

Wittgenstein's metaphysics of the inner and the outer

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ABSTRACT

In the very same manuscripts in which Wittgenstein, in the last two years of his life, writes about colours and about certainty, he also writes about the concepts of the inner and the outer, the other minds problem and the problem of pretending. The latter remarks, although very original, are still unpublished; in this article they are examined in detail. The thesis defended is that Wittgenstein carries out a radical reversal of the traditional picture of our knowledge of other minds according to which the uncertainty and unpredictability of the outer has to be explained by the inner. Wittgenstein wants to give an analysis of our knowledge of other minds which goes beyond the distinction between the inner and the outer. The uncertainty and unpredictability is a consequence of the fact that our psychological concepts are based upon the indefiniteness of situations in which we talk about other minds. This factual way of living and not a metaphysically hidden mind explains the uncertainty. It is argued that in a very interesting way Wittgenstein's thoughts about the inner and the outer are an application of his remarks about certainty and doubt.

It is wellknown that during the last two years of his life (after may 1949) Wittgenstein wrote on two philosophical themes. The one concerned knowledge and certainty; Wittgenstein's thoughts on this topic were published as *ON CERTAINTY* in 1969. The other theme was the analysis of colour concepts and Wittgenstein's thoughts on this

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topic were published in 1977 under the title REMARKS ON COLOUR. Although von Wright ⁽¹⁾ remarks that Wittgenstein also wrote on a third theme, which von Wright called THE INNER AND THE OUTER, and that these writings are due to appear as the second of two volumes of LAST WRITINGS it is not to be expected that they will be published in the near future.

This article expounds Wittgenstein's latest thoughts on the inner and the outer. The aim is to indicate how these very original thoughts contribute to a deeper understanding of our knowledge of other minds and to what degree they are an elaboration of Wittgenstein's thoughts on certainty and knowledge. The main thesis defended will be that Wittgenstein, after having established in PI, par. 244-315, the non-primacy of the inner in the case of the first person use of psychological concepts now, as late as 1949-1951, is concerned to establish the non-primacy of the inner in the case of the third person use of psychological concepts. More specifically, the fundamental thesis attributed to Wittgenstein will be that he is carrying out a radical reversal of the traditional picture according to which the uncertainty and unpredictability of the outer has to be explained by the inner. The position ascribed to Wittgenstein will be that the uncertainty and unpredictability of the outer is a consequence of the fact that our psychological concepts, especially those applied to other persons, are based upon the indefiniteness of human life. As his treatment of the first person led him to a refutation of solipsism, his approach to the third person will lead him to repudiating skepticism about other minds.

First more about the Nachlass, the extensive legacy of unpublished writings Wittgenstein left at his death ⁽²⁾. In MS169 Wittgenstein discusses the other minds problem consistently and without interruptions over the span of roughly 80 notebook pages. A significant block of material in PI, part. 2, (p. 222-229) is strongly indebted to MS169 ⁽³⁾. Two other major sources of Wittgenstein's treatment of the third person are found in MS173 and MS174. The first of these notebooks was written between 24 March and 12 April 1950. In this manuscript Wittgenstein is dealing mostly with the topic of colours. However a significant block is a stretch of text (36 notebook pages) dealing exclusively with the third person. A second major source is found in MS174 of which the first 35 pages are concerned with other minds, the second half with certainty. A smaller but equally important source is found in MS176 which contributed most to *ON CERTAINTY*. An important and rather discursive stretch of remarks concerning other minds is written between what have since been published as OC, par. 523 and 524 ⁽⁴⁾.

(1) See von Wright, *WITTGENSTEIN*, Basil Blackwell 1980, p. 59.

(2) All my references to the Nachlass will be to the Cornell University Library microfilm version of Wittgenstein's papers (made in 1967). For their generous permission to cite material from Wittgenstein's Nachlass, I thank the executors of Wittgenstein's literary estate (professor von Wright, Anscombe and Rhees).

(3) Von Wright underestimates the importance of this manuscript for PI, part. 2. See von Wright, 1980, p. 134.

(4) That these remarks have been omitted is nowhere being indicated in the edition of *ON CERTAINTY*.

A first indication of Wittgenstein's approach to the problem of other minds is given in a fragment right after what we now know as OC, par. 523:

Kann man wissen was in dem Andern vorgeht, wie er selbst es weiss?
—Wie weiss er es denn? Er kann sein Gefühl (z.B.) ausdrücken-sein Erlebnis ausdrücken-Ein Zweifel für ihn ob er wirklich dies Erlebnis habe
—analog dem Zweifel, ob er die und die Krankheit habe— tritt in das Spiel nicht ein, und darum ist es falsch zu sagen er wisse, was er erlebe. Der Andre aber kann sehr wohl zweifeln, ob jener das Erlebnis habe. Der Zweifel tritt also ins Spiel ein, aber eben darum ist es auch möglich dass Sicherheit besteht. (MS176, p. 47)

First of all, what is the central concern of this rather discursive passage? In the first sentence the topic is generally stated as a question concerning our knowledge of other minds. On closer inspection of the cited passage we can see that Wittgenstein seeks to establish three points:

(A) the problem of other minds is the reversal of the coin of the problem of our knowledge of our own minds.

(B) in the third person use of psychological concepts there is place for doubt.

(C) in the third person use of psychological concepts there is also certainty.

In what follows I will further explore Wittgenstein's arguments for (A), (B) and (C) respectively.

What is the connection between the other minds problem and the problem of our knowledge of our own minds? (point A). Wittgenstein diagnoses both problems as emerging from a common conceptual confusion. In PI, par. 246 Wittgenstein touches only very slightly upon this connection when he remarks that other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations only from my behaviour—for I cannot be said to learn of them, I have them. In this cryptic remark Wittgenstein implicitly rejects what I will call the symmetrical construction of the use of psychological concepts in the first and third person. According to this construction ascriptions of psychological concepts to oneself and to others would be symmetrical in respect of verification. In our own case we would have direct inner evidence for ascriptions of psychological concepts, in the case of other persons indirect outer evidence. The consequence of this symmetrical construction is that in the first person direct evidence guarantees certainty whereas in the third person the indirect outer evidence leads to uncertainty. An explicit reference to this symmetrical construction of the inner and the outer coupled with a rejection of it is found in this passage:

Das Kennzeichnende vom Seelischen scheint zu sein, dass man es im Andern nach dem Äussern erraten-raten- muss und nur von sich her kennt.

Aber wenn durch genaueres Überlegen diese Ansicht in Rauch aufgeht, so ist zwar nicht das Innere zum Äusseren geworden, aber es gibt für uns nicht mehr direkte innere und indirekte äussere Evidenz des Seelischen (MS, 173, p. 33).

In another fragment in the same notebook Wittgenstein contrasts this symmetrical construction with his own asymmetrical construction of the inner and the outer:

Es ist nicht so, als hätte ich in mir direkte, er für mein Seelisches aber nur indirekte. Sondern er hat dafür Evidenz, ich (aber) nicht. (MS, 173, p. 42).

Here is how Wittgenstein reasons. Misled according to Wittgenstein by a misconstrual of the use of psychological concepts in the first and third person one is inclined to think that we cannot know the minds of others in the way that we know our own minds and hence that our knowledge of other minds is far inferior to knowledge of our own minds. The connection between the other minds problem and the problem of our own minds is indeed straightforward. If one constructs first person statements as based upon inner and direct acquaintance with private experiences it follows that, as we can never perceive the minds or what goes on in the minds of others directly, we can only know from our own case what experiences are really like. Knowledge of other minds can never be checked by a direct appeal to what goes on in their minds, as is possible in our own case. Experiences cannot be recognized with certainty just from externals. Outer, indirect evidence can only make it probable that someone feels pain or is acting as if in pain. Compared with the certainty of our knowledge of our own minds the uncertainty in the case of other minds is felt as a serious shortcoming.

Although I won't argue for it here I take it to be the main conclusion of the private-language argument that the first person use of psychological concepts is akin to expressions and it is a logical feature of expressions that they are not descriptions of experiences⁽⁵⁾. Expressions are not claims to knowledge. But if first person utterances are typically not based on evidence at all, the need to speak of indirect evidence in the third person use of psychological concepts disappears. That precisely is what Wittgenstein's asymmetrical proposal comes to: although expressions are, from the perspective of the first person, not descriptions, from the perspective of the third person a state of mind can be derived from them. In that sense the use of psychological concepts in the third person is based upon the evidence of behaviour.

So far so good. But the asymmetrical construal proposed by Wittgenstein has not

(5) Wittgenstein does not deny the possibility of a descriptive, retrospective use of first person statements. See for instance *LAST WRITINGS*, par. 32-51. See also my *Beyond the Inner and the Outer, Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology*. KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS, DORDRECHT 1990 chapter IV par. 3

yet solved the other minds problem. Even if Wittgenstein is right in arguing that we do not establish a correlation between the inner and the outer, neither in our own case nor in the case of others, the fact remains that in the case of others the appeal we have to make to the evidence of their behavior often leads to uncertainty. Wittgenstein even seems to be admitting this himself when he remarks in our first quotation that 'Der Zweifel tritt also ins Spiel ein...' (point B). In this context some philosophers are fond of invoking the phenomenon of pretence as a striking example of our uncertainty as to what goes on in other minds. We always have to remain uncertain as to whether a man really has pain or is just acting as if in pain. It is to this special problem that Wittgenstein turns on and on in MS169 and in a much smaller notebook MS171⁽⁶⁾.

Die Möglichkeit der Verstellung scheint eine Schwierigkeit zu erzeugen. Denn sie scheint die äussere Evidenz wertlos zu machen, d.h., die Evidenz zu annullieren (MS, 169, p. 68).

His repudiation of this special sort of skepticism about other minds can be reconstructed as consisting of two stages. In the first he seeks to establish that:

(i) for pretence there is also outward evidence

Then he tries to show that:

(ii) the language-game of pretending logically presupposes language-games of genuine expression of feelings and thoughts.

Textual justification in PI for ascribing these propositions to Wittgenstein is quite meagre. As to (i) Wittgenstein remarks that 'It is certainly possible to be convinced by evidence that someone is in such-and-such a state of mind, that, for instance, he is not pretending. But "evidence" here includes "imponderable" evidence' (PI, p. 228).

This fragment is an extremely succinct summary of many notebook pages in MS169 devoted to the topic of pretence. To prove his overall point that the uncertainty as to what goes on in other minds does not need to be explained by hidden mental processes at work behind a behavioral facade, Wittgenstein seeks to convince us of two conceptual insights. First he tries to show that the concept of pretence is internally related to outward evidence, second, how the evidence in this case is rather typical, i.e. imponderable evidence. As to this first point he gives the following grammatical descriptions:

Vor allem hat die Verstellung ihre eigenen äusseren Zeichen. Wie könnten wir sonst überhaupt über Verstellung reden? (MS, 169, p. 68)

Ich sage: 'Dieser Mensch verbirgt sein Inneres'. Woher weiss man, dass er es verbirgt? Es gibt dafür also Anzeichen und auch Anzeichen für das Gegenteil (MS, 169, p. 50).

(6) This notebook consists of 14 pages only.

Dass der Schauspieler den Kummer darstellen kann, zeigt die Unsicherheit der Evidenz, aber dass er den Kummer darstellen kann, auch die Realität der Evidenz. (MS, 173, p. 43).

His point is clear. From a person's behaviour conclusions can be drawn not only about his pain or sorrow but also about his pretending to be in pain or in sorrow. Pretence, for instance, can be exposed at the stage and be recognized. Hence there is such a thing as an appearance of pretence, although much more complicated than the appearance of, for instance, pain.

This point concerning pretence is part of his more general consideration that the uncertainty as to what goes on in other minds has nothing to do with a 'hidden inner mental thing' but everything with a 'hidden' outer thing.

Frag dich aber: woran kann man ein Anzeichen für etwas Inneres als untrüglich erkennen? Man kann es doch nur wieder am Äusseren messen. Also kommt es auf den Gegensatz Innen und Aussen nicht an. (MS, 169, p. 51).

To make this point clear Wittgenstein reminds us of cases in which we don't know what another person is thinking although there is no 'mental thing' that is 'hidden':

Bedenke, dass wir den Andern nicht nur dann nicht verstehen, wenn er seine Gefühle versteckt, sondern oft auch dann nicht, wenn er sie nicht versteckt, ja wenn er sein Äusserstes tut, sich verständlich zu machen. (MS 169, p. 43).

Other examples he cites are someone hiding his thoughts from me by expressing them in a language I don't know or by hiding his diary. The philosophical message is that in all these cases what is hidden can also be found. And because the possibility of finding is provided for what is hidden is also relevant and of interest for others. But the appeal of philosophical defenses of skepticism about other minds to a 'hidden inner mental thing' that is hidden in such a way that finding has become inconceivable is senseless. If what is thus hidden can never be found it won't be of interest too.

Because of these considerations I think that Wittgenstein's philosophy of the inner and the outer can be said to carry out a radical reversal in the traditional approach to other minds. Traditionally the uncertainty or unpredictability of other person's behaviour is explained by the inner or the soul⁽⁷⁾. Wittgenstein's position amounts to a reversal of this traditional picture according to which the outer is conceived as a facade behind

(7) The only other exception to this tradition is Wolfgang Köhler. See his *GESTALTPSYCHOLOGY*, New York, 1929, chapter VII. Wittgenstein refers to this chapter several times, for instance in *REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY*, vol. 2, par. 334, 335.

which mental powers are at work. He does not introduce the concepts of the soul, the inner, to justify or explain the uncertainty about behavior of other persons. The reversal is the case: the indefiniteness of human life and human behavior gives an explanation for the use of psychological concepts in the third person and the uncertainty implied by this use. The conditions for the possibility of our use of the concepts of the inner and the outer are given by a shared pattern of life. The use of those concepts has therefore to be described by reference not to something inner but to behavioral criteria which presuppose this pattern of life. According to Wittgenstein it resides in the nature of our concepts of the inner and the outer, i.e. in the fact that concepts are based upon a shared but irregular pattern of life, that uncertainty exists. Facial expressions, for instance, form an important basis for us to discriminate between real or unreal emotions. However, variability and irregularity are essential to facial expressions. In Wittgenstein's words: 'A facial expression that was completely fixed couldn't be a friendly one' (*REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY*, vol. 2, par. 615). The consequence of this irregularity and variability of the behavioral criteria on which the use of the concepts of the inner and the outer is based is that 'sufficient evidence passes over into insufficient without a sharp borderline' (ibid. par. 614). Hence the uncertainty about the inner is uncertainty about the outer. Differently posed: the uncertainty about other minds is constitutional, refers to the character of the language-game⁽⁸⁾.

What is this character more precisely? The second conceptual insight mentioned above gives an answer to this question. The specific character of the language-games in which we try to discern between real or feigned expressions is that they are constituted by what Wittgenstein calls «imponderable evidence». In PI he only cites examples of imponderable evidence. 'Imponderable evidence includes subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone' (PI, p. 228). His choice for the term «imponderable evidence» is rather subtle. The meaning of the term is, I think, that although you have evidence for something and are convinced of it, you are not able to specify your evidence in terms of general principles. If you are certain that somebody is feigning pain, for instance, your evidence can only be the look or glance which he has given another. And the only reason you can give to convince another that he is feigning could be 'If you had seen it you would have said the same thing' (*LAST WRITINGS*, par. 923). Wittgenstein's point is not that imponderable evidence poses a problem in daily life. On the contrary, subtleties of human behavior function in daily life as unproblematic clues to our understanding of other persons. His point is that imponderable evidence does not enable one to prove that another person is really in pain or just acting as if. There are no generally agreed upon principles, as in the natural sciences, from which a prove can be deduced. But the lack of generally agreed upon principles, which Wittgenstein tries to bring about by calling the evidence imponderable, does not implicate that one cannot speak of knowledge of other minds. Knowledge in the case of other minds is only completely different from

(8) See *REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY*, vol. 2, par. 657, 684.

knowledge in the natural sciences or mathematics ⁽⁹⁾. As he remarks 'The kind of certainty is the kind of language-game' (PI, part. 2, xi, p. 229).

The second stage (ii) of his attack upon skepticism about other minds consists of his making clear the logical relations in PI is his remark that 'A child has much to learn before it can pretend' (PI, part. 2, xi, p. 229). Especially in MS169 and MS171 there occur various alternative drafts of this remark. Wittgenstein is not doing here childpsychology. Once again he is explicating the constitutive rules for the meaning of concepts, in this case the concept of pretending. Linking the meaning of the concept to the way the concept is learnt makes abundantly clear what those constitutive rules are. In general his point is that the language-game of pretending is a very complicated and specific one. Because of this complexity the playing of the language-game of pretending presupposes all sorts of other and less complicated games and conceptual abilities. And because of this complexity we can regard behaviour as dissimulation only under very particular circumstances. The moral to be drawn from this for other minds skepticism is that it is not possible for all behaviour, under all circumstances, to be dissimulation. Hence philosophers who have exaggerated the scope of pretence eo ipso have distorted the meaning of pretence. Linking the meaning of pretence to the way this concept is learnt brings to light that:

Erst in einem verhältnismässig komplizierten Lebensmuster reden wir von Verstellung. (MS169, p. 63).

And also that:

Wäre die Verstellung nicht ein kompliziertes Muster, so wäre es denkbar dass sich das neugeborene Kind verstellt. (MS171, p. 1)

A child, however, has much to learn before it can be said of it that it pretends. Typically it has to manifest a variety of linguistic abilities, such as being able to say 'I believe that he is in pain' or 'He believes that I am in pain, but I am not', etc.

That the ability to pretend logically depends upon the ability to express oneself genuinely comes out quite explicitly in the following remark:

Die Äusserungen meiner Gefühle können unecht sein. Insbesondere können sie verstellt sein. Dies ist ein anderes Sprachspiel als das primitive, der echten Äusserungen. (MS169, p. 63)

More pointedly:

(9) See PI, part. 2, xi, p. 226.

Ich will also sagen, dass es einen ursprünglichen echten Schmerzausdruck gibt; also der Schmerzausdruck nicht gleichermassen mit dem Schmerz und der Verstellung verbunden ist. (MS171, p. 1)

In the more primitive language-game of the genuine expression of pain the relation between pain and expression is internal. His point is that we can never drive a wedge between pain and the expression of pain in these more primitive games. The moral to be drawn from his discussion of pretence is that this internal relation is not disturbed by the fact that people can merely put up an appearance of pain. The language-game of pretence is a different kind of language-game and in that sense the phenomenon of pretence only makes the concept of pain more complex. The language-game of pretence does not function at the same logical level as the language-game of genuinely expressing one's pain. On the contrary, the language-game of pretence is logically built upon the language-game of genuine expressing oneself. The problem of pretence is therefore not in the first place an epistemological problem but a problem concerning the logical relations between different sorts of language-games. The scope of pretence is limited to very specific language-games where the relation between experiences and expressions is rather different: genuine expressions of pain are constituted by an inseparable conceptual tie between experience and expression.

Thus far, two fundamental points have been established. First, it has been demonstrated that the other minds problem is the reversal of the problem of our knowledge of our own minds. Both problems were the result of a symmetrical construction of the first and third person use of psychological concepts. In contrast to this view Wittgenstein proposed an asymmetrical construction. Secondly, it has been shown that the uncertainty about other minds is a constitutional feature of our language-games and not an epistemological shortcoming which forces us forever to be in complete doubt as to whether another person really has pain or is just acting as if in pain. Having established the above points, much of the task of this article has been accomplished. However, in the quotation at the beginning of this article Wittgenstein emphasized that 'Der Zweifel tritt also ins Spiel ein; aber eben darum ist es auch möglich dass Sicherheit besteht'. The application of his discussion in ON CERTAINTY to the problem of other minds is obvious. The cogency of this move from his treatment of knowledge and certainty to the other minds problem remains however to be examined. First I will draw attention to Wittgenstein's discussion of knowledge and certainty; only then consequences of his move from the theme of certainty to the other minds problem can be fully appreciated (point C). The main point of Wittgenstein's discussion of knowledge and certainty is that the language-games of knowledge and doubt logically presuppose certainty; certainty is a condition for the possibility of those language-games. Knowledge and doubt are concepts which play a role in language-games of comparable logical complexity. In order to know something and in order to genuinely doubt something there must be grounds for knowing and grounds for doubting. As Wittgenstein says, whether I know something depends on whether the evidence backs me up or contradicts

me⁽¹⁰⁾. The implication of this need for compelling grounds for it to be possible to speak of knowledge is that one may be mistaken in what one claims to know; hence that it makes sense for another person to doubt what one claims to know. There are however propositions of which it makes no sense to say that one knows them as compelling grounds to support them are lacking; grounds are lacking because those propositions underlie the possibility of giving grounds. They form a kind of belief that is not founded but taken for granted in all our reasons for our acceptance of particular propositions which are subject to empirical verification or falsification. In that sense they are 'beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal' (ON CERTAINTY, par. 359). The proposition that the earth exists, for instance, is beyond being justified or unjustified as the citing of evidence to support the proposition, stamping with one's feet on the ground, already takes for granted that the earth exists. For the same reason it makes no sense to doubt that the earth exists. Grounds for doubting are lacking and the game of doubting itself presupposes belief or certainty.

The clue to Wittgenstein's move from his discussion of knowledge and certainty to his treatment of other minds is found in his often cited but never adequately interpreted remark that 'My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul' (PI, part. 2, xi, p. 178). Ironically, of this remark religious as well as behavioristic interpretations have been given⁽¹¹⁾. To my knowledge, there is only one rather short stretch of text in Wittgenstein's notebooks in which he mentions the term 'attitude' ('Einstellung zur Seele'). The context in which he uses the term sheds however much light upon the meaning that has to be attached to the above quoted passage. In MS169 he writes:

Statt 'Einstellung zur Seele' könnte man auch sagen: 'Einstellung zum Menschen'. Ich könnte von einem Menschen ja immer sagen, er sei ein Automat (das könnte ich in der Schule beim Physiologieunterricht lernen) und es würde doch meine Einstellung zum Andern nicht beeinflussen. Ich kann es ja eben von mir selbst sagen.

Was aber ist der Unterschied zwischen einer Einstellung und einer Meinung? Ich möchte sagen: Die Einstellung kommt vor der Meinung.

Eine Meinung kann sich irren. Aber wie sähe hier ein Irrtum aus?
(MS169, p. 60-61)

It is noteworthy that in this version of his quoted remark in PI Wittgenstein quite

(10) See ON CERTAINTY, par. 504.

(11) For a religious interpretation see Dilman, 'Wittgenstein on the soul', in: Vesey, G. (ed.), UNDERSTANDING WITTGENSTEIN, New York, 1974, chapter 11. For a behavioristic interpretation, see Kripke, S., 'Wittgenstein on rules and private-language', in: Block, I. (ed.), PERSPECTIVES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN, Oxford, 1981, p. 303, note 21.

explicitly formulates what he means with 'Einstellung zur Seele' in terms of the logical relations between knowledge and certainty. To my opinion the logical relation between 'knowledge' and 'certainty' is mirrored by the logical relation between 'opinion' and 'attitude'. A clue to this parallel is given by the last remark of the above passage where Wittgenstein seems to suggest that the possibility of error is provided for in the case of opinion, but that error is inconceivable in the case of attitude. From *ON CERTAINTY* we learn that for something to count as a mistake it must have a ground and that not every false belief is a mistake. For instance, if I wrongly believe that I have seen this table, or one like it, every day for several months past, and have regularly used it, that is not a mistake: others would regard me as demented (*ON CERTAINTY*, par. 67-78)⁽¹²⁾. They would regard me as demented, because grounds are lacking to convince me that I have made a mistake. If someone makes a mistake, this mistake can be fitted into what he knows aright, but in this case I am not sharing the same frame of reference on the basis of which my mistake counts as a mistake. Grounds are lacking as I am not sharing the 'world-picture' that underlies the possibility of such grounds.

Wittgenstein not only utilizes this logical relation between mistakes and madness in his treatment of knowledge and certainty, but seems to have explicitly recognized it as holding too in the case of the other minds problem, for he appears specifically to identify the relation between mistakes and madness in the following remark:

Es gibt doch Fälle, wo nur ein Wahnsinniger den Ausdruck der Schmerzen (z.B) für unecht halten könnte. (MS169, p. 51)

Wittgenstein's most fundamental answer to skepticism about other minds is that it rests on a complete misunderstanding of the role certain propositions play in our life. The utterance 'He is really in pain' is under normal circumstances not a proposition subject to verification or falsification. It is not a proposition we come to believe on the basis of arguments or experience. On the contrary, it is a proposition that underlies and is taken for granted in such reasoning about other minds. Doubt about other minds presupposes that certain things are in deed not doubted. And what is in practice not doubted shows itself in our reactions to others as other people, or in our 'Einstellung zur Seele'. In his notebooks Wittgenstein describes many examples that show our certainty about other minds⁽¹³⁾. I will mention only one although very interesting example, the role of confessions in our forms of life⁽¹⁴⁾.

(12) It is noteworthy that these remarks on the concepts of error and madness come from MS174, of which the first half is devoted to the inner and the outer.

(13) The examples concern mostly the noticing of facial expressions.

(14) Confessions also played an important role in Wittgenstein's own life. See McGuinness, B., *WITTGENSTEIN A LIFE*, Duckworth, 1988.

Wenn einer Freundschaft heuchelt und endlich seine wahren Gefühle zeigt, oder gesteht, denken wir gewöhnlich nicht daran um dies Geständnis (diese Evidenz) in Zweifel zu ziehen und auch hier zu sagen, wir könnten nicht wissen, was wirklich in ihm vorgeht. Vielmehr scheint jetzt Sicherheit erreicht. (MS174, p. 10)

To conclude, Wittgenstein's approach to the other minds problem is not epistemological in that sense that he does not undertake to rebut skepticism with arguments that provide a foundation for our knowledge of other minds. Instead he attempts to show from within our language-games the conditions for the possibility of our talk about other minds. His approach can be called metaphysical in the Kantian sense of the word: he attempts to expose the essence of the inner and the outer by describing the rules which determine what can be said and what cannot, which moves can be made and which cannot within language-games. Typical for Wittgenstein is his linking the rules of language-games to a factual way of living. It is this factual way of living, for instance our reactions to confessions, that is for him the highest court of metaphysical appeal. And it is precisely this factual way of living that explains the uncertainty about other minds. Outward evidence is the only way for us to talk about other minds and the uncertainty implied by this fact is constitutional and not an epistemological shortcoming. Moreover the fact that uncertainty exists also implies certainty about other minds.