminate the problem of other minds. In showing that Malcolm's position is untenable, a number of views of Wittgenstein's, particularly those concerning 'private language', are shown to be mistaken.

The view that dreams are not experiences of which dream memories are the later recollections is first defended against some obvious objections. It is argued that a sufficiently rich dream life would be a second life in a second real world. What this shows is that Wittgenstein's attempt to eliminate reliance on the 'inner' by an appeal to public 'criteria' presupposes knowledge of an external world, which in turn must be based on the 'inner'.

Wittgenstein's views on privacy are examined and it is argued that they are without foundation. Malcolm's conclusion that the privacy of dreams makes it impossible within a dream to distinguish between using a word consistently and seeming to use it consistently is accordingly rejected.

Malcolm's views on 'criteria' and the identity of concepts are attacked. It is argued that there is no
principled way of individuating concepts. The claim that the meaning of 'dream' is determined by that to which one has access when awake, i.e., dream memories, is rejected.

It is shown that the incompatibility between being sound asleep and manifesting experiences is no more reason to suppose that a sleeper cannot have experiences than it is to suppose that a stoic cannot.

Finally, it is argued that rejection of Malcolm's position need not lead to radical skepticism as to whether one is dreaming or not.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

My primary aim in this thesis is to refute Malcolm's well-known claim that dreams are not mental events in sleep. In doing this I examine Malcolm's views on 'criteria' and 'private language', two issues which are of interest quite apart from the question of dreaming.

In my first chapter I outline Malcolm's position and offer a limited defence of it. Following an argument developed by Shoemaker, I show that, whether Malcolm is right or wrong, the possibility of a state of total illusion cannot be shown by an appeal to the existence of realistic and coherent dreams. If Malcolm is right, the existence of any kind of dream does nothing to show that a state of total illusion is possible. If, on the other hand, Malcolm is wrong, someone like Descartes who is taking the skeptical stance cannot be sure that there have ever been any dreams at all, let alone realistic and coherent ones. Since all the skeptic can be sure of is the existence of certain dream memories and since it is only on Malcolm's view that the correctness of a dream memory cannot be questioned, the skeptic cannot appeal to the fact of realistic and coherent dreams in order to show the possibility of a state of total
illusion.

In my second chapter I defend the Malcolmian thesis against an attack by Yost and Kalish. I do this in part in order to show some of the difficulties in refuting Malcolm's position. Yost and Kalish argue that if dreams became veridical, if one could tell what went on during the night on the basis of one's dream memories, dreams would certainly be experiences. They argue that it just happens to be true that dreams are not veridical, and claim that the question of whether or not dreams are experiences is independent of the question of whether or not they are veridical. I show that Yost and Kalish still allow the Malcolmian to claim that all we can sensibly talk about in connection with dreams are waking impressions, veridical or not. Although I think that the Yost and Kalish attack does not succeed, I think that their notion of a veridical dream does point towards a successful attack.

The possibility to be raised in order to undermine Malcolm's position is not that dreams become veridical, but that they become rich, consistent and coherent. Quinton develops this possibility, and I devote the third chapter to Quinton's fantasy. Quinton argues that if our dream life were as rich and coherent as our waking life, we should have to conclude that dreams are experiences in a second real
world. This suggests that dreams as we know them are experiences, since any ordinary dream would be an experience in a second real world if other dreams formed a sufficiently coherent pattern with it. I do not press this line of argument, however, since someone holding a Malcolmian position can object that Quinton's story has nothing to do with dreams just because it is a story about a second real world. My main aim in the third chapter is to defend Quinton's view that rich, consistent and coherent dreams (or dream-like phenomena) can provide an adequate basis for belief in a second real world, and accordingly that Quinton dreams at least can be misremembered and that in a Quinton dream one can make a distinction between the subjective and the objective.

Malcolm's views on dreaming rest in large part on two lines of argument connected with 'private language' and 'criteria'. If these arguments serve to support his views on dreaming, they should show that there is something wrong with Quinton's story, because belief in a second real world requires an individual to make objectivity judgments on the basis of his private memories without reliance on public 'criteria'. In the next two chapters I go on to show that Quinton's story can withstand the sort of attack that a Malcolmian might offer.
In my fourth chapter I consider the question of 'private language'. Malcolm emphasizes the fact that no one else can corroborate the judgments that one makes in a dream, but I note that all of us make judgments when awake which others cannot confirm, judgments whose propriety Malcolm would not question. I argue from this that the mere fact that dreams are private is no reason to suppose that one cannot make a decision for oneself as to whether one is dreaming or not. It might be objected that what is at issue is not de facto privacy but the sort of privacy that requires the use of a 'really' or 'necessarily' private language. I consider expressions such as 'necessarily private language' and argue that terms such as 'really' and 'necessarily' add nothing to 'private language'. I argue that considerations of privacy are of no epistemological importance, and conclude that the privacy of dreams does not force one to accept Malcolm's position.

The second line of argument which Malcolm uses to support his view concerns 'criteria' and the identity of concepts. Malcolm seems to hold the view that we apply words such as 'dream' on the basis of 'criteria' which logically guarantee the existence of things such as dreams which are distinct from the 'criteria'. I argue in my fifth chapter that what Malcolm calls 'criteria' are no more than
pieces of favoured evidence, that a concept such as dreaming is not as closely tied to the 'criteria' for its application as Malcolm thinks. I then argue that no empirical claims are absolutely certain, and conclude from this that one can consistently admit to having the 'criteria' (i.e., the best evidence) and still express doubt as to whether the evidence is good enough.

Malcolm seems to think that changing the 'criteria' must involve a shift to a 'different' concept, and I go on to argue that there is no principled way of individuating concepts. I argue that using the evidence of brain states, etc. to show that someone is dreaming does not involve a 'different' concept of dreaming.

The fourth and fifth chapters, the ones just discussed, show that two of Malcolm's three main lines of argument for holding that dreams are not experiences in sleep are thoroughly misguided, but they do nothing to show that dreams are actually such experiences. In the final chapter, besides dealing with Malcolm's third line of argument, I show that we are justified in believing that dreams are experiences in sleep until we have evidence to the contrary. I first use the possibility of a second real world as described by Quinton to show that Malcolm's view that dream memories are not really memories is untenable. Given the
possibility of a second real world, I must decide on the basis of evidence available to me whether or not I inhabit such a world. It is in part because I am entitled to assume (in the absence of reasons to think otherwise) that what I take to be chaotic dream memories are not false memories of coherent experiences that I am entitled to assume that they actually are dream memories. This, in turn, entitles me to assume that I inhabit only one world. A Malcolmian can thus be forced into the position of saying that I must make decisions about the correctness or incorrectness of what I take to be my dream memories in order to decide that they are only dream memories—while arguing that dream memories are not memories at all and that the question of their correctness or incorrectness is unintelligible.

At this point I think that a Malcolmian is left only with the argument that there is an incompatibility between dreaming and having experiences because any evidence one could have that someone is having experiences is exactly the sort of evidence one would use to show that the person in question is not asleep, and hence not dreaming. I show that this argument rests on a muddle, as indeed it must, for the same form of argument would show that one cannot be a stoic or even have an experience whose manifestations are unobserved. Once this final argument is shown to be
mistaken, we are entitled, in the absence of any evidence to suggest otherwise, to suppose that dreams are experiences in sleep—simply because our dream memories suggest that they are.

I conclude with a few remarks about the relationship between skepticism and Malcolm's thesis. I argue that Malcolm is mistaken in thinking that his radical view on the nature of dreams must be accepted if we are to avoid total skepticism. Once Malcolm's demand for absolute certainty has been shown to be misguided, the mere possibility that one is only dreaming can be dealt with. That things seem consistent does not prove that they are consistent, but it is a good reason for thinking so. Skepticism over the question of whether one is awake, just like skepticism over the questions of other minds and physical objects, is always intelligible. It does not follow that it is always reasonable.
CHAPTER 2: THE STRENGTH OF MALCOLM'S POSITION: A LIMITED DEFENCE.

Norman Malcolm presents arguments in *Dreaming*\(^1\) to show that dreams do not consist of thoughts, experiences, feelings, etc. that one has in sleep. Malcolm argues that the supposition that dreams do consist of such mental occurrences cannot be supported by any evidence we have or could have, and hence that it is meaningless. Much of the interest in Malcolm's position on the nature of dreams arises from the fact that it is developed from some of the central arguments in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.\(^2\) Indeed, Malcolm's position might be taken as a *reductio ad absurdum* of some of Wittgenstein's conclusions. In this chapter I shall try to show that Malcolm's position is not so absurd as it might appear at first glance, from which it follows that his position and its Wittgensteinian basis cannot be demolished by a simple *reductio*.

Several reputable dictionaries\(^3\) define the word 'dream' in terms of mental events in sleep, and there seem to be fairly clear semantic intuitions among English-speakers with which such definitions agree. It might seem to follow that
Malcolm must be wrong in his claim about the nature of dreams. Someone making this sort of objection to Malcolm could admit that Malcolm might be able to show that it is logically impossible for people to dream. He could admit, too, that Malcolm might have true and interesting things to say about something other than dreaming. I think that such obvious objections suffer from two defects.

First, they are trivial. Malcolm's thesis is one of some consequence. He argues that the memory-like phenomena that we call 'dream memories' are not memories of prior experiences. He also argues that Cartesian skepticism about whether or not one is dreaming is unintelligible. These are interesting conclusions; we should not deliberately misinterpret them. The substance of Malcolm's position can be expressed without using the word 'dream': he denies that one can have experiences in (sound) sleep and claims that Descartes cannot consistently say both 'cogito' and 'dormio'. I think that it follows from this that what is of interest in Malcolm's position cannot simply be dismissed by an appeal to the semantics of 'dream'.

Second, Malcolm presents plausible arguments for the view that our semantic intuitions and the dictionaries' distillations of them are mistaken. Malcolm is well aware of the natural tendency to insist that dreams are
experiences one has in sleep. He calls dreaming 'a queer phenomenon' just because he thinks that our everyday talk about dreams, while perfectly in order, leads us to what he thinks are unintelligible conclusions. Malcolm argues that 'dream' and its cognates are properly used by English-speakers. We make statements such as 'John had a strange dream last night', and we do not find them unusually perplexing. For the most part, at least, we assign truth values to such statements on the basis of certain things that people say and do when they are awake. The mental states of the dreamer during the night (if any) are not accessible to us, and yet we confidently say that someone dreamt. The dreamer himself has memories. The correctness of such memories, however, cannot be checked as we check the correctness of other memories. Normally, the question of whether or not one has correctly remembered a dream simply does not arise. For reasons such as these, Malcolm thinks that 'Smith dreamt' is a statement about Smith's waking state and not a statement about Smith's experiences during sleep. In short, to dream is to awaken with a dream memory, to awaken thinking that one remembers certain experiences, etc. when in fact this is not so. I shall argue that Malcolm is wrong, but I think that his arguments have sufficient force to preclude their being rejected simply on
the grounds that Malcolm has lost sight of the concept he tries to analyse, that he is talking about dream memories rather than dreams. If we accept Malcolm's analysis, we can use the word 'dream' much as we always have. This shows, I think, that the semantics of 'dream' have not been completely ignored.

Malcolm, as I have said, calls dreaming 'a queer phenomenon' because he thinks that the language we use to talk about dreams is misleading. One of Malcolm's examples of how the language misleads is the fact that we use the past tense 'dreamt' to describe what is, according to Malcolm, a present state of a person and not a prior mental event which caused that state. Malcolm does not deny, of course, that we also use the past tense 'dreamt' in connection with someone's previous waking state, but this is not misleading. Another example is the way we use 'memory' and its cognates in talking about dreams. Malcolm argues that dream memories are not a kind of memory. This point can be put by saying that 'memory' is syncategorematic in 'dream memory' just as 'intellectual' is syncategorematic in 'intellectual dwarf'. These consequences of the view that dreams are not experiences, etc. that one has in sleep do not help to make it plausible. However, Malcolm thinks that he has conclusive arguments to show that we must accept such
consequences. I agree with Malcolm to this extent: if one could develop sound arguments to show that dreams are not experiences, etc., then one would simply have to accept the result that certain locutions we use in talking about dreams must either be rejected as resting on error or given an implausible analysis.

Apart from locutions such as these, Malcolm's position does not require that we change or reinterpret our everyday talk about dreams. In fact, his position is developed from consideration of our ordinary talk about dreams and experiences, and of the bases on which we ordinarily ascribe dreams and experiences. Malcolm's important insight is this: the kind of evidence, aside from dream reports, that we do in fact take as tending to show that someone has had an experience at a certain time is just the kind of evidence that we do in fact take as tending to show that the person in question was not asleep at that time, and hence not dreaming. Malcolm claims that it follows from this that nothing whatever can confirm or disconfirm a dream memory. From this, in turn, it would follow, according to completely unexceptionable standards for having meaning, that the claim that a dream memory is correct is meaningless. If anything is to count as a necessary truth about memories, it is this: memories are caused by, and give knowledge of, prior events;
one remembers correctly or else one only seems to remember. If it is meaningless to suppose that dream memories are correct, it follows that dream memories are not a kind of memory at all.

The crux of Malcolm's argument is the lack of any confirmation. He does not argue that the sleeper's lack of behaviour shows that he is not in some particular mental state. Someone taking a position similar to Malcolm's might argue from the fact that the sleeper lies still with a calm expression to the conclusion that he is not, say, terrified, that he is in some mental state which is incompatible with being terrified. An argument might be developed along these lines to show that one cannot have violent emotions in sleep. I think that this is about all anyone could hope to show with such an argument. Malcolm does not reply on this line of argument and his conclusion is far more radical: the ascription of any mental state whatever to someone who is (sound) asleep is unintelligible.

Malcolm devotes a chapter to what he means by 'sound asleep' and to various borderline cases in which we are not sure as to whether we should say that someone is or is not asleep. These are essentially peripheral considerations, and I shall not consider cases of people being almost asleep, etc. Accordingly, I shall henceforth simply write
'asleep' with the intention that it is to be understood as 'sound asleep'. My vocabulary will differ from Malcolm's, too, in that I shall restrict my discussion to experiences. Malcolm's claim that it is unintelligible to suppose that people make judgments, see images, etc. in sleep rests on his general principle that it is unintelligible to suppose that people have any mental life whatever during sleep. If I can show that it is intelligible to suppose that people have experiences in sleep, Malcolm's principle would be shown to be mistaken. There would then be no reason to deny the intelligibility of the supposition that one makes judgments, sees images, etc. in sleep.

The natural reaction to Malcolm's claim that no evidence whatever could confirm the correctness of a dream memory is the suggestion that knowledge of the physical states of the dreamer while he is asleep could provide confirmation. If, for example, we could correlate a brain state, S, with the experience of being afraid, the fact that someone's brain was in state S during the night, would according to this suggestion, confirm his dream memory of having been afraid. Malcolm has arguments for rejecting any suggestion along these lines. His arguments strike me as being very bad. However, since they involve difficult issues in such areas as induction and the identity of
concepts, an adequate refutation cannot be simple. A thorough examination of Malcolm's arguments will, I hope, cast some light on matters which have considerable interest quite apart from the thesis in *Dreaming*.

Our everyday talk about dreams does lend some support to Malcolm's position. Consider, for example, the common phrase 'only dreamt'. A man bragging about his courage may say 'I have never experienced fear in my life!', and the fact that he dreamt that he experienced fear cannot be used to falsify his claim. Similarly, a stock broker might honestly boast 'I have never misjudged a market!', remembering full well the nightmare in which he led his clients and himself to ruin.

As things stand, the question of whether or not someone remembers a dream correctly is of no practical importance to us. It might seem that the correctness of dream memories is of considerable practical importance to certain psychiatrists and their patients. In a brief appendix to *Dreaming*, Malcolm argues that acceptance of his views can have no direct effect on the practice of psychiatry, although it must lead to the rejection of certain theories which purport to explain or justify that practice. Malcolm does not deny that there is a respectable branch of psychiatry which deals with the patient's dream memories,
nor that this branch of psychiatry can have a theoretical foundation. What he denies is the intelligibility of a theory of psychiatry which involves the supposition that people have experiences in sleep. The psychiatrist's data are the patient's dream reports. There is often some doubt as to whether the patient is reporting a dream memory or inventing a tale, but this need not prevent the psychiatrist from sometimes concluding that he has knowledge of the patient's dream memories. This knowledge enables the psychiatrist to diagnose the illness. If one grants this (and denies that the correlations between certain kinds of dream memories and certain kinds of illnesses are just coincidental), one is faced with the problem of determining the causal connection between the illnesses and the dream memories. This, clearly, is an empirical question. Malcolm claims that any answer which postulates experiences in sleep as part of the causal connection between the illnesses and the dream memories is unintelligible, but he does not deny that an intelligible answer can be found. One can, of course, reject Malcolm's claim while admitting that he has raised serious doubts about the legitimacy of simply assuming that dream memories are reliable indicators of prior experiences.

Sydney Shoemaker has an argument to show that the possibility of a state of total illusion cannot be
demonstrated by an appeal to coherent and realistic dreams. This follows from Malcolm's position, but Shoemaker argues that this is so even if Malcolm is wrong. In the 'First Meditation', Descartes says:

...in the still of the night, I have the familiar conviction that I am here, wearing a cloak, sitting by the fire—when really I am undressed and lying in bed!g

On the basis of this, it is possible to interpret Descartes as claiming that (1) he knows that he has had coherent and realistic dreams, and (2) he knows that a dream is a state of total illusion. It would follow from (1) and (2) that a state of total illusion is possible because such states, viz., dreams, have actually occurred.

Obviously, if Malcolm is right, Descartes cannot claim (2). If Malcolm is wrong, if it is intelligible to suppose that one has misremembered a dream, a skeptical Descartes cannot claim (1). Descartes, of course, can modify (1). He can simply claim that it seems to him now that he was in a state of total illusion, that he was dreaming, in the past. This weaker claim, however, will not simply show the possibility of a state of total illusion, any more than someone's seeming to remember squaring the circle will simply show that it is possible to square the circle. What the modified argument does show is that Descartes has either
made errors in the past or is now making an error. But there is no reason to suppose that the latter is the result of total illusion; it might well be an isolated mistake. I think that Shoemaker's argument is valid, and that the possibility of a state of total illusion cannot be demonstrated by an appeal to dreams.

It might be objected that I have dealt to cavalierly with the suggestion that someone's seeming to remember a state of total illusion would show that such a state is logically possible. The case of someone seeming to remember squaring the circle seems a little far-fetched. The former can be described in great detail, whereas the latter cannot. This is true, but the objection begs the question. The only basis for claiming that there must be a difference between the two cases is the (completely rational) belief that total illusion is possible, whereas squaring the circle is impossible. The objection relies on the principle that what is logically possible can be coherently described, and what is not logically possible cannot be coherently described. I think that this is an acceptable principle. I claim that any supposition whatever should be deemed to show a logically possible state of affairs until it can be shown otherwise. To describe a state of total illusion in great detail is to demonstrate that an attempt to fill in details will not show
such a state to be logically impossible. The importance of detailed descriptions shows up in well-known fantasies about time travel. Stories which seem coherent on the surface just cannot be developed in any detail. Much more could be said on this topic, but this is not required for the present argument. The objection presupposes some way of distinguishing the logically possible from the logically impossible. That is why the supposition that someone might seem to remember in great detail how he squared the circle is ruled out \textit{a priori}. Whatever principle is used to rule out this supposition and to allow the supposition that someone might seem to remember a dream in great detail can be used to show that any coherently describable state of total illusion is logically possible. The special case of dreaming does not have to be considered.

In my view, one does Descartes an injustice in construing his remarks about dreams as an \textit{argument} for the possibility of total illusion. They should be taken, rather, as an aid to the unimaginative reader. It seems to be Descartes' general position throughout the \textit{Meditations} that any burden of proof lies with the non-skeptic, and I completely agree. Even if this is denied, and some justification for radical skepticism is demanded, it is unreasonable to ask the skeptic to justify his position by
presenting indubitable instances of total illusion. In any event, it is not clear, simply from the 'First Meditation', that Descartes has even to assert that a state of total illusion is possible. He says that he must 'withhold assent', and it is clear that one can withhold assent to \( P \) without affirming that \( \neg P \) is possible; perhaps it is and perhaps it is not. I think that the 'First Meditation' is best understood as a statement of methodological principle. Because he cannot be sure that a state of total illusion is impossible, Descartes adopts the principle of assuming that he can be in such a state until he has good reason to think otherwise. No facts or possibilities are asserted or denied; Descartes has simply decided to be cautious.

In this chapter, I have tried to show something of the strength and interest of Malcolm's position. I have agreed with Shoemaker that no argument based on dreams can show that a state of total illusion is logically possible. I have suggested that one can argue for the logical possibility of total illusion simply from the possibility of coherently describing an instance of it, whether this is a dream or not. It seems to follow that dreams have no special epistemological interest. However, some of Malcolm's arguments concerning dreams are taken by Malcolm, at least, as applicable to any state of total illusion, as I
shall try to show. I think that he would deny that one can give a coherent description of a state of total illusion. For reasons such as these, I think that **Dreaming** is worth examining for its wider philosophical implications as well as for the thesis concerning dreams.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I


3 E.g., the *O.E.D.* and Webster's *Third International Dictionary*.

4 The title of the fourteenth chapter of *Dreaming*.


7 Sydney Shoemaker, 'Dreaming and Total Illusion', as yet unpublished.


CHAPTER 3: AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON THE MALCOLMIAN POSITION.

In 'Miss Macdonald on Sleeping and Waking',¹ R. M. Yost, Jr. and Donald Kalish attack a position which is essentially similar to Malcolm's. Malcolm mentions Yost and Kalish's paper several times in Dreaming,² but I do not think that he deals adequately with it. I shall try to show that their argument does not refute the Macdonald-Malcolm position. In doing this, I hope to bring out some of the deep issues involved in the position, issues which I shall try to deal with in later chapters.

Yost and Kalish offer an argument which is intended to show that dreams are experiences. They say:

Suppose that hereafter all dreams led people to make successful predictions after they awakened. If a person in California were to dream that the Washington Monument was being painted blue, he could successfully predict that a telephone call to the Capitol would bring word that the Monument was indeed being painted blue. If he were to dream that Westminster Abbey was on fire, then, after awakening, he could confidently expect that motion pictures of the fire would soon be shown at the local cinema. And generally, no dream from now on would conflict with any subsequent waking experience. If this were to happen, we should certainly be perplexed for a while. Some might say,
'After all their wayward years, dreams have now become veridical'. And some might say, 'Instead of having dreams, we now have paranormal but veridical perceptions while asleep; I wonder what the explanation is?' But if anyone had formerly been inclined to accept...the...radical dissimilarity of dreams and waking experiences, he would surely abandon it now. He would want to say now that while he was asleep the Washington Monument did really look blue to him, did really appear to him in a context of real objects, etc. He would totally reject the claim that while he was asleep he did not see anything blue....And he would say that he was mistaken formerly when he believed that a dreamer could not see, touch, hear, etc. 

If the situation that Yost and Kalish describe came about and some people said:

Instead of having dreams, we now have paranormal but veridical perceptions while asleep,

it would not simply follow that anyone would change his views about dreams. In saying that we no longer dream, one is protecting the truth of what one has previously said about dreams; new beliefs about paranormal perceptions must be shown to be in conflict with old beliefs about dreams. I think that this could be shown, but it is not necessary. We can suppose instead that people say:

After all their wayward years, dreams have now become veridical.
This strikes me as a perfectly proper way of describing the phenomenon, but it is not quite clear whether or not Malcolm would accept this as an entirely correct use of the word 'dream'.

Ignoring day-dreams and the like, 'Smith dreamt' entails 'Smith slept'. This is not quite right; if someone were knocked unconscious and told us when he came to consciousness that he had dreamt, I do not think that we should dispute his claim simply because we generally say that such a person is unconscious rather than asleep. I think, too, that we could properly say that someone dreamt while he was drugged or drunk, although such people are often described as being in a drugged or drunken stupor rather than asleep. Malcolm ignores such cases, and so shall I. We may suppose that the people in Yost and Kalish's example gave every indication of being asleep during the night, and take this as being reason enough to say that they were asleep. Malcolm seems to agree that this would be in order. He says:

If we were required to find out whether someone is asleep what should we look for? It would be things of this sort: that he is recumbent, his eyes are closed, his breathing regular, his body mainly inert, and that he does not react to various sounds and movements in his vicinity to which
he would normally react if awake....
Our ordinary application of the word 'asleep' is not guided by any consideration of what is going on in someone's cranium, spinal column or other inward parts, but rather by how his body is disposed and by his behaviour or lack of it. 4

This suggests that Malcolm would not claim that there is anything suspect about the Yost and Kalish supposition. People who have given every indication of being asleep sincerely offer dream reports. The only strange thing about the situation is that the dream reports have predictive and retrodictive value.

On the other hand, because most dreams are not veridical and because we often use the fact that something did not happen as evidence that someone only dreamt that it happened, Malcolm is led to say:

...the statement 'I dreamt such and such' implies that such and such did not occur. 5

This makes it a necessary truth that one cannot dream that water is flowing over Niagara Falls, that it is cold in the Arctic, and so on. These consequences, clearly, are unacceptable, and Malcolm does admit 6 that one could dream that Westminster Abbey is being destroyed by fire and discover on awakening that the abbey had burned while one
was asleep. If Malcolm is prepared to accept the possibility that some dreams might be veridical, it is hard to see how he could exclude the possibility that all dreams might be veridical. I shall try to show that, as far as Yost and Kalish's attack is concerned, Malcolm has no need to reject the latter possibility.

Malcolm denies that his position is threatened by his admission that there could be veridical dreams. He says:

Someone in California might dream one night that Westminster Abbey was destroyed by fire and discover the next day that this had really happened....But if his dream narrative contained statements like 'I saw it burning', 'I heard the walls crashing'; or 'It seemed to me that I could see it burning and hear the walls crashing'—those statements, which ostensibly report experiences he had while asleep, would all be false—if they were not false they could not properly be said to belong to the description of a dream.

I think that if Malcolm can maintain his position in the face of the possibility that some dreams might be veridical, there is little reason to suppose that the possibility that all dreams might be veridical would threaten it. This is the crucial point over which I disagree with Yost and Kalish.

There is a clear sense in which an isolated instance of
a veridical dream does not require an explanation. One can quite properly ask for an explanation of such a dream, just as one can quite properly ask for an explanation of any dream. The fact that the dream is veridical, however, can be dismissed as a coincidence. There is no reason to suppose that the explanation of a veridical dream must include some reference to the real event in virtue of which the dream is called 'veridical', although this cannot be ruled out a priori.

If one is faced with a situation in which all or most dreams are veridical, one can no longer dismiss the fact that a particular dream is veridical as a coincidence. What is to be explained is not simply a particular dream, but the fact that this dream corresponds to a real event in certain ways. Unlike the case in which one explains an isolated instance of a veridical dream, the reference to the real event in virtue of which the dream is called 'veridical' must be included in the explanation. It does not follow from this that a mental event in sleep, a non-Malcolmian dream, must be included in it.

Yost and Kalish ask us to imagine a situation in which all dreams are veridical. We are asked to suppose that, within this context, someone in California tells us that he dreamt that the Washington Monument was being painted blue,
and that it turns out later that the Washington Monument was being painted blue while he slept. According to Yost and Kalish, if we take them literally, we are supposed to conclude from this that the person in question, call him 'Smith', saw the Washington Monument being painted, that it 'did really appear to him'. If we could accept the conclusion, it would certainly serve as an explanation. 'Why does Smith's account tally with the journalist's?' 'Because they both saw the event in question.' But, of course, we have at least two reasons for rejecting the conclusion. First, by hypothesis, Smith was asleep. His eyes were shut and he was not seeing anything. Any evidence we could have to show that he was literally seeing something would be evidence to suppose that he was not asleep, and hence not dreaming. Second, Smith was several thousand miles away from the Washington Monument. He could not have seen it with his eyes open in broad daylight. Obviously, Yost and Kalish are not to be taken literally.

Let us take it, then, that the explanatory hypothesis is that Smith 'saw' the Washington Monument being painted in a special sense of 'saw'. This sense of 'saw' is such that the claim 'Smith saw event x' is not refuted by the fact that Smith was asleep, in the dark, thousands of miles away from x when it occurred. Yost and Kalish obviously intend
this to be more than a metaphorical restatement of the fact which is to be explained; they suggest that one is forced to the conclusion that Smith had an experience during sleep, that he perceived (in some way yet to be discovered) the painting of the Washington Monument while he was asleep. It would follow from this that a veridical dream memory is a memory of a perception, of an experience in sleep. I have two criticisms of Yost and Kalish's line of argument.

First, the conclusion is not forced on us by the facts of the case; one can describe evidence which would falsify it. There are only two data: the Washington Monument was painted during the night and Smith on awakening has a certain ability, i.e., he can make certain predictions. We could explain Smith's ability if we could show that it is the result of his brain being in a particular state, S, and show how S has been caused by the event in question. Now, if this chain of events is anything like ordinary seeing, the occurrence of state S in Smith's brain took place very shortly after the event. There is no reason, however, to suppose that this must be so. Perhaps the painting of the Washington Monument caused Smith's brain to go into state R in the middle of the night, and his brain changes from state R to state S on awakening. I see no reason why this must be ruled out a priori.
My second criticism of Yost and Kalish will explain why I have not discussed the question of brain states more fully. Malcolm, as I pointed out in my first chapter, denies that the existence of particular brain states in sleep can support the conclusion that people have experiences in sleep. Let us suppose that brain state $S$ occurred in Smith during the night and that $S$ is of a kind which we have correlated with perceptions. The supposition that Smith had an experience in sleep would then be supported by three pieces of evidence: Smith's veridical dream memory, his brain state while he was asleep, and the fact that the event in virtue of which we call his dream memory 'veridical', the painting of the Washington Monument, took place while Smith was asleep. In contrast, the supposition that someone who had an ordinary dream had an experience in sleep could be supported by only two pieces of evidence: his dream memory and the existence of certain brain states. I think that this is an important difference, but I do not think that it can force Malcolm into any concessions. As long as Malcolm can hold to his position that evidence about brain states has no bearing on his claim that dreams are not experiences, he can reject Yost and Kalish's conclusion. Yost and Kalish have helped to make clear how intuitively unacceptable Malcolm's thesis is, but
I can think of no argument against Malcolm's rejection of Yost and Kalish's conclusion which cannot serve equally well as an argument against Malcolm's general rejection of brain states as evidence of sleeping experiences. I conclude that arguments based on the possibility that dreams might be veridical are otiose.

My objections can be put in terms of Grice's account of perception in 'The Causal Theory of Perception'. Grice argues that some causal chain or other between what is perceived and the percipient is a necessary condition of perception. An expansion of Yost and Kalish's story could allow this condition to be satisfied. Grice adds, and I think that he is clearly right, that this condition is not sufficient; a special kind of causal chain is required. Grice suggests that the best way of showing what kind is by means of examples. He says:

...the best procedure...is to indicate the mode of causal connexion by examples; to say that, for an object to be perceived by X, it is sufficient that it should be causally involved in the generation of some sense-impression by X in the kind of way in which...my hand is causally responsible for its looking to me as if there were a hand before me...whatever that kind of way may be....

It is clear how Malcolm would react to Grice's suggestion.
He would claim that we can only have knowledge of X's waking sense-impressions, and argue from this that Grice's sufficient condition could not be met on any version of Yost and Kalish's story. His position would be that the conclusion that one might perceive in sleep begs the very question which the introduction of the possibility of veridical dreams was supposed to answer.

Yost and Kalish suggest an analogy between dreaming and perceiving. This analogy is not strengthened by their supposition that dreams become veridical because their sense of 'veridical' precludes the possibility of granting the status of a new sense to seeing-in-a-dream. A veridical dream, on their account, is one which 'led people to make successful predictions after they awakened.' It follows from this that seeing-in-a-dream can have only a confirmatory role, that a waking sense always overrules seeing-in-a-dream. Our familiar senses are not restricted in this way. The ordinary sense of sight is veridical in that it allows us to make successful predictions which involve other senses. To see a rose, for example, is to be able to predict what one will smell and feel under certain circumstances. There are, however, things which we see but which we cannot touch, hear, smell, etc., purely visible objects such as rainbows. I think that an understanding of
why we allow such items in our ontology can help to clarify the deficiencies in Yost and Kalish's argument.

Briefly, the question of whether or not there are rainbows comes down to a question of conceptual economy. Rather than saying that fifty people see a rainbow, we could say that they suffer from similar hallucinations. One of the economies afforded by saying that there are rainbows is the result that we do not have to explain so many instances of mass hallucination. One of the costs is the possibility that we might have to account for mistakes that people can make about rainbows, a difficulty that could not arise if we did not grant that rainbows exist endependently of people's perceptions of them. Questions such as these have nothing to do with questions of 'veridicality' in Yost and Kalish's sense, with questions of whether the sense of sight is confirmed by other senses.

I think that the story needed to refute Malcolm's position is not one in which dreams are veridical, but one in which considerations of conceptual economy lead us to say that seeing-in-a-dream is a legitimate form of perception. What is needed is a story in which dream objects are given an ontological status purely on the basis of conceptual economy. I should now like to argue that such a story can be coherently told.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 2


2 Malcolm, Dreaming, particularly Ch. 12 and Ch. 15.

3 Yost and Kalish, p. 120

4 Malcolm, Dreaming, p. 22.

5 Ibid., p. 66.

6 Ibid., p. 68.

7 Ibid., p. 68.

In this chapter, I shall develop an account of a possible situation in which we take our dreams—or phenomena much like dreams—far more seriously than we do now. I shall argue that if our dream life were sufficiently rich, consistent and coherent, we should have reasonable grounds for claiming that we inhabit more than one world. My argument is based on Anthony Quinton's ingenious paper, 'Spaces and Times', in which he develops a story in order to show that one can make sense of the idea of two spaces which are not spatially related. I shall not be concerned with this conclusion, but I shall use a modified version of Quinton's story to attack the Malcolmian position.

Suppose that I sleep for twelve hours each day. This is not strictly necessary, but it avoids complications which are irrelevant for present purposes. Suppose, too, that my dream life undergoes some remarkable changes. Formerly, I dreamt only occasionally and my dreams were completely unrelated to each other, and thus I had no reason to take my dream life at all seriously. Now, however, I dream every time I go to sleep. Moreover, each night's dream is connected with the previous night's dream. The book that I
started to read in Monday night's dream is finished in Tuesday night's dream. The people I meet in Wednesday night's dream recognize me in Thursday night's dream, and so on. In my dreams I am a fisherman by a lake. I work regularly and I have a regular pattern of life with my family. Each night when I fall asleep I dream that I awaken in my house by the lake, that my wife feeds me, and that I go out to fish.

My dream body and my waking body are distinct. If I eat a large meal before falling asleep, this does not affect my appetite for breakfast in my dream; just as, in ordinary dreams, dreaming that one has eaten a large meal does nothing to stay the pangs of real hunger. I twist my ankle one day, but in my dream the following night I do not limp. In my dream I cut my hand, but when I awaken there is no mark on my hand. This, of course, is a feature of dreams as we know them. There is, however, some connection between my waking body and what goes on in my dreams. My dream memories, whether we accept Malcolm's account or not, are causally dependent on states of my body when I am awake.

One day I take a nap after lunch. During my nap I dream that I have just awakened in the middle of the night in my house by the lake. Intrigued by this, I make the experiment of staying up all night. Sure enough, when I
finally do get to sleep, I dream that I awaken by the lake and that people tell me that I have slept through an entire day. In short, every sleeping period in Canada is a 'waking' period by the lake of my dreams, and every 'sleeping' period by the lake of my dreams is a waking period in Canada.

A remarkable feature of my dream life is that much of my waking life comes back to me as if it were a dream. I tell the people by the lake of my dreams about the 'dream' I had, but this is only a description of what I did in Canada on the day before. People by the lake of my dreams tell me not to take my 'dream life' so seriously, not to worry about my next 'dream', because it is not 'real'. In this respect, the situation in my dreams is just like the situation in Canada. Without going into more detail, the point should be clear: my dream life is every bit as rich, consistent and coherent as my waking life, and it becomes increasingly silly to dismiss it as 'only a dream'. If I must distinguish between dreams and reality in such a situation, it seems that the choice of which is going to be which must be completely arbitrary.

Various questions can arise at this point. It might be objected that the story concerns a second world and our access to it, rather than dreaming. It might seem to follow
from this that it is irrelevant to Malcolm's thesis. I shall deal with such questions later. For the moment, I shall simply expand Quinton's story in order to show that his conclusion is the only rational one we could reach if we were faced with the circumstances he describes. I shall use the words 'dream', 'memory', 'experience', etc. on the assumption that there is no error in Quinton's argument. That is, I shall assume that dream experiences are experiences, at least when the dreams or dream-like phenomena constitute another real world, and so on. I do not intend to beg any questions by doing so; it is simply a device to eliminate scare-quotes and expressions such as 'dream-like phenomena'. I shall also, simply for reasons of brevity, use the term 'Bylake' as a proper name to refer to the second real world.

In telling the story of my life in Bylake, I have begun by supposing a radical change in the normal pattern of dreaming. I did this in order to make it easier to imagine two clearly distinct sets of experiences. If I stay with this way of telling the story, there are going to be problems about my previous life and experiences in Bylake. My past life there, from my point of view, is going to consist only of my memories of experiences had after the change in my dream life and whatever other people in Bylake
tell me about my life before the radical change in my dreams occurred. This, of course, is the situation in which someone suffering from total amnesia finds himself. There seem to be no insuperable conceptual problems over amnesia, and I could describe my life in Bylake as the life of a person suffering from total amnesia. I think that this would be sufficient to meet the objection that a meagre past forces one to deny that the second world is an objective one.

If the imbalance between the two sets of experiences seems too great because of the amnesia, I can tell the story so that this imbalance is removed. Suppose that I am afflicted with total amnesia here in Canada just at the time when the change in the pattern of my dreams begins. I awaken with a vivid memory of a dream and no memory of anything else. After five days and five nights, I have ten groups of memories which fall into two clear sets. Both in my life in Bylake and in my life in Canada, I am a person whose knowledge of his own past (beyond the previous five days) is almost entirely limited to what he can learn from what others tell him. Both in Bylake and in Canada, I can make some inferences about my past based on my own five days of experiences, and these can supplement what I learn from others. Such inferences must be very tentative, but equally so in both cases. The two cases are now exactly
symmetrical; more than ever, there seems to be no reason to relegate one set of experiences, one life, to what Quinton calls 'the ontological wastebasket'.

There is no need to suppose a sudden change in my dream life. Now that I have made use of a change in my dream life to illustrate what it would be like to inhabit more than one world, a plausible account of how we, with our beliefs about the world, might come to think of ourselves as inhabiting two distinct objective worlds can be dropped. Imagine someone growing up from birth with two sets of experiences such as I have described. This way of putting it, of course, reflects the fact that the only access we can have to a consciousness is through a body to which we can have access. (I am ignoring the special case of each person's access, if it can be called that, to his own consciousness.) Someone whose earliest experiences fell quite naturally into two parts, into two lives, should not be hard to imagine if my earlier story about the change in my dream life is coherent.

There seems to be no conceptual barrier to filling out the case. Suppose that English is spoken in Bylake as it is in this part of Canada. The child, hearing English for the better part of twenty-four hours each day, learns the language more quickly than other children. He learns the
word 'dream' as most children do. When he is awake in Canada, he tells adults that the people in his dreams say that this life is only a dream; and, when he is awake in Bylake, he tells adults the corresponding thing. Both in Canada and Bylake, adults are amazed at the richness and regularity of the child's dreams, but in both places they go on dismissing the child's other life as 'only a dream'. The child soon learns to do the appropriate thing: in each of his worlds, he learns not to expect others to take what they call 'merely a child's dreams' seriously; nonetheless, this does not prevent the child from taking them seriously. Adults try to force the child into a pattern of intellectual dishonesty—a common enough phenomenon.

There is, of course, no need to suppose that English or any other language with which we are familiar is spoken in Bylake. It could be the case, as far as I can see, that the language spoken in Bylake is not translatable into English. There seems to be no reason why the language of Bylake should not reflect powers of thought and perception which English-speakers lack. For obvious reasons, such powers are hard to imagine. It might, I think, be the case that the inhabitants of Bylake do not conceive of the space in which they live in a Euclidean way, and their language could reflect this. Whether or not such a language could be
translated into English, i.e., made intelligible to English-speakers, would depend in part at least on the geometrical imagination of English-speakers. So far as I can see, there could be a language the understanding of which requires more imagination than that of the most imaginative English-speaker. If I learnt the language of Bylake, there would be at least one person who could understand both that language and English. It would not follow from this, however, that the language of Bylake would be translatable into English. At any given moment, either in Canada or in Bylake, I might be able to understand both languages, but it could still be a fact about the languages that something expressible in one is not expressible, even at great length, in the other.

The case of differing perceptual powers is similar. The language of Bylake might reflect perceptual discriminations which I can make in Bylake but which I cannot make here. In that case, my situation would be much like the situation of someone who suffers from intermittent colour blindness or intermittent tone deafness. Apart from perceptual discriminations, there could be totally different senses in Bylake, and the language could reflect this state of affairs. Different modes of perception would involve different sensations, and a variety of sensations and sensation terms which are unique to Bylake may be supposed.
There is no reason why the story has to involve just one person. No doubt if several people shared a life in Canada and shared a life in Bylake, they would be bolder than the unique child in making the claim that the so-called 'dream life' is every bit as real as life in Canada. If several people in Canada were to arrange to meet each other at a certain place and time in Bylake, for example, this would demonstrate considerable confidence in the reality of Bylake. One could tell the story so that everyone on the planet shared the life in Bylake; the world of Bylake would then be as populated as this world. If that were so, we should have no use for the concept of a 'dream', of that particular kind of unreality; there would not be even a temptation to dismiss one set of experiences as 'unreal'.

I have argued that I might have a dream life which is rich enough to allow me to use the concept of another world. Could it be rich enough to force me to use such a concept? I think so. What allows us to relegate our dream experiences to 'the ontological wastebasket', to deny that they are experiences of an objective world (and, if we follow Malcolm, to deny that they are experiences at all), is the fact that they are fragmentary, relatively rare, and completely disjointed. If our dream experiences were as rich and coherent as our other experiences, it would require
a completely unjustifiable decision to take one set of experiences seriously and to ignore the other. One might as well refuse to allow observations made on Fridays to falsify scientific hypotheses. This, too, could be done: there is, however, as things stand, absolutely no rational basis for doing so.

Using Quinton's metaphor of 'the ontological wastebasket', a man is merely eccentric if he keeps important papers in a round basket on the floor and keeps litter in a desk drawer: what distinguishes important papers from litter is not the place in which they are kept, but the importance that people attach to them. If I am to think of Bylake as an objective world, as having an existence apart from my experience of it, I must allow a place in my conceptual scheme for the concept of being mistaken about something in Bylake. To say that Bylake is an objective world is to say that it does not only seem so to me. This, in turn, requires the possibility that certain things in Bylake are not what they seem to be. The distinction between the way things seem and the way things are would be made in Bylake much as it is here. For example, if the laws of optics are the same as they are here, an oar that is partly immersed in water would look bent. I could say, just as I say in Canada, that it seems bent but is straight.
There is no need to suppose that physical laws in Bylake are the same as physical laws here. However, it is part of Quinton's story that there are regular patterns of events in Bylake, and it follows from this that physical laws of some sort can be developed. These, in turn, would allow me to make predictions about events in Bylake, and give me an additional basis for applying the distinction between the subjective and the objective. On the basis of these laws, I could predict events in Bylake while I am awake in Canada, i.e., I could predict my future 'dream' memories. Indeed, other people working from my descriptions of Bylake could formulate the physical laws of Bylake and predict what my 'dream' memories will be, perhaps far more successfully than I could. This is another way in which the distinction between the way things seem and the way things are in Bylake need not be idle for me.

I now turn to the question of personal identity. What gives me the right to say that I inhabit Bylake? Why not say, rather, that I have knowledge of someone else's life in Bylake? I think that there are no insurmountable conceptual difficulties in the supposition that one person, one consciousness, could have two bodies and two sets of experiences. The difficulties are not essentially different from those connected with the question of why I can call a
single body and a single set of experiences 'mine'. In
telling the story of Bylake, I have suggested that I could
simply trust my memory and claim prior experiences which
seem to be mine as mine. To base personal identity on
memory is to run the risk, as Locke's critics have pointed
out, of developing a circular argument. I think that
circularity can be avoided by distinguishing between
memories and memory-like phenomena in terms of characteristic
causal connections between events and the memories of those
events. A promising argument along these lines has been
developed by Shoemaker in 'Persons and Their Pasts'.
Obviously, the characteristic causal connections between
Bylake and this world would be radically different from
those which now exist, but presumably they could be
discovered. An element of circularity would still be
involved, since one would have to have some notion of what
a memory of Bylake is before one could determine the nature
of the causal chain which makes such memories possible. I
shall not deal with this problem here, but only point out
that it is not a problem which arises only because of the
peculiar features of Quinton's story. The element of
circularity remains even when this account of personal
identity is applied to the usual sort of case.

In telling Quinton's story, I have begun by saying that
I did things in Bylake, that certain experiences were mine, etc. It might seem that questions of personal identity have been begged in first telling the story. I have tried to show that this is not so, but perhaps something should be said about the peculiar features of 'I'. Coval discusses some of these features in *Scepticism and the First Person*[^3]. Coval is concerned to show that there is no essential assymmetry between 'I' and other personal pronouns. His point is that the apparent assymmetry between 'I' and other personal pronouns gives solipsism a specious plausibility. I want to use the same conclusion to make a different point: the essential symmetry between 'I' and other personal pronouns can be used to show that I can use 'I' without committing myself to the sort of claims which lead to solipsism.

There are certain features of the way we can use 'I' which are not shared by 'he'. These are brought out in considerations such as these: one can walk into a room and say 'I am tired' without introducing oneself, pointing to oneself, or previously saying something which indicates the person to whom the pronoun, 'I', refers. By contrast, if one is to be understood when one says 'He is tired', one must do one of these things or something similar. I do not question these facts about the use of 'I' and 'he', but it
does seem to me that too much importance can be attached to the differences. I claim that it is only a contingent matter that we can use 'I' without preliminaries, and only a contingent matter that we must use such preliminaries to make ourselves understood when we use 'he'. It is only a contingency that we move our lips when we speak. If we could produce sounds without showing it, we should have to point to ourselves or do something which serves this purpose in order to make clear to others the reference of 'I'. We have roughly this sort of situation when we speak on the telephone. To describe a suitable change for the case of 'he' is more difficult, and it is hard to do it without making some rather bizarre suppositions. However, I see no reason in principle why something like the following should not be the case: whenever I use the pronoun, 'he', I produce in the person to whom I am referring some sign which makes it clear to those nearby that he is the person referred to—perhaps he gives a start or his hair stands on end. This is a far more radical change than was need for 'I', and I think that it would have to involve some causal connection between my intention to refer to a particular person and that person. Something like this can be found in real life. One can, in suitable circumstances, show to whom 'he' refers by saying something like 'He is a thief, and he always
blushes when this fact is mentioned.' I think that it follows from this that it is not the 'logic' of 'I' or 'he' that accounts for the different ways they can be used, but certain contingencies about human bodies and the world in which we live. I think that the important difference is between 'I' and other personal pronouns, and I could have dealt with 'I' and 'you'. This would have been far easier; it is clear that one does not have to tell such a fantastic story to show how 'you' might be used without preliminaries. However, I wanted to argue that there is no essential asymmetry between 'I' and any other personal pronoun. I conclude from all this that I am entitled to use 'I' in telling Quinton's story, that my use of the word does not in itself beg any questions.

My conclusion that 'I' is a pronoun much like any other conflicts with Alston's account of the word's meaning in Philosophy of Language. Alston says: 'the word has a single meaning—the speaker.' I do not think that this is even approximately right; it cannot be salvaged by substituting 'speaker or writer' for 'speaker', nor 'this' for 'the'. There seems to be no way of avoiding the claims of traditional grammar books.

A possible objection to Quinton's story is this: suppose that we come across someone who tells us a story
like Quinton's. Why should we believe him? Why should we not say, rather, that he is deluded? One way to deal with this objection is to admit it. For my purposes (which will become clearer later in this chapter), I think that I can grant that we should never have good reason to believe that a person has access to an objective world which is denied to us. To grant this is not to deny that such a person could have unique access to a second objective world. I think that the situation would be analogous to one in which someone claims to have witnessed a miracle, and Hume's arguments on the latter topic⁵ seem relevant. According to Hume, there is nothing incoherent in the notion of a miracle, a violation of a law of nature. Nevertheless, we are never justified in accepting a report of a miracle, because the balance of evidence can never be in its favour. Similarly, it may be that the balance of evidence is always against the truth of a person's claim to have unique access to another objective world, but this does not show that there is anything incoherent in his claim, that it might not be true.

I am not forced, however, to admit the objection. I have already pointed out that other people in Canada could make predictions about my 'dream' reports on the basis of my earlier 'dream' reports. If these were kept from me, the
question of my cheating would not arise. If I developed skills in Bylake which I had not had the opportunity to develop here, others would have reason to take my story seriously. It could be that the science of Bylake is far more advanced than science here, and I could apply what I learn in Bylake to the technological and scientific problems we face here. Perhaps I could show others how to cure many of the serious diseases which afflict people in Canada. It would be very hard to argue that I had literally 'dreamt up' cures for a variety of diseases with no access to statistics, laboratories or patients. It seems quite clear that Quinton's story can be told so that others can apply objectivity concepts to Bylake, even though their only access to Bylake is my reports and my behaviour in Canada.

Quinton's story shows how one could come to think of a dream world as a real world. I have argued that enough coherent dream memories constitute a real past, just as our ordinary memories constitute a real past. This needs some explanation. The correctness of any memory of Bylake can be questioned, just as the correctness of any ordinary memory can be questioned. In neither case does it follow from this that one can sensibly question all memories. As Shoemaker argues in *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity*, if we are to have a usable concept of the past, we must assume that most
memories are correct. Any memory can be checked against other memories and found to be incorrect, but there is nothing against which one can check all memories.

It might seem that present evidence of past events could provide a check on memory which does not rely on other memories, but this is not so. To see this, one has only to consider Russell's famous

...hypothesis that the world sprang into being five minutes ago, exactly as it was then, with a population that "remembered" a wholly unreal past.7

Without causal laws and the reliance on memory that they require, ashes and fossils are just further items in the present world. I do not mean to deny that much of the language we use to describe present phenomena implies that the phenomena has had a certain history. Thus it is a necessary truth that ashes are the result of fire and that fossils have fossilized. All this shows, of course, is that we cannot properly use terms such as 'ashes' and 'fossils' without implying a claim about the past.

Someone might grant that we cannot sensibly suppose all memories to be delusive, but still object that all memories of Bylake might be delusive. This is a possibility, but the radical nature of Quinton's story, the fact that it is a story about two worlds, makes it a remote one. I think that
it would require an alternative causal account of Bylake memories. I would retract my claim about the objectivity of Bylake if I were convinced that something like the following took place: every night when I fall asleep a super-psychologist with his super-machine—the equivalent of Descartes' evil genius—implants Bylake 'memories' in me. It is just possible that consistent and coherent Bylake 'memories' are naturally produced in me without human agency, but this astronomically improbable eventuality can safely be ignored. The important point is that I am not in the position in which Descartes took himself to be; I can bring evidence to bear on the supposition that all my Bylake memories are delusive. Someone who is skeptical about my Bylake memories needs evidence to support his skepticism; Quinton's story can be told so that this evidence is lacking.

I think that Quinton's story raises difficulties for Malcolm's position, although in itself it does not show that Malcolm is mistaken. Malcolm's position rests in large part on his views on 'private language' and 'criteria', and I shall go on to show that the possibility of Bylake makes these views untenable.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 4


5 See An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1902), Section X.


CHAPTER 5: PRIVACY

It is a common opinion that stories such as Quinton's are suspect because they place an individual in the position of having to decide by himself what is objective and what is merely dreamt. This view is held not only by thoroughgoing Wittgensteinians like Malcolm. In a section of The Bounds of Sense entitled 'Why only one Objective World?' which clearly is addressed to the sort of story Quinton tells, Strawson makes this astonishing claim:

If fantasies of the kind I speak of are to have any chance of getting us to admit the conceivability of a multiplicity of objective worlds, they must at least take account of this factor; they must at least allow for the point that another name for the objective is the public.

This suggests that the question of whether or not Bylake is an objective world is not to be settled by me alone, but that I must appeal to 'the public' to help me. In telling Quinton's story, I have allowed a place for two publics, the public of the world which includes Canada and the public of Bylake. I assume that it is the former that Strawson had in mind. In this chapter, I shall argue that the question of the objectivity of Bylake—and all other questions of
objectivity—can be distinguished from questions of publicity. I shall argue that the public and the objective are not logically equivalent, let alone tied together by simple semantics as Strawson suggests.

In claiming that I could come to think of Bylake as an objective world, I pointed out that I could make a distinction between the way things are in Bylake and the way things seem, that I could apply such concepts as mistake, evidence, etc. I shall continue to make the distinction between the objective and the subjective in this way. I think that it is only if the distinction is drawn in this way that there is any philosophical interest in the equation of the objective with the public. There is a perfectly correct use of the word 'objective' in which the objective is contrasted not to the unreal, the dreamt, the imaginary, etc., but to the personal or subjective. One can speak of a man's subjective reactions to a work of art, for example, without denying that there is an objective answer to the question of whether he has those feelings. I have pointed out this other way of drawing the distinction between the objective and the non-objective—the other sense of 'objective', if this is preferred—only to make clear that I shall not use it. The question of whether Bylake is a real world or a dream world and the question of whether I have
experiences in sleep or only awaken thinking that I have can be put in terms of the distinction between the objective and the non-objective only if that distinction is drawn as I shall draw it. Likewise, it is only by drawing the distinction in this way that one can understand Strawson's reasons for thinking that there can be only one objective world and put a non-trivial interpretation on his equation of the objective with the public.

Malcolm's version of the equation of the objective with the public takes the form of the claim that there cannot be a 'private language'. Malcolm would argue that objectivity is conceptually tied to the possibility of making a mistake. This is why he attaches so much importance to his claim that it does not make sense to suppose that a dream memory is incorrect. I agree with Malcolm on the question of the possibility of error, and I have tried to show how I could make mistakes about Bylake. Malcolm sees that knowledge of having made a mistake in the past is propositional knowledge, that it presupposes a language. Malcolm thinks that one cannot use a language without reference to other users of that language, that one cannot have a private language.

Malcolm uses his claim that there cannot be a private language as the basis for various reductio ad absurdum
arguments. In his review of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, he says:

> The idea of a private language is presupposed by every program of inferring or constructing the 'external world' and 'other minds'. It is contained in the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical British empiricism, as well as in recent and contemporary phenomenalism and sense-datum theory.²

It follows from this that there must be something wrong with Quinton's story if the notion of a private language is incoherent, since it is a story about 'inferring or constructing' an external world.

On Malcolm's view, it is not just Quinton's conclusion that is mistaken; the very notion of private experiences that one has in sleep is rejected. Malcolm argues for his central claim in *Dreaming*, the denial that dreams are experiences, by an appeal to the impossibility of a private language. He says:

> ...the sentence 'I am asleep' cannot be used to make a judgment. Let us remember that no one can know whether another person makes a correct use of the sentence 'I am asleep' to describe his condition....³

From the fact that no one else can know whether or not I use the sentence 'I am asleep' correctly, Malcolm argues:
There could be nothing whatever that would tend to show that I employ that sentence correctly. I have no conception of what it would mean to say that not only have I identified my state as that of sleep but that my identification is furthermore right.4

Malcolm seems to be arguing here that if I try to use a language privately, I cannot even understand the distinction between correct and incorrect use of language. Before dealing with this argument, I should point out that Malcolm sees it as applicable to all contents of dreams. He says:

The argument just gone through... applies to an indefinite number of kinds of mental acts and psychological states and occurrences. As stated there it referred only to judging.... What we have is a schema of proof which...can be made into a proof that thinking in sleep, reasoning in sleep, imagining in sleep and so on, are all unintelligible notions.5

I now turn to the question of what is meant by the claim that there cannot be a private language. I take it that no one wants to deny that I can write a diary in a private code or that I can use English when I am alone. The claim needs to be explicated, and this requires an explication of the phrase 'private language'. In 'Wittgenstein on Privacy', John W. Cook says:

A chief complaint against Wittgenstein
is that he does not make it sufficiently clear what the idea of a private language includes—what is meant by "a private language"... He does not try to make this clear because the idea under investigation turns out to be irremediably confused... 6

If this is correct, it follows that nothing significant is asserted by saying, 'There cannot be a private language.' Cook does not reach this conclusion, but I think that it is inescapable. It is a necessary condition of our understanding anything of the form, 'There cannot be an R', that we understand the meaning of 'R'. (My argument here commits me to the position that expressions such as 'square circle' have meaning, a position which I should be prepared to defend independently of present considerations.)

Moreover, if Malcolm cannot give some account of the meaning of 'private language', we cannot understand his claim that 'the idea of a private language is presupposed by' various positions that he wishes to attack.

Malcolm does not try to elucidate the meaning of 'private language' in Dreaming, but he refers the reader to his review of the Philosophical Investigations. 7 He says in the review:

By a 'private language' is meant one that not merely is not but cannot be
understood by anyone other than the speaker.\textsuperscript{8}

The force of 'cannot' is expanded as follows:

...a language which is really private (i.e. it is a logical impossibility that anyone else should understand it or should have any basis for knowing whether I am using a particular name consistently).\textsuperscript{9}

This allows us to interpret the argument in \textit{Dreaming}. I cannot use a language in my dreams because such a use of language is 'really private', because it is a logical impossibility for others to understand it—\textit{qua} language used in a dream. That is, anything which makes it possible for others to understand the language I use in a dream would be evidence, on Malcolm's view, for the conclusion that I am not asleep, and hence not dreaming. The difficulty with this interpretation of 'private language' is that there is no reason whatever to suppose that such a language is impossible. On this interpretation of 'private language', I cannot go for a solitary walk and remind myself to return before dark. The language I use on a solitary walk is, \textit{qua} language used on a solitary walk, a language of which it is true that 'it is a logical impossibility that anyone else should understand it.' Since every private use of language is, \textit{qua} some feature or other, a use of language of which it
is true that 'it is a logical impossibility that anyone else should understand it', there is nothing to distinguish Malcolm's 'really private' language from a language or use of language which is in fact private.

My argument here is based on Jonathan Bennett's discussion of private languages in *Kant's Analytic*. Bennett speaks of 'a necessarily private language', but the same considerations apply. The form of words, 'a necessarily private language', has been so much used that it is easy to simply assume that it must make sense. Bennett suggests that the emperor has no clothes by asking:

> Could there be a necessarily private hat, i.e. one which could not be worn by more than one person? The question is absurd: it is a piece of pre-Lockean essentialism, an ellipsis which we are not told how to expand. 10

I think that Locke's account of 'essence' is correct and completely clear. Once it is understood, it can be seen that expressions such as Malcolm's 'really' or 'necessarily' fail to add anything to 'private language'. Locke says:

> It is necessary for me to be as I am; God and nature has made me so....if it be asked, whether it be essential to me or any other particular corporeal being, to have reason? I say no; no more than it is essential to this white
thing I write on to have words on it. But if that particular being be to be counted of the sort man, and to have the name man given to it, then reason is essential to it...as it is essential to this thing I write on to contain words, if I will give it the name treatise, and rank it under that species.

Bennett's conclusion is correct. The claim, 'There cannot be a necessarily ("really", etc.) private language is defective: either it is a claim about the impossibility of a private language, in which case 'necessarily' does no work: or it is a claim about the impossibility of a language having certain features which entail privacy, in which case it should be expressed as a claim about the impossibility of a language having those features. Bennett points out the possibility that the claim may be some combination of these two, but I think that this interpretation can safely be ignored.

If we waive for the moment the possibility of Bylake, the language one uses in a dream is 'necessarily private', i.e., it has a feature (being used in a dream) which entails privacy. But since the only reason which Malcolm gives for supposing that one cannot use a language in a dream is the fact that such a language would be private, we are driven back to the question of privacy. Malcolm thinks that there cannot be a private language because:
I shall be the sole arbiter of whether this is the same as that. What I choose to call the 'same' will be the same. No restriction whatever will be imposed upon my application of the word. But a sound that I can use as I please is not a word.12

Malcolm's point is that I cannot make sense of the notion of correctly applying a word unless I understand what it would be like to misapply it. This in turn requires that I have some way of distinguishing between 'I am using this word correctly' and 'It seems to me now that I am using this word correctly' which, of course, must be independent of the way my use of the word seems to me now. That is all right, but Malcolm has not given any argument to show how the public comes into the picture, why any check on my use of words must involve others.

This gap in the argument is discussed by M. J. Scott-Taggart in 'Private Languages and Linguistic Stipulation'. Scott-Taggart says:

It seems that, for Malcolm, an appeal to an independent check is an appeal to a consensus. This explains his thinking that 'in the nature of the case there cannot be such an appeal.' That this is indeed his view is further confirmed when he says, echoing Wittgenstein's 'whatever is going to seem right to me is right', that 'a sound that I can use as I please is not a word.' This locution, in the normal use which is here being employed,
we find in sentences like 'You can do as you please', which carry the implication that other people are in some way not relevant to whatever is going to be done. Taken together, these points make clear that Malcolm construes the 'independent' in 'independent check' to mean 'independent of my own decision'. If we define 'independent' in this way, then a private language is indeed impossible.13

As Scott-Taggart sees, we do not have to define 'independent' in this way. What is required is some way of distinguishing 'It seems to me now that I am using this word correctly' from 'I am using this word correctly.' To see that this distinction can be made without reference to a public, it is helpful to consider the language of a Robinson Crusoe.

I think that A. J. Ayer has done much to clarify the difference between the public and the objective in his paper, 'Can There Be a Private Language?' Ayer raises the question of whether a congenital Robinson Crusoe could develop a language and make a distinction between the way things are and the way things seem, and concludes that he could. Of such a man, Ayer says:

He will certainly be able to recognize many things upon the island, in the sense that he adapts his behaviour to them. Is it inconceivable that he should also name them?...
But if we allow that our Robinson Crusoe could invent words to describe the flora and fauna of his island, why not allow that he could also invent words to describe his sensations? In neither case will he be able to justify his use of words by drawing on the evidence provided by a fellow creature: but while this is a useful check, it is not indispensable.... Unfortunately, he may make mistakes.... but to say that nothing turns upon a mistake is not to say that it is not a mistake at all.14

No doubt a congenital Crusoe would be likely to make mistakes on which nothing turns, but I think he could also make mistakes whose consequences would be apparent to him. Suppose for example, that Crusoe develops a crude theory about the relationship between rainfall and crops. Suppose that he writes in his diary something to the effect that rain in the spring produces good crops in the fall. Year after year, events occur which confirm this theory and which tend to show a consistency in Crusoe's use of words. One fall, after what Crusoe thinks was a wet spring, the crops are very poor. This need not force Crusoe to suppose that he is now attaching a different meaning to 'wet', 'poor' or 'crop', etc. There are at least two other suppositions that Crusoe can make: he can suppose that he was mistaken in thinking that it rained last spring or he can suppose that his theory is not so reliable as he
thought. Crusoe realizes that he has made a mistake, and he can find good reasons for supposing that it was one kind of mistake rather than another. If he decides that his theory is unreliable, he could set about developing a better one. If the improved theory turns out to be well confirmed, Crusoe can use this fact as evidence that he had not made a semantic error when he first supposed that the crops in the fall were poor even though the spring had been wet.

A similar argument will show, I think, that Crusoe could develop a language in terms of which he could refer to his sensations. He uses the word 'pain' to refer to a sensation. The next day he uses the same word to refer to what strikes him as being a very similar sensation, i.e., he thinks that the word 'pain' is appropriate on this occasion. Now, the question can arise for him of whether he is being consistent in his use of the word 'pain'. He can appeal to his memory, but as Malcolm points out, memories are not infallible. As I argued in the previous chapter, it is absurd to try to justify reliance on memory in general, but our Crusoe can find some justification for his belief that he is entitled to trust his memory on this particular occasion. He has noted in his diary that certain concomitants accompany pain; it has characteristic causes and effects. So the question of whether the sensation he
now has is pain or not has some substance for him. It might even be extremely important to him. For instance, it matters whether eating a certain fruit causes pain, and Crusoe might have a vital interest in the truth of his belief that pain causes him to misjudge his aim while hunting.

I have argued that Crusoe could check the correctness of a particular memory by an appeal to the causes and effects of his sensations, i.e., to an objective world. The concept of an objective world would allow him to develop a large body of memories and beliefs, against which he could check his present belief that he is using a sensation term correctly. The employment of the concept of an objective world would not guarantee that Crusoe is using the sensation term consistently, but it would allow him to weigh one claim against another, to say, 'Either this memory is incorrect or all those memories and/or that hypothesis are incorrect.'

There have been two main lines of criticism of Ayer's position. Rhees, in a direct reply to Ayer's paper, fastens onto Ayer's claim that Crusoe could invent words. It is not clear just what Rhees's position is, but I think that he wants to point out that 'mere naming' is not organizing one's experience. One cannot say 'I shall henceforth call all ____s "birds"' unless one already has
something with which to fill in the blank. If this is Rhees's objection, it is not totally without foundation. However, it misses Ayer's fundamental point. The suggestion that one consider a congenital Crusoe is only introduced in order to make it quite clear that other people have never had any part in the use of Crusoe's language. Ayer does not give an account of how Crusoe could organize his experience to the point at which he could name recurring items in it, and I do not think that it is incumbent upon Ayer or myself to do so. The issue is whether one can have a private language. Unless there are positive reasons to suppose that a solitary person could not acquire a language—and there are no such reasons—the question of the origin of Crusoe's language is irrelevant. Moreover, no one, as far as I know, has yet given anything like a plausible account of how the first two cavemen developed a language, but it would be absurd to take this to show that there cannot be a public language.

The second line of criticism of Ayer's position is exemplified by Malcolm's distinction between a language which is not and a language which cannot be understood by others. I have already dealt with one interpretation of 'cannot', the 'logical impossibility' interpretation. Is there any other interpretation of 'cannot' which adds
anything to 'is not'? There is one obvious interpretation, but this will turn out to be insufficient to save Malcolm's position or anything like it. In most contexts at least, there is nothing to choose between 'I cannot understand French' and 'I do not understand French.' Someone looking at a difficult philosophical argument for the first time might be expected to say either 'I do not understand it' or 'I cannot understand it.' After making a serious effort, someone might well despair of ever being able to understand it. Such a person is more likely to say 'I cannot understand it!', the emphasis on 'cannot' suggesting that he has tried but failed, that it is beyond his capabilities. I think that this is about all that 'cannot' adds when we are talking about understanding.

Someone coming across a Robinson Crusoe might make a serious effort to read what he takes to be Crusoe's diary, fail, and say 'I cannot understand his language.' If enough people tried and failed to understand what they took to be Crusoe's language, we could have an instance of all that can be seriously meant by 'a private language', a language which is not and cannot be understood by others, even when they make a determined effort to understand it. I say that we could have an instance of a private language because the facts would not force us to that conclusion. After many
attempts to read the putative diary, we might decide that we were wrong in supposing that the book was a diary; we might decide, despite some evidence to the contrary, that Crusoe merely was in the habit of scrawling meaningless marks into his book. But the facts would not force us to that conclusion either. The facts of the case leave it an open question as to whether we are faced with a private language or no language at all.

On Malcolm's view, Crusoe could not have a language which no one else could understand, because this precludes the possibility of others checking Crusoe's use of words. Malcolm thinks that Crusoe cannot have a distinction between using a word consistently and seeming to use it consistently unless it is possible for others to check his use of words. The importance that Malcolm attaches to a mere possibility is puzzling.

Crusoe is alone. He cannot appeal to others to help him make a house, cure his illnesses or check on the consistency in his use of language. A possible builder creates no houses and a possible doctor cures no illnesses: what use is a possible public? Malcolm is not clear on this point, but he might be thinking along these lines: the distinction between being consistent and seeming to be consistent gets its meaning from the concept of a public
check. On this view, Crusoe's belief that he is using words consistently just is the belief that if others came to his island they could learn his language and find his use of words to be (briefly but paradoxically) consistent. This line of thought rests on the verifiability theory of meaning, and reflects Malcolm's insight that the distinction between using a word consistently and seeming to use it consistently must have some basis other than mere strength of conviction.

On the face of it, 'I am using the word "x" consistently' does not mean 'If others checked my use of "x", they would not find it erratic' or anything similar. One might be forced to claim that they are equivalent if one could not conceive of any way of verifying 'I am using the word "x" consistently' which did not involve a public check. I have already argued that Crusoe could bring evidence to bear on his belief that he is using a word consistently. If Crusoe can do this, he does not need to equate 'I am using the word "x" consistently' with some statement about what others would do if they observed his linguistic behaviour.

Malcolm's view that the public must be involved in the verification of my belief that I am using a word consistently seems to rest on a very bad argument which Wittgenstein developed in the *Philosophical Investigations*. 
Wittgenstein's argument runs along these lines: anything we want to call 'language' must be in some sense rule-governed; it must be possible to use a word incorrectly as well as correctly. This seems unexceptionable. Wittgenstein, however, sees the difficulties in the concept of a rule. He points out that any number of formulae can generate a given finite series of numbers, and adds the point that the formula which strikes one as being the one which generates the series might not be the one which occurs to others.16 This is correct, but hardly original. It must have occurred to many people who have been subjected to so-called 'intelligence tests'.

Wittgenstein goes on to make an original and far more interesting point: even given a formula, there are difficulties in setting an objective standard of what counts as applying it consistently. Thus someone could claim to understand the formula, 'add 2', give every sign of being able to add 2 just as we all do, and then at some point deviate from what we expect and still insist that he is following the rule, 'add 2'.17 It seems clear that Wittgenstein is right in this. It follows, I think, that if we are to call the man who claims that the series, 1002, 1004, 1006, 1008, 1012, is generated by the rule, 'add 2', 'deviant' in his understanding of the rule, we must do so on
the grounds that he deviates from the rule as we generally apply it. I completely fail to see how it can follow from this that one cannot follow a rule privately. Wittgenstein concludes:

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.  

What baffles me about this final move is the jump from the claim that obeying a rule is a practice to the claim that one needs a public to check one's use of a rule in order to make a distinction between thinking that one is obeying a rule and obeying it.

Wittgenstein is certainly right in saying that we must make a distinction between thinking that we are obeying a rule and obeying it, if we are to have any use for a rule. I think that Ayer's Crusoe can make this distinction. In using a language in the way I have described, Crusoe is trying to use words according to a rule. What is crucial is that he has a use for the concept of being mistaken in his use of a word. He is trying to be consistent, to use words in the same way, and he has some idea of whether or not he is succeeding. True, he can never be absolutely certain that he is being consistent in his use of a word, but I
claim that we are in the same situation.

The public to which I have access is limited, and it is certainly intelligible to suppose that this segment of the public might be mistaken. Moreover, if we are to be as skeptical over the ordinary case as we are over the case of Crusoe, access to all the English-speakers in the world will not guarantee that I am using a word consistently. If I take the skeptical stance, I can only claim that it seems to me that others observe my linguistic behaviour and comment on it. Only an objective public can be of use to me; without some way of distinguishing between the way things are and the way things seem, I cannot distinguish between 'Someone else is confirming my judgment' and 'It seems to me that someone else is confirming my judgment.' I do not want to deny that others can help one to decide whether something is so or merely seems so. The drunkard can certainly ask others whether there are pink rats in the corner, but of course he may be imagining the other people just as he is imagining the pink rats. Epistemologically, other people have the same status as scientific instruments. If I want to confirm my judgment that a particular piece of paper is blue, I can show it to others or examine it with a spectroscope. If others disagree with my judgment, I can always suppose that they are colour blind or insincere; if
the spectroscope does not help to confirm my judgment, I can always suppose that the instrument is defective. Whether I appeal to other people or to instruments, the conclusion I reach is, in the last analysis, my own. Scott-Taggart makes much the same point in 'Private Languages and Linguistic Stipulation': even when one has a public, it cannot serve as 'a linguistic super-ego', it cannot make my decisions. I can now return to the comparison I made earlier between the language which is private in virtue of being used on a solitary walk and the language which is private in virtue of being used in a dream. My conclusion in the previous chapter about memory is relevant here. I think that both the solitary walker and the dreamer can simply trust their memories unless they have a reason not to. If it seems to me on a solitary walk or in a dream that 'fear' properly describes the sensation I am now having, the presumption is that 'fear' does properly describe the sensation. There are, however, two differences between the cases; one minor, the other important.

The possibility that someone might join me when I am out on a walk is not remote, whereas the possibility that my dream might be my first experience of a second real world, a Bylake with people who can check my use of language, is remote. I think that this is the only relevant difference
if the issue is privacy. But the issue, as I have tried to show, is not privacy, and this is not the important difference. It is only possible that my dream world is a real world, whereas it is a fact that the world I live in when I take a solitary walk is a real world. If I wish to check the consistency in my use of words when I am on a solitary walk, I can in fact make use of evidence. For example, I can confirm that I am using the word 'pain' correctly by noting that a wasp is resting on my hand. In a dream, this sort of thing is impossible; wasps in dreams are as likely to turn into princesses as they are to cause pain. All that this shows is that in fact I can bring less evidence to bear on the truth of claims that I make in dreams than I can on the truth of claims that I make on a solitary walk, that in dreams I must trust my memory more that I do in waking life. It does not follow from this that I can make no distinction between using a word correctly and seeming to use it correctly when I am dreaming.

I have tried to show that the concept of objectivity does not rest on the concept of publicity. I have argued that the dreamer can have a public, the public of Bylake. To see this is to see that he does not need one, it is to see that the privacy of dreams is not a fact which supports Malcolm's position.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 5


5 Ibid., p. 45.


7 Malcolm, *Dreaming*, p. 54n.

8 Pitcher, op. cit., p. 66.

9 Ibid., p. 70.


12 Pitcher, op. cit., p. 73.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 5, cont'd.


16 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, particularly Sections 143-7.

17 Ibid., particularly Sections 185-90.

18 Ibid., Section 202.

19 Scott-Taggart, op. cit., Section 2.
Although I have argued for the possibility of a private language, English is in fact a public language. If I am to communicate with others, I must take account of their linguistic practices. For example, if others are to understand my claim that dreams are experiences, my use of the word 'experience' must meet certain public standards. Malcolm properly insists on this point, and this marks one aspect of his thought on the question of meaning. Unfortunately, Malcolm does not distinguish these sorts of considerations carefully enough from another aspect of his thought on the question of meaning, a strong interpretation of the verifiability theory of meaning. I think that his use of the word 'criteria' reflects this failure to distinguish between two different claims. There is no doubt that Malcolm thinks that his use of the technical term 'criteria' is the same as Wittgenstein's, but I shall completely ignore the question of what Wittgenstein meant by 'criteria' and all other questions connected with Wittgenstein's use of the word. My only concern will be with Malcolm's use of the word, which may or may not approximate Wittgenstein's.
In a chapter entitled 'The Concept of Dreaming', Malcolm asks:

...how could it be determined that the inner states of different people were the same and, therefore, that they meant the same thing by the word 'dreaming'?\[1\]

The point of this rhetorical question is clear: if we are to be able to talk about others' mental states and if we are to be able to understand others when they talk about their own mental states, we must establish or learn the meaning of words. This can only be done by reference to something public, something to which several members of the linguistic community have access. I think that this is right. I see no way in which words used to describe or refer to mental states could have a place in a public language unless they can be applied on the basis of publicly observable phenomena. In fact, the phenomena we use to apply and learn mental terms is, at least for the most part, behaviour. The requirement of public accessibility is met by pulse rates and brain states, but in fact we do not usually learn or apply mental terms on the basis of such phenomena.

It is a fact about human history that we have learned to correlate such things as brain states with sensations. Malcolm sees the absurdity in supposing that we could have
learned to correlate in this way all the outer manifestations of inner sensations with the sensations themselves. He says:

...one may be inclined to think that there cannot be a criterion (something that settles a question with certainty) of someone's having a sore foot or having dreamt, but merely various 'outer' phenomena that are empirically correlated with sore feet and dreams. This view, however, is self-contradictory: without criteria for the occurrence of these things the correlations could not be established.2

What I object to in this passage is the claim that one cannot correlate dreams and sore feet with outer manifestations unless one can be certain that one has found examples of dreams and sore feet. I shall argue that it is enough to have reasonable grounds for supposing that someone has dreamt or has sore feet in order to go about establishing correlations.

Malcolm is not alone in his insistence that certainty is required for the establishment of correlations. Strawson argues in much the same way in Individuals. He says:

And, in the case of at least some P-predicates, the ways of telling must constitute in some sense logically adequate kinds of criteria for the ascription of the P-predicate. For
suppose in no case did these ways of telling constitute logically adequate kinds of criteria. Then we should have to think of the relation between the ways of telling and what the P-predicate ascribes, or a part of what it ascribes, always in the following way: we should have to think of the ways of telling as signs of the presence, in the individual concerned, of this different thing, viz. the state of consciousness. But then we could only know that the way of telling was a sign of the presence of the different thing ascribed by the P-predicate, by the observation of correlations between the two.

Strawson does qualify his claim that the ways of telling must be 'logically adequate' with the phrase 'in some sense', but the later part of the passage I have just quoted suggests that this is not much of a qualification. Malcolm speaks of 'something that settles a question with certainty' and Strawson speaks of 'ways of telling'. Expressions like these suggest that what is being discussed is our everyday application of words, the decision procedures we in fact use in deciding whether or not someone is in pain or has dreamt, etc. I think that notions such as 'certainty' and 'logically adequate kinds of criteria' have no place here. Before arguing for this position, I should make it clear that I am not claiming that there is anything intrinsically dubious about such notions.

There is nothing illegitimate in saying that memory can
supply a logically adequate criterion of personal identity. Likewise, it is quite in order to argue that the concept of morality is logically tied to the concept of the happiness of sentient beings. As long as one is dealing with questions of conceptual dependence, with questions such as 'What is a dream?' and 'What is a physical object?', there is nothing wrong with speaking of 'logically adequate criteria', etc.

Malcolm denies that he is dealing with such questions. He explains his use of 'criterion' in this way:

One cause of the difficulty is a temptation to think that when one states the criterion for something one says what that something is—one defines it. But this is wrong. The criterion of someone's having a sore foot is what he does and says in certain circumstances: and that is not a sore foot.

Indeed, Malcolm seems to find questions of conceptual dependence and definition unintelligible. He says:

...I am not trying to say what dreaming is: I do not understand what it would mean to do that. I merely set forth the reminder that in our daily discourse about dreams what we take as determining beyond question that a man dreamt is that in sincerity he should tell a dream or say he had one.

Dreaming looks like an analysis of the concept of dreaming.
Malcolm's conclusion that dreams are not experiences looks like part of the answer to the question 'What is dreaming?' I think that we must construe Malcolm's enterprise as being a conceptual investigation, notwithstanding his denial.

I think that the fact that we ascribe sensation predicates on the basis of behaviour and the fact that we say that someone has dreamt on the basis of his dream report are important. I think there are conceptual connections between sensations and behaviour, between dreams and sincere dream reports, and so on. What I deny is that these conceptual connections are of a kind which make behaviour and dream reports 'logically adequate criteria' for saying that someone has a certain sensation or has dreamt. I deny that there is anything to which we can have access which can determine 'beyond question' that someone has dreamt or has a sore foot. What needs to be examined is not 'what we take as determining beyond question', but what we take as good evidence for, good reasons for thinking that, and so on.

I think that it might be helpful to suggest an analogy between the ways we ascribe mental predicates on the basis of behaviour and the ways in which we make physical object claims on the basis of our sensory experiences. It is clear that the only evidence one has for a claim about physical objects is the 'evidence of the senses', one's sensory
experiences. On the question of the perception of physical objects, I should be prepared to argue, much as Malcolm argues on the question of feelings, experiences, etc., that it is unintelligible to suppose that we could have discovered that our senses are usually reliable by discovering empirical correlations between our sensory states and physical objects. I do not think that it follows from this that there must be some privileged kind of sensory states or a large enough body of sensory states, a 'criterion' of perception, against which one can check other sensory states. If one looks across a field and sees or seems to see a two-headed cow, the mere fact that this is unusual makes one dubious as to whether there really is a two-headed cow there. But looking from another angle and seeing that there are two cows is not a special way of looking; there are no privileged angles for looking at cows, although in each particular case there are better and worse angles. Touching the cows or looking several times from different angles will, for practical purposes, settle the question of whether there are one or two cows, but this does not show that touching or a certain number of looks constitutes evidence which determines 'beyond question' the existence of two cows.

The sort of mild skepticism which I am maintaining is
not, of course, without its critics. Austin's criticism is most well-known, but I shall deal only with one of Malcolm's arguments. Malcolm claims that we can have absolutely certain knowledge of some matters of fact. He claims that he can know with certainty that there is an ink-bottle on his desk on the basis of present evidence, and denies that future events could force him to admit that he was mistaken. Malcolm says in 'Knowledge and Belief':

   Now could it turn out to be false that there is an ink-bottle directly in front of me on this desk? Many philosophers would say that many things could happen of such a nature that if they did happen it would be proved that I am deceived. It could happen that when I next reach for this ink-bottle my hand should seem to pass through it. It could happen that in the next moment the ink-bottle will suddenly vanish.

   Not only do I not have to admit that those extraordinary occurrences would be evidence that there is no ink-bottle here; the fact is that I do not admit it. There is nothing whatever that could happen in the next moment or the next year that would by me be called evidence that there is not an ink-bottle here now. No future experience or investigation could prove to me that I am mistaken.

Malcolm's use of the phrase 'be proved that I am deceived' and 'could prove to me that I am mistaken' suggest the sort of muddle which Malcolm is in. Of course the skeptic cannot provide proof that a mistake has been made; his position
is that there can be no strict proof of empirical claims.

Malcolm argues for his position in the following way:

Someone asks you for a dollar. You say "There is one in this drawer." You open the drawer and look, but it is perfectly empty. Your statement turned out to be false. This can be said because you discovered an empty drawer. It could not be said if it were only probable that the drawer is empty....One statement about physical things turned out to be false only because you made sure of another statement about physical things. The two concepts cannot exist apart. Therefore it is impossible that every statement about physical things could turn out to be false.

There are two obvious criticisms of this line of argument. First, as I have already argued, we are justified in saying that we have made a mistake when we have good reasons to think so; Malcolm is wrong in thinking that we must make sure that the drawer is empty before concluding that the claim that there is a dollar in the drawer was mistaken. Second, even the conclusion that it is impossible that every statement about physical things could turn out to be false does not guarantee the truth of any particular empirical statement, any more than the impossibility of every Canadian becoming the next Prime Minister guarantees that Smith will not become the next Prime Minister. This error seems so gross that it is hard to believe that Malcolm is
making it; but if he is not, there seems to be no point to his conclusion that it is impossible that all empirical claims could turn out to be false.

I have suggested an analogy between the claims we make about other people's mental states and the claims we make about physical objects. I have argued that we can never be absolutely certain in our claims about things like ink-bottles, but that nevertheless terms such as 'ink-bottle' have a place in the language. I think that an element of uncertainty in the claims we make about other people's mental states is, likewise, no reason for supposing that we cannot use mental terms. In both cases, I reject the line of argument which suggests that there must be examples about which there can be no doubt, so-called 'paradigm cases', if the language is to be taught and used.

I should point out an important disanalogy between claims about physical objects and claims about other people's mental states. People have knowledge of their own mental states and they do not get it as others do, by observing their behaviour. This suggests a basis for skepticism over claims about others' mental states which is lacking in physical object claims. One can always be skeptical about a physical object claim because one can always claim that there is not enough sensory evidence, but this is the only
basis for such skepticism. One can be skeptical over a claim about others' mental states on this basis, and it can at least be argued that one can also be skeptical over such claims because we do not have the right kind of evidence; that we have only behaviour, no matter how much evidence we gather. This radical skepticism over other minds is not justified. It is a necessary condition of our being able to put mental terms to a serious use in a public language that we should be able to apply them on the basis of publicly observable phenomena. Mental terms are put to a serious use, and hence the necessary condition obtains. This is a point about the nature of terms which are used in a public language, and I think that it is what underlies Strawson's clearly false claims about 'logically adequate criteria'.

I have tried to show that the search for certainty is misguided; the word 'dream' can have a use, even though we can never be absolutely certain that someone has dreamt. From the insight that something which is accessible to the public must have some bearing on the truth of claims such as 'He dreamt last night' if others are to understand it, Malcolm slides to the position that the meaning of 'He dreamt last night' is determined by the evidence we actually use to justify the claim. This is discussed by Putnam in 'Dreaming and "Depth Grammar"'. I completely agree with
Putnam's criticism:

...the thesis that the existence of a 'criterion', in Malcolm's sense, is a prerequisite for even the assignability of truth-values is badly in need of support. I do not wish to discuss the whole issue of Verificationism here; but let me point out that Malcolm's requirements are much stronger than those of other Verificationists, e.g., Carnap and Reichenbach. Carnap and Reichenbach require only that a sentence should be able to be used to express the conclusion of an inductive inference, or still more weakly, that it should be possible to assign some kind of inductive probability to it, for it to be 'cognitively meaningful'. Malcolm, in effect, rejects this view on the ground that you cannot assign a probability to something that is unintelligible, and that a sentence is unintelligible if there is no criterion for its being used to say what is true. If this has any plausibility at all, it seems to accrue from the ambiguity: criterion= set of truth conditions, vs. criterion= 'way of settling a question with certainty' (Malcolm's notion). 9

Putnam's paper was originally entitled 'Arguments based on children's learning to talk', and I now turn to Malcolm's emphasis on the fact that children cannot be taught the word 'dream' while they are dreaming.

Malcolm uses considerations of how the word 'dream' is taught to support his claim that dreams are not experiences that one has in sleep. He says:
If after waking from sleep a child tells us that he saw and did and thought various things, none of which could be true, and if his relation of these incidents has spontaneity and no appearance of invention, then we say to him 'It was a dream.'

No doubt many children learn the word 'dream' in much this way, but I see no reason why this has to be so. Malcolm does not even consider the possibility that a child might be taught that 'dream' means 'an experience or thought had while asleep'. This would seem to be the natural way to teach the word to someone who has never dreamt. There are people who sincerely claim that they have never dreamt; presumably they understand what they are saying. Such people give every indication of understanding the word 'dream'; nothing in their linguistic behaviour suggests that they do not. I do not know how such people learnt the word 'dream', and I do not think that it matters. What is known, and what does matter, is that some people did not learn how to use the word in the way that Malcolm suggests.

Even supposing that Malcolm is right and that everyone who can use the word 'dream' correctly learnt how to do so in the way that Malcolm says, I do not think that his position is supported by such considerations. I do not think that the meaning of a word and the way in which it is taught are as closely linked as Malcolm would have us believe. The most
favourable examples for Malcolm's position are those in which a word is always learnt ostensively, colour words, for example. I see no reason why a child should not learn the meaning of 'green' by being shown things that only seem green. Suppose a child were kept away from everything green. To teach him the word 'green', he is shown blue objects in a yellow light against a yellow background. We have every reason to suppose that the child, when he subsequently comes across green things, will be able to correctly identify their colour. To be able to do this just is to understand what 'green' means.

A possible objection is that the child in my example will not mean by 'green' what we do, but will mean 'seems green'. This objection would have considerable force if the distinction between being green and seeming to be green worked in the same way as the distinction between being green and being, say, red. It does not. The child in my example, on discovering that he has been systematically deceived, might well be more cautious than most people in making claims about the colour of things, and this could show in his use of 'seems', 'I think that', etc. I do not think that anyone would want to seriously argue that this would constitute even a partial failure to have learnt the meaning of 'green'.
Putnam argues for my claim that we do not need 'criteria' in Malcolm's sense. He says:

Could we have only 'indications' and no 'criterion'? Consider the following case: there is a disease, multiple sclerosis, which is extremely difficult to diagnose. The symptoms resemble those of other neurological diseases; and not all of the symptoms are usually present. Some neurologists believe that multiple sclerosis is caused by a virus, although they cannot presently specify what virus. Suppose a patient, X, has a 'paradigmatic' case of multiple sclerosis. Then Malcolm's view is that, no matter what we find out later, X has multiple sclerosis because that is what we presently mean. In particular, if we later identify a virus as the cause of multiple sclerosis, and this patient's condition was not caused by that virus, he still had multiple sclerosis. (Saying that this virus was the cause of multiple sclerosis was changing the concept. One could even say in the manner of Malcolm, p. 81: 'Considering the radical conceptual changes that the adoption of a virological criterion would entail, it is evident that a new concept would have been created that only remotely resembled the old one.' Perhaps the discoveries of the investigators would not 'pertain to multiple sclerosis!!')

I shall try to show that this is not unfair to Malcolm.

In discussing some empirical studies on dreaming, Malcolm says:

We ought to...ask ourselves whether it is appropriate to call this creation a
concept of dreaming. If rapid eye movements during sleep became the criterion of dreaming one consequence is that if someone were to tell a dream it could turn out that his impression that he dreamt was mistaken. Another consequence is that it would be possible to discover that a man's assertion that he had slept a dreamless sleep was in error.

I think that most people would consider 'this creation' to be the familiar concept of dreaming. The supposition that one only thinks that one has dreamt strikes most people as completely intelligible, indeed this is what many people take Malcolm's thesis in *Dreaming* to be. Likewise, the supposition that we dream and forget our dreams before awakening does not strike most people as unintelligible. Malcolm thinks that such suppositions must involve a 'new concept' of dreaming. If this move is allowed, there seems to be no reasonable basis for disallowing the claim that research into multiple sclerosis must involve a 'new concept' of multiple sclerosis.

In a chapter entitled 'The Criteria of Sleep', Malcolm says:

In addition to...the criterion of...behaviour, there is the criterion of...testimony.

The differences in 'criteria' lead Malcolm to suppose that there are two concepts of sleep, one applicable to animals.
and human infants, the other to adults and older children. It is worth pointing out that giving testimony is a kind of behaviour. Of course Malcolm could reword this passage, but if he did so I think that his claim that there are two concepts of sleep would lose any plausibility it now has. I shall not press this point, since I am now going to argue that the question of how many concepts of sleep (or of anything else) there are rests on a confusion.

Malcolm assumes, but never explicitly states, that there are definite ways in which concepts can be individuated. This assumption needs to be examined. I have denied that Malcolm's 'criteria' can serve to clearly individuate concepts, and I do not think that some other way of systematically individuating concepts can be given. I claim that the notion of the identity of concepts has not been made precise enough to do the sort of work that Malcolm wants it to do. The prospects of rectifying this state of affairs look bleak. Consider the concept of pain.

Sometimes one wants to say that a man is in pain and sometimes one wants to say that a fish is in pain. The question of whether the concept of pain is 'the same' in both cases just is the question of whether 'pain' is ambiguous. I do not think that there is any principled way of settling this question. Quine's remarks on ambiguity,
while they have not demonstrated that there can be no principled distinction between ambiguity and vagueness, have cast the gravest doubts on what many people have taken to be a distinction which does not need to be explicated. A man's pain behaviour differs from a fish's, but of course one man's pain behaviour differs from another's. I do not think that much more can be said than that we find it natural to use a single word, 'pain', in speaking of both men and fish. As we learn more about men and fish, we may find it either more or less natural to do so.

I think that the same considerations apply to the question of whether or not the experimental psychologists's and the layman's concepts of dreaming are different. Both use the word 'dream' and neither feels that the other's use of the word is eccentric. As long as that is so, they both have the 'same concept' of dreaming—on the only intelligible interpretation of 'same concept'. Malcolm, in a passage I have already quoted, speaks of rapid eye movements becoming the 'criterion' of dreaming, and suggests that this would be a different concept of dreaming. Of course an experimental psychologist who said 'By "dream" I mean mental events correlated with rapid eye movements in sleep' would be straining our present linguistic intuitions, but few people say this sort of thing. If it were established that a very
strong correlation obtained between rapid eye movements and dream memories, and if this were a matter of general knowledge, then I think that our linguistic intuitions would be less strained. Some people might continue to insist that there is merely an extensional equivalence between 'dreams' and 'mental events correlated with rapid eye movements in sleep', but this position would be difficult to maintain. The difficulties in the distinction between intension and extension are brought out by Quine in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'.

(Quine's remarks in 'Two Dogmas' are very similar in spirit to the views of Putnam which I have quoted. One can trace a line of thought from 'Two Dogmas' to Putnam's 'The Analytic and the Synthetic', to Putnam's discussion of cluster-concepts in 'Brains and Behaviour' and on to 'Dreaming and "Depth Grammar"'.)

As I have said, the experimental psychologist does not begin by making his hypothesis true by definition. Like the layman, he thinks that dreams are experiences in sleep. The data that he works from are people's dream reports, and his belief that people have experiences in sleep cannot be conclusively verified by dream reports or anything else. This does not make his belief worthless. As I have tried to show earlier in this chapter, our most mundane beliefs about
the objects we deal with in ordinary life cannot be conclusively verified. It is enough for the experimental psychologist to have good reasons to think that someone has dreamt in order to go about correlating dreams with such things as rapid eye movements in sleep. Once such a correlation is even tentatively established, rapid eye movements in sleep and so on have some evidential value. Given a correlation between rapid eye movements in sleep and dreams, and faced with a case in which there were rapid eye movements in sleep but no dream memories, the psychologist does not have to abandon his hypothesis. He can simply claim that the dreamer forgot his dream. As Malcolm points out, such claims must be confirmable in principle if they are to be intelligible. I think that the psychologist's claim would be confirmable in principle, and not just by the rapid eye movements in sleep. The psychologist thinks, although he does not know, that other evidence could be found which would have a bearing on the question. Perhaps brain states could also be correlated with dreams. The point is that the choice between claiming that the dreamer forgot his dream and abandoning the hypothesis that dreams are correlated with rapid eye movements in sleep need not be arbitrary; a network of beliefs might be involved. Moreover, the psychologist can modify his hypothesis. He can say that
rapid eye movements in sleep usually are a sign of dreams, and this would not destroy the evidential value of rapid eye movements in sleep.

Malcolm's objection to correlating experiences with brain states and using the existence of those brain states in sleep as evidence for the claim that dreams are experiences in sleep also involves confirmation. He says:

The imagined correlation would, of necessity, have been established only for the case of people who were awake.... The attempt to extend the inductive reasoning to the case of sleeping persons would yield a conclusion that was logically incapable of confirmation.19

I claim that dream memories would provide confirmation. Not conclusive confirmation, but confirmation nevertheless. Of course we do not have to remain passive observers. Perhaps we could induce the brain states in question with drugs, and if this always resulted in dream memories, it would become very hard to deny that dreams are experiences in sleep.

I shall end my discussion of confirmation with a final quotation from 'Dreaming and "Depth Grammar"':

More importantly, kinds of confirmation and disconfirmation are possible that Malcolm simply does not consider: model building and theory construction.... Thus, assuming that dreams take place 'in physical time'—i.e., that they start and stop at some time or
other—various things become inductive evidence that correlations hold:
correlations between the things we do with our eyes, muscles, vocal cords, as we sleep and dream events; and
correlations between the neural processes that normally go with 'seeing' certain things and dream events. If these correlations appear to be not only statistically significant, but also to 'fit' into an explanatory theory of dreaming, then they are not only highly confirmed; but the underlying assumption that dreams 'take place in physical time' is equally highly confirmed. It sometimes appears as if Malcolm wants to eliminate this kind of 'inverse deductive method' (as Mill called it) from science, and to allow only (1) conclusive verification based on the application of 'criteria', and (2) inductive inference in the most restricted possible sense: induction by simple enumeration. But as Mill remarked, no developed social science (or any other science, one might add) will ever be possible on this basis.20

I conclude that empirical investigation could falsify Malcolm's thesis.

By the same token, empirical investigation could verify Malcolm's thesis. We could have evidence which would lead us to reject the common belief that dreams are experiences which we later remember, but this sort of evidence is just the sort of evidence which Malcolm claims is irrelevant to his thesis.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 6

1 Malcolm, *Dreaming*, p. 54.

2 Ibid., pp. 60-1.


4 Malcolm, *Dreaming*, p. 60.

5 Ibid., p. 59.


8 Ibid., p. 69.


14 Ibid., p. 23.

15 W. V. O. Quine, Word and Object (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), Section 27.


19 Malcolm, Dreaming, p. 43.

I have argued that Malcolm's notion of 'criteria' rests on a mistake, but it is worth examining a line of argument that Malcolm might present against Quinton's story. I think that Malcolm would argue against Quinton that the story of Bylake must remain the story of a strange series of dreams. He would argue that I cannot be awake and fishing in Bylake because I am asleep, and this in turn can be established because the 'criteria' of sleep have been met. This line of argument is fallacious because it begs the question against Quinton. Of course we are justified in saying that a person is asleep when we see one body lying still in bed; we have every reason to suppose that there is no Bylake in which the person in question is wide awake. However, the fact that we assume that there is no Bylake does not show that there cannot be one. In order to apply a 'criterion' of bodily behaviour in deciding whether or not Smith is asleep, we must first find out which body is Smith's. There is no a priori guarantee that Smith does not have a second body, in this world or another.

It might seem that I have been unfair to Malcolm in
supposing that he would argue in this way, but I think that Malcolm would be in trouble if he modified his position. Suppose that Malcolm grants Quinton his story, but claims that it has nothing to do with dreams just because it is a story about a second real world. If Malcolm conceded this much, I think that he would immediately have to make two further concessions. First, he would have to retract his claim that we have usable 'criteria' in terms of which to learn and apply the words 'sleep' and 'dream'. Second, and far more important, his claim that it is unintelligible to ask whether a dream memory is correct becomes empty. This needs some explanation.

Now, while I am awake in Canada, I do not believe that I have a second life in Bylake. My belief that I inhabit only one world is based on my dream memories. I assume, but I do not know with absolute certainty, that my dream memories are at least accurate enough to justify my claim that I inhabit only one world. This is an empirical claim which could conceivably be falsified. It would be falsified if I had reason to believe that all or most of my dream memories up to now were mistaken in a particular way, if I had reason to believe that I had so misremembered Bylake that I have wrongly concluded that it does not exist. In first discussing Quinton's story, I raised the possibility
that I might come to think of my past in Bylake in much the same way that someone suffering from total amnesia comes to think about his past here. I think that I could come to believe that my past dream memories were all or mostly incorrect on the basis of future knowledge that I could obtain in Bylake. Granted, this possibility is remote, but it supplies the necessary empirical content to the supposition that all or most of my dream memories up to now have been incorrect. If this is right, if it is always intelligible to suppose that all or most of my dream memories up to now have been incorrect, it follows that it is always intelligible to suppose that some or any one of them have been incorrect.

Malcolm would object that what has been shown is not that it is intelligible to suppose that a dream memory is incorrect but, rather, that it is intelligible to suppose that what one has taken to be a dream memory could turn out to be a real memory. He would point to the common phenomenon of someone not knowing whether he did something or whether he merely dreamt that he did it, and correctly claim that we have straightforward ways of settling such questions. If I awaken wondering whether I had an accident with my car or whether I merely dreamt that I had an accident with my car, I can settle the question by looking
at my car. That is, I can settle the question by appealing to something other than memories or dream memories. In contrast, I cannot bring such evidence to bear on my belief that I inhabit only one world; all I have that is relevant to the question is a group of items in my present experience which might be dream memories or might be real memories. If Malcolm grants that Bylake is a logical possibility, then he is faced with a strange situation. I assume that my dream memories are not grossly incorrect memories of Bylake; because I trust my memories, I think that they are merely dream memories. On Malcolm's view, this comes down to saying that because I think that my memories are more-or-less correct, I am justified in saying that the question of their correctness is unintelligible. This point can be put in another way: unless we assume that Malcolm is wrong in his claim that it is unintelligible to say that a dream memory is right or wrong, we are never justified in calling a memory-like phenomenon a 'dream memory'.

In discussing Yost and Kalish's veridical dreams, in telling the story of Bylake, in attacking Malcolm's position on 'private language' and 'criteria', and in showing the strange consequences of the view that it is unintelligible to ask whether a dream memory is correct, I have not refuted Malcolm's thesis. However, I think that I have forced
anyone who holds a Malcolmian view back to a single point: the claim that only a person who is awake can intelligibly be said to have experiences, because only a person who is awake can behave in a way which suggests that he is having experiences. It is on this point that Malcolm must make his case.

Malcolm does not equate having a certain experience with behaving in a certain way; he does not claim that there cannot be experiences which are not manifested in behaviour. He does not deny that it is intelligible to suppose that a person who is awake is now having an experience although he gives no outer sign of it, because we know what it would be like for him to give an outer sign of it. In contrast, according to Malcolm, nothing could count as behavioural evidence that a sleeping man is now having an experience, since any such evidence would be evidence to show that he is not asleep. I have no objection to the logical point; I see nothing wrong with the claim that 'Smith is asleep' entails 'Smith is not behaving in a way which suggests that he is having experiences.' It is Malcolm's use of the point which is in error. In a passage which I have already quoted in connection with Malcolm's views on inductive evidence, Malcolm says:

The attempt to extend the inductive
reasoning to the case of sleeping persons would yield a conclusion that was logically incapable of confirmation. 1

Likewise, it is considerations of logical impossibility that lead Malcolm to say:

Surely there is something dubious in the assumption that there can be a true judgment that cannot be communicated to others. 2

This brings to mind the discussion of 'private language', and I shall now argue that Malcolm's whole position on dreaming rests on the same muddle over modalities as does his position on 'private language'.

I take it that no one wants to deny that a stoic can feel pain, be afraid, make judgments, etc. without showing it. Certainly Malcolm would not claim that it is unintelligible to suppose that a stoic is in considerable pain although he gives no sign of it, and this is only to admit that there can be stoics. Now, what differences are there between the supposition that Smith, the sleeper, is having an unpleasant experience and not showing it, and the supposition that Jones, the stoic, is having an unpleasant experience and not showing it? It is true that any manifestation of the experience by Smith is reason to think
that he is not asleep. But likewise, any manifestation of the experience by Jones is reason to think that he is not a stoic. These are both necessary truths. Malcolm makes his case on the claim that it is a necessary truth that a sleeper cannot manifest experiences in behaviour. This is not quite right. It is a necessary truth that a sleeper, *qua* sleeper, cannot manifest experiences in behaviour. But likewise, it is a necessary truth that a stoic, *qua* stoic, cannot manifest experiences in behaviour. Obviously, it is not a necessary truth that Smith and Jones cannot at any particular time behave in any particular way. I think that the two cases are symmetrical in all relevant respects.

My argument can be generalized beyond the example of the stoic. Of anyone, in any situation whatever in which he is not manifesting his experiences, it is necessarily true that he is, *qua* person not manifesting his experiences, not manifesting his experiences. Once it is seen that Malcolm's point that it is a necessary truth that a sleeper cannot behave in a way which suggests that he is having experiences is elliptical, his position loses any plausibility it might have had.

It can now be seen that the fact that 'I am asleep' is false whenever it is asserted does nothing to support Malcolm's position. 'I am in pain but not telling anyone'
is likewise false whenever it is asserted, and many more examples could be developed. 'I am asleep' and 'I am dreaming' are peculiar only in that they are simple. However, I see no reason why there should not be a word, 'W', which means 'in pain but not telling anyone'. 'I am W' would be just like 'I am asleep' and 'I am dreaming', and it seems clear that our vocabulary could have many more words like 'W' in it than it does.

I conclude that there are no conceptual grounds for supposing that dream memories are not memories of experiences in sleep. Although Malcolm does not think so, we could, as I argued in the previous chapter, bring physiological evidence to bear for or against the natural supposition that dream memories are memories of experiences in sleep. In the absence of such evidence, we are entitled to assume that our dream memories are correct memories of experiences if they do not conflict with our beliefs about the world. The only way in which this conflict can arise is over the question of the duration of dreams. If I sleep for eight hours and then awaken thinking that I have been anxious for ten hours since I fell asleep, then I must assume that my dream memory is mistaken or that my judgment of time in my dream was in error.

I have totally rejected Malcolm's conclusions, and I
should now deal with his view that we are doomed to hopeless skepticism if we do not accept them, if we admit the legitimacy of questions such as 'Am I dreaming?' Malcolm argues:

There is, prima facie, a simple but devastating objection to the use of the coherence principle for finding out whether one is awake or dreaming, and it is surprising that either it has not occurred to the philosophers who accept the principle or, if it has, that they have said nothing about how to deal with it....The objection that should occur to anyone is that it is possible a person should dream that the right connections hold, dream that he connects his present perceptions with 'the whole course of his life'.

On the basis of this 'devastating objection', Malcolm dismisses Ayer's discussion of dreaming in The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. I think that Ayer has seen the objection and has dealt adequately with it.

Malcolm quotes the following passage from Ayer:

I may find among my sense-data the relations that justify me in grouping them to form material things; I may apply the authorized methods for assigning to these things their 'real characteristics'; I may even have such experiences as I should ordinarily describe by saying that I was making use of the criteria of measurement; and still I may wake to find that I have been dreaming all along....
Obviously, Ayer has seen the objection. Malcolm makes a further quotation from Ayer:

> So long as the general structure of my sense-data conforms to the expectations that I derive from the memory of my past experience, I remain convinced that I am not living in a dream; and the longer the series of successful predictions is extended, the smaller becomes the probability that I am mistaken.\(^5\)

Malcolm does not quote the sentence immediately following this passage. Ayer continues:

> Admittedly, this progressive limitation of the probability of illusion can never reach the status of a formal demonstration. But then...it is unreasonable to expect that it should.\(^6\)

I have dealt with Malcolm's demand for absolute certainty in my previous chapter. Ayer has shown how we can be certain for all practical purposes that we are not dreaming. That things seem coherent is good, but not conclusive, evidence that they are coherent; the possibility that we are mistaken need not prevent us from weighing evidence.

In discussing the principle of coherence, Malcolm says:

> I suspect that the principle has been accepted...because philosophers have assumed that it must be possible to tell whether one is awake or asleep
(at least with probability) and also it has seemed to them that there could not be a test for this other than coherence. Without thinking it through they have supposed that coherence works as a test, because it has to work. 7

This sort of diagnosis fits Malcolm's position better than Ayer's. It can be argued that Malcolm adopts his radical position largely because he thinks that such a position is needed to avoid an abyss of hopeless skepticism.

Malcolm's book is developed from a few remarks about dreaming that Wittgenstein makes in the Philosophical Investigations. 8 Malcolm's conclusions rest heavily on Wittgenstein's doctrines about 'private language' and Wittgenstein's attitude to the general problem of other minds. It would be much harder to see some of the errors in the Philosophical Investigations if Malcolm had not developed them to what I have tried to show are completely untenable conclusions.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 7

1 Malcolm, Dreaming, p. 43.

2 Ibid., p. 9.

3 Ibid., p. 108.


5 Ibid., p. 274, quoted by Malcolm, Dreaming, p. 111.

6 Ibid., p. 274.


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