Dreaming an investigation into the grammar of traditional and contemporary problems associated with dreaming.

Kevin Worr Bittle
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DREAMING:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE GRAMMAR OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DREAMING

By
Kevin Worr Bittle

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1982
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ABSTRACT

DREAMING:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE GRAMMAR OF TRADITIONAL AND
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DREAMING

By

Kevin Worr Bittle

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the grammar of a
traditional and contemporary philosophical problem associated with
dreaming. It is the sceptic's contention that the question "Am I awake
for asleep and dreaming?" is a legitimate question; that although we
may think we are awake there is always the possibility that we are
asleep and dreaming. I argue that from a Wittgensteinian perspective
the sceptic's question does not have a use in ordinary language, that
its use is restricted to a special language-game, that of philosophy.
I go on to argue that the sceptic's use of the word "dream" in his
question is both illegitimate and unjustified; with the result that
because the question fails to express a meaningful possibility it should
no longer be a concern for philosophy.

Norman Malcolm, in his book Dreaming (1959) attempts to meet,
the sceptical question with an argument that sleep has no experiential
content. But in doing so he raises another question; whether or not
dreaming can be said to be some kind of mental phenomenon occurring
during sleep. It is Malcolm's contention that dreams are not composed
of, or identical with, thoughts, images, sensations or conscious

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experiences of any kind. I argue that from a Wittgensteinian perspective Malcolm's treatment of mental events during sleep is far too restrictive; that it goes against our attitude about dreaming, our descriptions of dreams and recent and continuing advances in science and psychology. The result being that both his position and solution to the sceptical problem are untenable.

The method of appraisal is composed of four steps. First, Descartes' *Meditations* and contemporary sceptical positions are elucidated in an effort to determine the origin and nature of the sceptic's question. The position, and refutation of the sceptic's position advanced by Malcolm are subsequently examined. Both positions (the sceptic's and Malcolm's) are then criticized using some of the methods and remarks suggested by Ludwig Wittgenstein as the basis of analysis. With each position the conclusions reached as a result of this critique are reviewed in an attempt to explain the confusions and difficulties that follow from subscribing to either of the two positions.

I argue, in conclusion, that in light of continuing difficulties to make sense of and formulate conclusive arguments against both the sceptic and Malcolm, a grammatical investigation provides the most plausible alternative as a way of tackling these questions that philosophy can pursue.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My debt to previous scholars is evident from the numerous selections cited in both the footnotes and Bibliography. I should mention that any philosophic enterprise will necessarily involve a firm grasp of the arguments presented in Malcolm's Dreaming (1959). While there is much that I continue to find puzzling about Malcolm's position, his treatment of the sceptical question and other problems associated with dreaming provide the reader with invaluable insight, without which an attempt to tackle the subject matter "philosophically" might be premature.

I am grateful to all the faculty in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Windsor, specifically Professor Tony Blair, with whom I shared close to two years of successful employment, Dr. Pinto, for excessive, but always constructive criticism and Dr. Flood, whose presence in and around the Philosophy department will most surely be missed in the years to come.

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Finally, a special thanks to Mom for labouring through the many "first drafts" and Branko Bilcar, a colleague and fellow Wittgensteinian, who provided both support and inspiration in the two years at Windsor—and who suggested the project in the first place.

Kevin Bittle
July, 1982
INTRODUCTION

When I consider these matters carefully, I realize so clearly that there are no conclusive indications by which waking life can be distinguished from sleep that I am quite astonished, and my bewilderment is such that it is almost able to convince me that I am sleeping.

Descartes, Meditations

It is unusual to open a standard textbook of philosophy, psychology or religion and not find at least one reference to dreaming. Dreams have enjoyed great popularity because of their extraordinary nature. In days of old, people regarded dreams as favourable or hostile manifestations of higher powers, demonic and divine. Dreams have been associated with wishes, desires and have often been linked up to the creative process. Dreams continue to be a source of interest to scholars in various disciplines today.

In his paper, "The Problem of Dreams," Roger Squires states: "It is almost universally believed that dreams occur during sleep and that people are capable of recalling them when they wake up." Dreams and dreaming are not unusual occurrences. Although dreams can be abnormal, even bizarre, they are not unusual in the sense that they happen to only one or two of us. Very few people can say that they have never had a dream. The fact that a dream is a common occurrence of unusual character is significant. It is perhaps the single most important reason for the controversy surrounding dreams throughout the history of philosophy thus far.
Dreaming has long been associated with the problem of scepticism. In the Dialogue *Theaetetus*, Socrates asks, "What evidence could be appealed to, supposing we were asked at this very moment whether we are asleep or awake?" Theaetetus replies: "Indeed Socrates, I do not see by what evidence it is to be proved, for the two conditions correspond in every circumstance like exact counterparts." Although the sceptical problem is mentioned in the writings of ancient philosophers, the French philosopher René Descartes is credited with being the first to enunciate it clearly.

The sceptic's situation with respect to dreams as presented in the *Meditations* boils down to a question stated something like this: "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" This question has been the central and most substantial problem tied up with philosophical discussions of dreaming. While some contemporary sceptics maintain there is no way to know that you are awake, other philosophers claim to have shown that the sceptical problem associated with dreams is not a problem at all. Norman Malcolm is one such philosopher. He says: "There are not two things for me to decide between, one that I am awake the other that I am not awake. There is nothing to decide, no choice to make, nothing to find out."

Philosophers from Aristotle to Russell have held that dreams are mental states present during sleep. Malcolm's book, *Dreaming* has received as much careful consideration as the sceptical problem associated with dreams because it sets out to refute this. Though his position is
formulated in an effort to silence the sceptic, I believe it fathers more problems than it clears away. In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein states:

   Essence is expressed by grammar.

   One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that.

I believe we should keep these two statements in mind when we try to resolve the philosophical problems associated with dreaming.

This thesis will attempt to confront a traditional and contemporary philosophical problem by investigating the grammar of two questions: 1) "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?", 2) "Are dreams composed of or identical with thoughts, images, mental phenomena occurring during sleep?" By way of introduction I will outline two positions on dreams (Descartes and Malcolm). Using various statements and insights of Ludwig Wittgenstein as a basis of analysis, I will then carry out a grammatical investigation of the many and varied uses of the word "dream." Following that, I will return to the sceptic and Malcolm and examine the difficulties involved in their positions in light of this grammatical investigation. We will see that both questions play a central role in the sceptic's and Malcolm's position on dreams.

Since this thesis is principally a grammatical investigation, I will not be proposing an empirical explanation of dreams. If any avenue is open for us, it will be that this investigation of the grammar of the word "dream" may provide us with philosophic insight into two questions associated with dreaming that have plagued the history of philosophy so far.
FOOTNOTES

Introduction


6 Ibid., #340.
CHAPTER I

THE SCEPTICAL PROBLEM IN DESCARTES' MEDITATIONS

The question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" has been a source of controversy among philosophers for a number of centuries. Scholars have continued to wrestle with this problem since the publication of the Meditations in 1641. Every effort has been made to resolve this problem, to provide a proof or test that would establish, with certainty, that one is awake and not being deceived in a dream. A conclusive test or proof is still lacking.

What is Descartes' position with respect to dreams? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine the Meditations closely. In this chapter, I will briefly outline the sceptical problem associated with dreams as it appears in the First Meditation. I will then touch on the principle of coherence that Descartes presents in the Sixth Meditation. Finally, I will explain what is involved in holding a firm sceptical attitude with respect to dreams. This discussion will set the stage for the presentation of Norman Malcolm's account of dreams, which will appear in the following chapter.

In the Preface to the Meditations Descartes is intent on persuading us to free ourselves from a dependence on our senses. He says:

I undertake directly to treat of God and of the human mind, and at the same time to lay the foundations of first philosophy. I do this without expecting any praise for it from the vulgar, and without hoping that my book will be read by many. On the contrary, I would not recommend it to any except to those who

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would want to meditate seriously along with me, and who are capable of freeing the mind from attachment to the senses and clearing it entirely of all sorts of prejudices. [M, p. 69.]

According to Descartes, in order to develop the foundations of philosophy one must begin by arriving at fundamental certainties—clear and distinct ideas. It is his opinion that the senses stand in the way of clear and distinct ideas because they sometimes deceive us:

Everything which I have thus far accepted as entirely true and assured has been acquired from the senses or by means of the senses. But I have learned by experience that these senses sometimes mislead men, and it is prudent never to trust wholly those things which have once deceived us. [M, p. 76.]

Descartes' project in the Meditations is one of attempting to "get behind the ordinary world and ordinary language to a more fundamental certainty from which philosophizing could begin." He considers the phenomenon of dreaming because, for Descartes, a dream is an illusion and a remarkable example of how the senses can sometimes deceive us:

But I am speaking as though I never recall having been misled, while asleep, by similar illusions! When I consider these matters carefully, I realize so clearly that there are no conclusive indications by which waking life can be distinguished from sleep that I am quite astonished, and my bewilderment is such that it is almost able to convince me that I am sleeping. [M, p. 77.]

It is at this point that the sceptical problem, that of distinguishing waking life from sleep, receives its first clear and serious enunciation. The sceptical problem associated with dreaming can be stated in the following way. At this very moment I am writing this thesis. But I might have a dream in which I am here, seated at this desk writing this paper. And if I am dreaming, I would not be seated at this desk.
writing this paper, I would be lying undressed, asleep in my bed. Now it seems clear to me that I am awake and that it is with some design and deliberate intent that I write these words with this pen and perceive the result. But since the experience of writing this thesis in my dream is similar to what I am feeling right now, I have no way of telling at this very moment whether I am awake or asleep.

Descartes' project—that of trying to establish a test whereby one could know with certainty that he is awake—exposed the difficulty that has kept the sceptical problem associated with dreaming alive for a number of centuries. If I could show that certain things only occur when I am awake, I could solve the Cartesian dream problem. M.J. Baker, in his paper, "Sleeping and Waking," puts this quite well when he says:

> When Descartes says that no certain marks ever distinguish waking from sleep, he implies that no such marks are apprehended either initially or subsequently. If we show that they occur initially then he is refuted, and it would be unnecessary and redundant to show also that they occur subsequently.3

However, we must be careful here. As we read through the First Meditation, it is as if Descartes has come to a standstill with respect to the question "How can I tell whether I am awake or asleep?" But in the Sixth Meditation Descartes offers a solution to the sceptical problem.

Descartes did not continue to hold that there were no conclusive indications by which waking life could be distinguished from sleep. He declares that the philosophical doubt associated with dreams is "hyperbolical and ridiculous." [M, p. 143.] In the Sixth Meditation he claims that it is theoretically possible for anyone to determine whether he is
awake or asleep using a principle of coherence. And I should reject all the doubts of these last few days as exaggerated and ridiculous, particularly that very general uncertainty about sleep, which I could not distinguish from waking life. For now I find a very notable difference between the two, in that our memory can never bind and join our dreams together one with another and all with the course of our lives, as it habitually joins together what happens to us when we are awake. (M, p. 143.)

The principle of coherence is cited by Descartes to establish that there are no reasons for doubting whether he is awake or asleep. I am awake if the events that are happening to me cohere and can be united with one another through my memory in a consistent whole. According to the principle of coherence, if I cannot connect the perceptions I am having with the whole course of my life, I must be asleep and dreaming.

A number of contemporary philosophers have put forward novel tests and proofs that they believe establish with certainty, that one is awake:

Patently, I can dream that I am behaving in pain, for example that I am writhing or calling out in pain. When, however, I try to conceive the dreaming of a pain I find that I cannot. I find that I have conceived, not the dreaming of a pain, but simply the experiencing of a pain. But that is not dreaming a pain: that is being in pain. Hence, I can meet the Cartesian dream argument in the following way. Whenever it gives rise in my mind to the question "Can I now tell whether I am dreaming or waking?" I need merely pinch myself. If I have a feeling of pain, I cannot be dreaming that I do. Thus, I now pinch myself and I now feel pain. I conclude with certainty that I am not dreaming. But if I am not dreaming, and if I am conscious (which I am), it follows that I am awake. 5

Leon Pearl, in his paper "Is Theaetetus Dreaming?" gives us this argument:
Most of a man's memories and beliefs which are thought operative while awake are stored away when dreaming. Waking up consists of (1) becoming aware of your surroundings, (2) your beliefs and memories becoming thought operative. (2) is a sufficient condition for knowing you are awake.6

On the other hand, a few contemporary sceptics (Peter Unger, Fritz Mauthner) still maintain that there is no way to resolve the sceptical problem associated with dreams. Regardless of the tests or proofs formulated to establish that one is awake, the contemporary sceptic will declare them all to be unsuccessful. He will reply that "there is no such description to be had. It is just as meaningful to say 'I dreamt I pinched myself' or 'I dreamt my experiences cohere' as it is to say 'I pinched myself'; 'My experiences cohere.'"7 The contemporary sceptic holds that you cannot know, but only believe, that you are awake. And since he refuses to credit any tests or proof that would establish that you are awake, it is always possible that you are asleep and that everything is a dream.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty with Descartes' appeal to the principle of coherence is the fact that he felt it offered a conclusive test that could establish with certainty that one is awake. Although other philosophers since Descartes have subscribed to the principle of coherence, they believe it to establish that one is awake with probability, rather than certainty. Witness this quote from A.J. 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

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However, contemporary sceptics continue to maintain that you cannot know, but only believe that you are awake. Therefore, any kind of subscription to a principle of coherence is fruitless. Neither probability nor certainty plays a part since it is always possible that I am not awake and making connections through my memory, I am only dreaming that I am.

This sceptical position is similar to an objection raised against the coherence principle by Norman Malcolm in *Dreaming*:

> 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'. The coherence principle tells us that we are awake if we can make these connections and asleep in a dream if we cannot: but how does the principle tell us whether we are noting and making connections or dreaming that we are? [D, p. 108.]

The fact that a contemporary sceptic can use this objection to preserve the sceptical problem speaks against the coherence principle as a satisfactory way of resolving the dream enigma. Malcolm, however, argues that there is a way to resolve the sceptical problem associated with dreaming. The resolution cannot be had by subscribing to a principle of coherence. Rather, Malcolm argues for the thesis that dreams are not identical with, or composed of thoughts, images, sensations; conscious experiences of any kind. On this basis "the general uncertainty," (the question of whether I am awake or asleep and dreaming), which Descartes alludes to in the Sixth Meditation loses its status as a meaningful philosophical problem:
There are not two things for me to decide between, one that I am awake the other that I am not awake. There is nothing to decide, no choice to make, nothing to find out. [D, p. 118.]

Briefly, Malcolm considers the sceptic's question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" senseless in that one of the alternatives implied by it expresses a possibility that one cannot think. Whatever goes to show that someone is making a judgment while asleep would stand as evidence that the person is awake. In this respect, Descartes' project, that of finding a distinguishing mark between waking life and sleep, loses its credibility as a significant philosophical enterprise. This is because a sleeping subject is not capable of asking questions, making judgments or wondering about anything at all while asleep "for sleep qua sleep has no experiential content." [D, p. 39].

Malcolm's refutation of the sceptical problem associated with dreams is supported by his unusual thesis that dreams are not identical with, or composed of thoughts, images, sensations etc. In order to get a foothold with Malcolm's refutation of the sceptical problem associated with dreaming, one must examine his position in some detail. Let us now turn to Malcolm's Dreaming and his paper, "Dreaming and Scepticism" and highlight the main points of his position that will leave us better able to judge whether he succeeds in making a convincing case against the sceptical problem associated with dreams.
Chapter I

The reader should note at the outset that the traditional sceptical question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is not Descartes' question. In the Meditations Descartes is concerned with arriving at a mark or indication with which he can distinguish waking life from sleep. Although his discussion of dreams in the First Meditation appears to point toward the sceptical question there is no textual evidence to support the notion that he asked the question or ever considered the question seriously.


4 A point about Descartes' methodology should be made here. To say that Descartes resolved the sceptical problem associated with dreaming by subscribing to the principle of coherence is not entirely correct. The assurance that he is awake, and not asleep and dreaming is primarily supported by his belief and trust in a veracious God:

And I should not in any way doubt the truth of these things if, having made use of all my senses, my memory, and my understanding, to examine them, nothing is reported to me by any of them which is inconsistent with what is reported by the others. For, from the fact that God is not a deceiver, it necessarily follows in this matter I am not deceived. [M, p. 143.]

Therefore, the validity of the coherence principle (for Descartes) presupposes a divine guarantee.

5 John O. Nelson, "Can One Tell That He is Awake by Pinching Himself?" Philosophical Studies 17 (1966): 82.


7 Ibid., 110.

CHAPTER II

MALCOLM ON DREAMS AND DREAMING

Norman Malcolm's *Dreaming* (1959) and "Dreaming and Scepticism" (1957) are important contributions to philosophical literature. These two works, taken together, provide the most thoroughgoing and controversial treatment of philosophical questions that surround the phenomenon of dreaming. Malcolm argues that the sceptical problem associated with dreaming is unwarranted:

A consequence of my argument is that there is no room left for the sceptical question (a) "How can I know whether I am awake or sound asleep?"—for the question is absurd, since if I raise it I am not sound asleep.

In order to appreciate how this philosopher tackles the sceptical problem left in the wake of the *Meditations*, it is necessary to examine his position with respect to dreams.

Malcolm's *Dreaming* and "Dreaming and Scepticism" have been the centre of many a debate. These two works are controversial in that they present us with a new philosophical position on dreams. Malcolm's position (that dreams are not composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep), and his opinions about dreams and dreaming have been both supported and attacked vigorously in a number of philosophical journals. Philosophers, psychologists and the common man have always believed that dreaming was supposed to be a kind of mental.
phenomenon that occurs during sleep. Malcolm's position with respect to dreams is both unique and problematic in that it sets out to dispute this:

If a philosopher uses the phrase 'mental phenomenon', say, in such a way that dreams are mental phenomena by definition, then obviously no argument is going to prove him that they are not. I avoid this way of stating the matter. What I say instead is that if anyone holds that dreams are identical with, or composed of thoughts, impressions, feelings, images and so on (here one may supply whatever other mental nouns one likes, except 'dreams'), occurring in sleep, then his view is false. [D, p. 52.]

One of the things a reader will notice is that Malcolm's account of dreams is very guarded. He will go to great lengths to tell us what dreaming is not:

Aristotle says that a dream is a kind of illusory sense-presentation occurring in sleep (Aristotle, 459a, 460b, 462a). Descartes thought that in dreaming we reason and judge in exactly the same sense that we do when awake. Hobbes believed that dreams are 'the imaginations of them that sleep' (Hobbes, Pt. I, Ch. 2). Other philosophers think that dreaming is having images or even hallucinations in sleep.

These opinions can be seen to be mistaken... the idea that someone might reason, judge, imagine, or have impressions, presentations, illusions or hallucinations, while asleep, is a meaningless idea in the sense that we have no conception of what could establish that these things did or did not occur. We know perfectly well, however, what establishes that a person dreamt while he slept--namely, his telling a dream. This clear difference in possibility of verification shows that dreams are none of the things that philosophers have commonly supposed them to be. [D, pp. 49-50.]

But Malcolm refuses to commit himself to telling us what dreaming is:

But I am not trying to maintain that a dream is the waking impression that one dreamt. This would be
self-contradictory. Indeed, I am not trying to say what dreaming is: I do not understand what it would mean to do that. [D, p. 59.]

Although Malcolm maintains he is not attempting to tell us what dreaming "is," he does offer a few clues. Perhaps the best way to understand his account of dreams is to enumerate the clues, and see if we can arrive at a sharper picture. Malcolm contests the notion that a dream is a kind of mental phenomenon that occurs during sleep. However, when Malcolm says "Dreams are not composed of, or identical with thoughts, images, sensations...," we should not take him to be claiming that dreams do not occur. Malcolm is quite committed to the view that people do dream, "I do not understand what the first statement ('Dreaming is a real experience') could mean other than people really do have dreams--which is undeniable." 3

Malcolm also says that dreams have the power to influence the way we talk about our sleep. As well, they have the ability to affect the way we feel when we wake up in the morning:

A person whose state satisfied completely, for several hours, the criteria of sleep and was, therefore, sound asleep during that time, may not have had a sound sleep. He may awake feeling quite exhausted and if so he will not say that he had a good or sound sleep. And if he had a very unpleasant dream he would not say that he had a sound sleep: whereas he could say this if he had a pleasant dream. [D, pp. 32-33.].

According to Malcolm then, if a person has an enjoyable dream, he will wake up in the morning, feeling refreshed. If he has a disturbing dream, he will wake up feeling weak and fatigued. Therefore, dreams are qualitatively different. A dream is not just a dream, it can be gratifying
as well as unsettling.

In addition to these points, Malcolm tells us that a dream has content, that it involves a number of events, and that in a dream a person can do the impossible in every sense of the word, "That something is implausible or impossible does not go to show that I did not dream it. In a dream I can climb Everest without oxygen and I can square the circle." In summary, Malcolm affirms that:

(1) dreams do occur;
(2) dreams have qualitative differences;
(3) dreams have content;
(4) dreams involve a number of events connected in some fashion;
(5) in a dream, a person can do the impossible in every sense of the word.

But, Malcolm also states that (6) dreams are not identical with or composed of thoughts, impressions, feelings, images, or any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep.

In Malcolm making the claim that dreams are not experiences? Although there is no textual evidence to support this opinion, the reader has an uneasy feeling that this claim is lurking somewhere under the surface of his entire book. In Chapter III, "Judging That One is Asleep," Malcolm entertains the notion held by other philosophers (Descartes, Kant, Russell, Aristotle and others) that it is possible to make judgments
during sleep: "If a man can make judgments during sleep then it ought to be possible for him to judge, among other things, that he is asleep." Malcolm asks "Could I upon awaking describe my previous condition and inquire whether that condition is called 'being asleep?" and answers:

This suggestion loses all plausibility if we ask what the nature of this description would be.... The description would have to be of some conscious experience. But having some conscious experience or other, no matter what, is not what is meant by being asleep. [D, p. 12.]

Another quote that seems to point to the thesis that dreams are not experiences appears in his paper "Dreaming and Scepticism":

When a person is sound asleep he cannot have any thoughts, sensations or feelings at all; sound asleep in this cannot have any "content of experience." This is so regardless of whether or not the sleeper dreams. [D & S, p. 114.]

Malcolm appears to be saying a dream is something other than an experience, but it isn't anything that happens to us or takes place while we are asleep. A consequence of this paradoxical position is that you walk away with this question, "What is it that Malcolm takes dreaming to be?"

Why is it that Malcolm is reluctant to give us the essence of dreaming or tell us what a dream is? Is it perhaps because he holds the view that we know everything there is to know about dreams? Notice, Malcolm takes the question about "the real existence of dreams" i.e. whether dreams take place in logical independence of waking impressions, as a purely metaphysical question, "A question such as 'How do you know this happened while you slept?' does not arise in the ordinary commerce
of life and language." However, this is not the reason why Malcolm is hesitant to give us the essence of dreaming or tell us what dreaming "is." Malcolm maintains that a dream is not identical with, or composed of any kind of mental phenomenon because it is theoretically impossible to verify someone's having mental phenomena during sleep:

If it is theoretically impossible to verify that someone had images, say, in his sleep, but possible to verify that he dreamt, then a dream cannot be identical with, nor composed of, images experienced during sleep. [D, p. 51.]

Malcolm's verifiability argument involves (1) that we establish a person is making a judgment while asleep through observation, (2) that we establish the person knows he is making a judgment while he is asleep. Malcolm argues that if it were possible for someone to know that he is making a judgment while asleep, he would not be asleep. He would be awake. This is because Malcolm defines sleep in such a way that judgments, or any other mental activities, are not possible for a sleeping subject:

In order to know that when a man said 'I am asleep' he gave a true description of his own state, one would have to know that he said it while asleep and that he was aware of saying it. This is an impossible thing to know, because whatever showed that he was aware of saying that sentence would also show that he was not asleep. [D, p. 10.]

What follows is that a sleeping subject is incapable of making a judgment while asleep since, "it would be self-contradictory to verify that a man was both asleep and judging because whatever in his behaviour showed he was making the judgment would equally show that he was not asleep." 11

Malcolm's verifiability argument with respect to the judgment "I am asleep" also applies to the judgment "I am dreaming" because the
sense in which Malcolm considers the word "dream" implies that for someone to be dreaming he must also be asleep:

If 'I am dreaming' could express a judgment it would imply the judgment 'I am asleep', and therefore the absurdity of the latter proves the absurdity of the former. [D, p. 109.]

The upshot of Malcolm's argument is that the sceptical problem enunciated by Descartes in the *Meditations* and the traditional sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" can be rejected as nonsense:

There are not two things for me to decide between, one that I am awake the other that I am not awake. There is nothing to decide, no choice to make, nothing to find out.... Therefore the sentence 'I don't know whether I am awake or dreaming' cannot be a proper description of my condition, being itself a piece of nonsense. [D, p. 118.]

Verifiability allows Malcolm to make quick work of the sceptic. And if we allow him to have his way with the thesis that dreams are not composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep, it seems as if Malcolm has provided a plausible refutation of the sceptical problem associated with dreaming. That is to say, if we grant Malcolm the liberty of maintaining that sleep has no experiential content, his claim that a sleeping subject cannot judge, think, have impressions etc. is a safe one. Still, we wonder if Malcolm is correct in claiming that dreams are not composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep. The new position on dreams that Malcolm has provided in *D* and *D & S* seems to go against our opinions and attitudes toward the phenomenon of dreaming. Most of us have a strong inclination to think that dreaming is a kind of mental activity
that we experience during sleep. We will explore this in greater detail in Chapter V.

The arguments for and against Malcolm's thesis have been many and varied since the publication of D and D & S. It seems that in order to provide a successful refutation of the traditional sceptical problem associated with dreaming Malcolm must commit himself to the position that sleep has no experiential content. Yet, to do this, we wonder if it is not a heavy price to pay in light of all the criticism that continues to follow in its trail.\(^\text{12}\)

Our examination of Malcolm's position on dreams leaves us with the following questions: "Is Malcolm justified in thinking that his argument can be used to destroy the foundations of Cartesian scepticism?" Moreover, "Is Malcolm correct to maintain that dreams are not identical with, or composed of any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" Before we attempt to answer these and other philosophical questions associated with the phenomenon of dreaming, our attention will be directed toward a number of statements and insights of one other philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein. I believe that difficulties which surround the sceptical question connected with dreaming, and Malcolm's unusual thesis, can be brought to light by following two remarks articulated by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*. They are:

1. Essence is expressed by grammar. \([\text{PI}, \#371.]\)

2. One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that. \([\text{PI}, \#340.]\)
To those unfamiliar with Wittgenstein's philosophy these remarks may sound somewhat mysterious in light of our discussion of dreams and dreaming so far. It is for this reason that I now wish to turn to Wittgenstein's literature and briefly illuminate a number of his statements and insights that will serve as the basis of analysis for the remainder of this thesis.
When citing a text from Malcolm's Dreaming or "Dreaming and Scepticism," in the remainder of this thesis, I will use the abbreviations D and D & S respectively.


Ibid., p. 63.

Ibid., p. 85.

Ibid., p. 57.

Ibid., p. 9.

Ibid., p. 12.


Malcolm, Dreaming, p. 84.

Ibid., p. 36.

The criticisms offered against Malcolm's position have been many and varied since the publication of D & S and D. In order to appreciate the objections and controversy which surround Malcolm's position the reader should examine the following papers which I have found most illuminating in this respect:


However, in that my critique of Malcolm concerns the grammar of the philosophical problem left unanswered by his treatment of dreaming I have decided not to elucidate these criticisms in any detail.
CHAPTER III

SOME WITTGENSTEINIAN INSIGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In the Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology (Vol. I) Wittgenstein says:

Of course I don't want to give a definition of the word "dream"; but still I want to do something like it: to describe the use of the word.

There are difficulties involved in presenting a chapter intended to summarize Wittgenstein's position on dreams. Although he brought forward some interesting ideas on dreams, he did not give dreaming an extensive philosophical treatment. As well, anyone familiar with Wittgenstein's writings will be aware of his ability to condense extremely difficult thoughts into concise and subtle statements. His penchant for compression of difficult ideas, coupled with the sparse amount of material available on dreams, makes any interpretation of his philosophy susceptible to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. In this respect a writer attempting to approach the topic of dreams in Wittgenstein, or prepare a chapter intended to summarize his philosophy, should be prepared for hard work and possible disappointment.

With these considerations in mind, I am reluctant to offer a compendium of Wittgenstein's philosophy or explain his position on dreams. I will restrict this chapter to only those remarks and insights that serve as the basis of analysis for the remainder of this thesis. I will present a brief outline of Wittgenstein's notion of...
"grammar" and "criteria," concluding the chapter with a few words about what is involved in a grammatical investigation.

Wittgenstein's Notion of "Grammar"

When Wittgenstein refers to "grammar," he does so in a number of ways. Here are a few examples:

Essence is expressed by grammar. [PI, #371.]

Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfill its purpose, in order to have such-and-such an effect on human beings. It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs. [PI, #496.]

So is that what makes us believe a proposition? Well—the grammar of "believe" just does hang together with the grammar of the proposition believed. [OC, #313.]

"You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed."—That is a grammatical remark. [Z, #717.]

Whenever I think of grammar, I have a system of rules for speaking and writing a language in mind. Wittgenstein's references to grammar leave a great deal to the imagination. A recently published article, entitled "Grammar" has this to say:

Grammar describes conventions and customs, but they are not to be seen as mere arbitrary conventions. It exhibits the games we play, the skills and techniques we have acquired as part of a form of life. 4

Grammar helps us see the uses we make of language as games of sorts; and games needn't be justified in order to be understood--they're just played. 5

Wittgenstein's notion of "grammar" could be stated briefly in the following way. When he refers to the "grammar" of a word (a proposition,
a phrase) he is pointing us to the way the word is used in our language: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that." [PI, #340.] The "grammar" of a word is the way it is used in linguistic traffic (speaking and writing). This is not to say that Wittgenstein's method of clearing up philosophical problems simply involved looking at words. An important feature of his notion of "grammar" was that our language is conditioned by the world in which we live and the circumstances which surround speaking a language.

Therefore looking to the "grammar" of words (propositions, phrases) would be incomplete if we simply focused our attention on words. The significance of "grammar" for philosophical problems becomes evident when we extend our considerations to the actions, activities, customs and conventions that surround our language:

Now, is it a real case of seeing or hearing? Well, we call it that; we react with these words in particular situations. And we react to these words in turn by particular actions. [Z, #208.]

"Grammar" (in Wittgenstein's sense) is not just a system of rules for speaking and writing a language, or an enumeration of fundamental principles but the rough ground of language as it is actually used including the activities, the culture and conventions which surround the uses of words.

Grammar is related to language because it involves all the sentences, words and phrases in our daily discourse. Both "grammar" and language are associated with our normal ways of speaking; i.e.
the manifold games we play with words in the process of speaking a language. In addition, "grammar" is of critical importance when dealing with philosophical questions.

For many years philosophers disputed questions such as "What is being?" and "What is time?" Wittgenstein's contribution to philosophy is significant because he chose to deal with these and other philosophical questions in a new and different way. Instead of attempting to resolve these age-old metaphysical questions by trying to grasp the "essence" of "being" and "time," Wittgenstein proposed that we should look at how we use these words in our language; "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that." By looking to the uses of words, phrases and sentences, Wittgenstein believed that our philosophical problems would become clearer. We would discover our philosophical problems are problems about the use of words:

It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways.

For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear.

The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. -- The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question. -- Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off. -- Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a single problem.

There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. [PI, #133]
According to Wittgenstein philosophy "is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." Our philosophical problems are caused by a confusion, rather than a mistake. Perhaps we think that every string of words that can be put together expresses a possible state of affairs in the world. Grammar tells us which words and phrases have an application in our lives and which do not. In this respect, "grammar" lets us determine whether a certain string of words is absurd; whether a particular philosophic inquiry is fruitless. Looking to the uses of words i.e. "grammar" may not provide us with answers. Rather, in our effort to deal with difficult philosophical problems, "grammar" helps us to reject meaningless philosophical questions.

Wittgenstein and "Criteria"

Stanley Cavell, in his excellent paper "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" tells us that,

What Wittgenstein means when he says that philosophy really is descriptive is that it is descriptive of "our grammar," of "the criteria we have" in understanding one another, knowing the world, and possessing ourselves. Grammar is what language games are meant to reveal; it is because of this that they provide new ways of investigating concepts, and of criticizing traditional philosophy. All this, it should go without saying, is difficult to be clear about (Wittgenstein's own difficulty is not willful); but it is what any effort to understand Wittgenstein must direct itself toward.

"Criteria" is another important concept in Wittgenstein's philosophy. In Chapter V, we will see that Wittgenstein's remarks on criteria have a central role in Malcolm's account of dreaming. But for now, let us pause and consider the significance of this concept in
There are conflicting opinions among philosophers about what Wittgenstein meant when he referred to "criteria." This is not unusual since most of Wittgenstein's discussion of "criteria" and his use of the word "criterion" are anything but clear. In the Blue and Brown Books, he makes a distinction between criteria and symptoms:

Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?", we sometimes answer by giving 'criteria' and sometimes by giving 'symptoms'. If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case why do you say this man has got angina? then the answer "I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, "His throat is inflamed", this might give us a symptom of angina. I call "symptom" a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion. Then to say "A man has angina if this bacillus is found in him" is a tautology or it is a loose way of stating the definition of "angina". But to say, "A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat" is to make a hypothesis. 9

We might say, on the basis of this passage, that a criterion differs from a symptom in being a decisive piece of evidence. At numerous places during his consideration of the phenomenon of dreaming, Malcolm equates a "criterion" with "something that settles a question with certainty":

The application of a criterion must be able to yield either an affirmative or a negative result. 10

Considering this, 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...

Rogers Albritton's account of "criterion," in his article entitled "On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term Criterion," also supports the opinion that a criterion can be equated with a decisive piece of evidence:

It is plain enough, then, though Wittgenstein might have made it plainer, that in the sense of the passages I've quoted from the Blue Book the criterion for this or that's being so is, among other things, a logically sufficient condition of its being so. That is: If I find in a particular case that the criterion for a thing's being so is satisfied, what entitles me to claim that I thereby know the thing to be so is that the satisfaction of the criterion entails that it is so, in the technical sense of the word "entails" in which if a man owns two suitcases, that entails that he owns some luggage. 12

But is this notion of criterion Wittgenstein's?

That there are differences and difficulties in interpreting what Wittgenstein meant by "criteria" and his use of the word "criterion," can be seen by considering the following passage:

But what if we went on asking:--"And why do you suppose that toothache corresponds to his holding his cheek just because your toothache corresponds to your holding your cheek?" You will be at a loss to answer this question, and find that here we strike rock bottom, that is we have come down to conventions. (If you suggest as an answer to the last question that, whenever we've seen people holding their cheeks and asked them what's the matter, they have answered, "I have toothache",--remember that this experience only co-ordinates holding your cheek with saying certain words.) 13

In this passage Wittgenstein suggests that a criterion is associated with learning language. A concept such as "toothache" becomes established as part of our linguistic repertoire once we learn to make connections

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between certain kinds of behaviour and words. However, it is important to note that with respect to the question "How do you know that he has toothache?" an appeal to a number of criteria is possible:

Suppose that by observation, I found that in certain cases whenever these first criteria told me a person had toothache, a red patch appeared on his cheek... Now one may go on and ask: "How do you know that he has got toothache when he holds his cheek?" The answer to this might be, "I say, 'he' has toothache when he holds his cheek because I hold my cheek when I have toothache".14

If we can appeal to a number of criteria to settle a particular question it is difficult to see how Wittgenstein could be held responsible for the idea that a criterion is conclusive evidence on every topic. For if there are two independent criteria for a single state of affairs, it is possible that the two criteria may conflict: and in that case, at least one of them is not decisive.15 The question is, "Can a number of criteria be accommodated by a concept without a conflict?"

Wittgenstein, at various places in the PI and elsewhere in his writings, seems to admit that this is possible:

What does it mean to know who is in pain? It means, for example, to know which man in this room is in pain: for instance, that it is the one who is sitting over there, or the one who is standing in that corner, the tall one over there with the fair hair, and so on.---What am I getting at? At the fact that there is a great variety of criteria for personal 'identity'. [PI, #404.]

But what is even more surprising, in light of our discussion so far, is that in what follows these remarks, Wittgenstein suggests that an appeal to "criteria" is neither justified or necessary. That

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is, with some questions he intimates that an appeal to criteria ceases to play any role at all:

What am I getting at? At the fact that there is a great variety of criteria for personal identity.

Now which of them determines my saying that I am in pain? None. [PI, #404.]

We can sum up our discussion of "criteria" in the following way: Whether or not we choose to appeal to a criterion or criteria will depend on the kind of question being asked of us. It may be that with some questions, our appeal to criteria is restricted to that of a single criterion that will settle the question with certainty. However, there are circumstances in which an appeal to a number of criteria is possible. What is important to note (with respect to Wittgenstein's notion of "criteria") is that while an appeal to criteria may be possible in settling a question, it may not always be necessary. That is, it may be possible to settle some questions without an appeal to anything like "criteria" at all:

It is not part of Wittgenstein's thesis that a concept which has criteria is always employed on the basis of criteria. The concepts of pain, mental images and of personal identity have criteria which Wittgenstein discusses at length; but none of these criteria, he says, are applied when a man says of himself that he has a pain or an image. 16

The difficulties that follow from equating a criterion with a decisive piece of evidence for every question will become clearer when we consider Malcolm's use of the word "criterion" with respect to the phenomenon of dreaming in Chapter V.
What is Involved in a Grammatical Investigation?

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the grammar of several philosophical problems connected with the phenomenon of dreaming. We have had occasion to examine a number of Wittgenstein's remarks on "grammar" and "criteria." Before proceeding with our analysis of these problems, it is necessary to ask: "What is involved in a grammatical investigation?"

We feel as if we had to penetrate phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the 'possibilities' of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the kind of statement that we make about phenomena. Thus Augustine recalls to mind the different statements that are made about the duration, past present or future, of events. (These are, of course, not philosophical statements about time, the past, the present and the future.)

This quotation is from Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations. It is followed by the one passage of his published work in which he gives anything like an explanation of what is involved in a grammatical investigation:

Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language.-- Some of them can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart.

If we take the above passage of Wittgenstein's to be indicative of what is involved in a grammatical investigation then, a "grammatical
investigation" would involve:

1) Compiling a list of the uses of the word(s) in question;
2) The substitution of one form of expression for another;
3) Examining certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language.

Wittgenstein tells us that a grammatical investigation sheds light on philosophical problems by clearing misunderstandings away. Since we will be concerned with an investigation into the grammar of philosophical problems associated with dreaming, it would be helpful to find out why these moves, i.e. compiling a list of the uses of a word, substituting one form of expression for another, and examining certain analogies, help us while doing philosophy.

In the Zettel Wittgenstein says:

Philosophical investigations: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: it obliterates the distinction between factual and conceptual investigations. [Z, #458.]

Keep in mind what we have said about Wittgenstein's philosophy to this point. It seems to me that with his phrase, "Philosophical investigations: conceptual investigations," "Grammatical investigations" would make a nice fit here as well. According to Wittgenstein, a grammatical investigation is not directed toward phenomena, but toward concepts which embody the "possibilities" of phenomena. A grammatical investigation is a type of conceptual investigation:

One reason Wittgenstein chose to describe his investigations as grammatical is undoubtedly that his explorations are conceptual and are
therefore inextricably bound up in language...

This is why Wittgenstein says that he exhibits a method by examples: he does not develop a definitive repertoire of games which are to be played by his followers, but instead suggests by example a type of investigation which might be carried out in various situations. He also tries to suggest the need for such an investigation by describing typical circumstances where it is useful as a means to clear vision. Although this therapeutic "game" has some similarities with the games and calculations it treats, it is ultimately unlike them insofar as it must remain open-ended and responsive to whatever therapeutic needs arise: "... this description gets it light, that is to say its purpose--from the philosophical problems."

Philosophers, psychologists, clergy and the common man have always taken an active interest in dreams. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of dreaming raises certain problems which philosophers have gone to great lengths to resolve. For some time now, scholars have disputed questions such as "What is a dream?" "What is the essence of dreaming?"

In Chapters I and II we noticed that a similar debate, of special interest to philosophy, revolves around the question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" What attracts our attention is that with respect to both the sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" and questions pertaining to the essence of dreaming, philosophers have not yet been able to reach any conclusive answers.

The fact that philosophers have been unable to resolve these problems associated with dreaming suggests that some other solution is wanting, or perhaps that no solution is possible. It is for this reason that I choose to adopt a Wittgensteinian perspective toward a
number of problems associated with dreaming that have plagued the history of philosophy thus far. In the following chapters, I intend to investigate the grammar of two questions: 1) "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?", 2) "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" This approach finds its inspiration and encouragement from the wide variety of Wittgenstein's remarks which I have supplied in this chapter. It is my opinion that Wittgenstein's remarks on "grammar" and "criteria" have direct bearing on the problems I have cited, and that a grammatical investigation will yield a profitable result when we come to consider philosophical questions connected with dreaming. I argue that, in light of continuing difficulty on the part of philosophers to make headway with these problems, a Wittgensteinian perspective provides the most plausible alternative as a way of tackling these questions that philosophy can pursue.
Chapter III


5. Ibid., pp. 82-83.


11. Ibid., p. 60.


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16. Ibid.

17. Wittgenstein, PI, #90.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE GRAMMAR OF WORDS, PHRASES AND STATEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH DREAMING

Contemporary sceptics e.g. Peter Unger, Fritz Mauthner, maintain that the question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is a legitimate question for philosophy and that although we may think we are awake there is always the possibility that we are asleep and dreaming. Philosophers have attempted to silence the sceptic with arguments designed to discredit the sceptic's position and question but in doing so have raised additional questions. One query, aroused by Norman Malcolm's treatment of dreams and of particular interest to contemporary philosophers is, "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?"

Malcolm is reluctant to define what a dream is or provide a definition of dreaming: "I am not trying to say what dreaming is; I do not understand what it would mean to do that." The difficulty is to see how Malcolm is justified in arguing that dreams are none of the things that philosophers have commonly supposed them to be. The question "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" that remains unanswered by Malcolm's account of dreaming still leaves the essence of dreams to be decided.

How then might we begin to approach these philosophical problems
associated with dreaming? The history of somewhat successful but inconclusive attempts to resolve the traditional sceptical problem associated with dreaming and questions pertaining to the essence of dreams leaves one frustrated. Our frustration leads us to think that perhaps a definition of the word "dream" or an empirical explanation of dreaming is what is really necessary. At #374 of RPP Wittgenstein states that he does not intend to provide a definition of the word "dream" but to describe the use of the word. In this chapter I will explore the alternative suggested by Wittgenstein by investigating the grammar of words, phrases and statements associated with dreaming.

We note that a grammatical investigation is a type of conceptual investigation. Wittgenstein suggests that a grammatical investigation concerns the use of words: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that." Describing the use of the word "dream" may clear up certain confusions about our concept of dreaming in such a way that our difficulty with the questions cited above may at last be revealed. For this reason I now wish to turn our attention to the word "dream" and how we use it in the English language.

I will begin by enumerating a number of examples in which the word "dream" is used in the ordinary way. By looking at the way we use the word "dream," we will be able to draw some philosophical conclusions which will allow us to re-examine the positions of both the sceptic and Malcolm with new insight. Instead of providing the reader with a list of short sentences, each example has been given a context. This method not only adds "life" to our procedure but supplies details about the
occasion when the word "dream" is used. These particulars will play a significant role in our discussion of context later in the chapter. Here then are a number of uses of the word "dream" as they would appear in our everyday discourse.

1. A group of musicians are sitting around a table at a party discussing their upcoming tour through the United States. The drummer says to the lead guitarist, "I suppose that I'll have to leave you fellows sooner or later. My dream is to become the president of Petro-Can."

2. It's the fourth quarter of the final game of the NFL season. The Detroit Lions are leading the Pittsburgh Steelers with a score of 27 to 24. There is less than a minute of play left in the game. Bradshaw calls the play, fakes back and flips a pass to Franco Harris. Harris runs 65 yards for a touchdown, winning the game for the Steelers. Later in the dressing room, Cosell approaches Harris for comment. Harris: "Wow, a great game. That pass from Terry... it was like a dream come true."

3. There are frantic steps as a child runs from his room down the stairs to his mother. He jumps up on the sofa; eyes filled with tears and shouts, "Mommy, there was a big black cat that chased me all around my room. It had red eyes, big white teeth and paws as big as..." His mother replies, "Quiet, Sam. Quiet. There's no need to worry, honey. You must have had a bad dream."
One thing to notice about the questions 1) "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" and 2) "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon during sleep?" is that the word "dream" is used in two different ways. In the sceptic's question (1) it appears as gerund, i.e. "dreaming." With the other contemporary question associated with dreaming "Are dreams composed of, ..." it is used as a noun. A little reflection will tell us that the word "dream" has a variety of uses: as a noun, "I had a dream last night," as a gerund, "It must have happened while I was dreaming" and as an adjective, "She seems dreamy today." Our description of the use of the word "dream" then, would not be complete without enumerating occasions where other words, (variants of the word "dream") appear in our everyday discourse. Let us now turn to these examples as a way of enlarging upon our description of the use of the word "dream."

4. It is Christmastime and the family has gathered around the television set. Bing Crosby appears on the screen dressed in a leisure suit. He begins to complain about the lack of Christmas spirit, the absence of snow on the ground and then breaks into song, "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas."

5. Madge Smithson has been dating Tom Elliot for ten years. Tom and I have been invited to a housewarming party in the neighbourhood. Tom explains that Madge will be arriving a little late. We head up to the party without her. Two hours later, there is a knock at the door. Madge enters
on the arm of a mutual friend, Dick Washburn and announces their engagement. Tom grabs my arm and groans, "Am I dreaming?"

6. Jim's father decided to catch a little shut-eye after dinner. He puts up the lazyboy chair and dozes off. From the kitchen Jim and his mother hear the father shout, "Shoot kid, shoot! Boy, that kid can skate." Jim peeks around the corner and notices his father sleeping. Returning to the kitchen he shakes his head. Jim's mother: "I guess he's dreaming of the hockey tournament this weekend."

7. Sandy Hawley, top Canadian jockey, has just finished one of his poorest races. When asked for comment he said, "Indeed not a very good race at all. For a while I thought the horse was holding back, just about ready to give her all and we would have a chance. But as I entered the Clubhouse turn, I knew I was dreaming."

8. An assembly of executives is seated in a boardroom, ready to discuss a new advertising campaign for Brillo Soap Pads. One of the senior members of the firm, confronts a junior in the organization, "Jack, for years we have been stuck for a motto, something catchy, that will keep our consumer audience thinking about Brillo Soap Pads. Have you any ideas?" Jack Fontana pauses then replies, "Sir, I have
already taken care of it. How is this? TOUGH AS NAILS, SOFT AS A PILLOW, DIRT DISAPPEARS WHEN YOU SCRUB WITH BRILLO." The president glances to the senior member who asked the question and whispers, "Just what we need. I wonder when Fontana dreamt that one up."

9. A group of professional men and their wives are engaged in conversation at a cocktail party. B, a Philosophy professor, begins telling a dream to the others seated around him: "I dreamt that we were hunting in North Africa. Suddenly angry natives appeared and took us prisoners." (C, a medical doctor, who was away fixing a drink, enters the conversation at this point). B, "It was all very frightening. One of the natives had a knife with which he cut a series of small "x's" on the back of my wife's neck."

The doctor excuses himself from the group and goes over to B's wife, who was chatting at the bar. C, the medical doctor, says, "Hope you do not think me rude, but could you pull your hair up for a moment. I want to examine those scars on your neck." B's wife laughs and pointing to her husband, says, "Oh, that story again, he dreamt it."

10. "I dreamt that I was walking in a forest. Suddenly an angry grizzly bear appeared and began to chase me. It was all very frightening. In making my escape I sustained a number of scratches on my arms and legs."

11. "If we attempt to interpret a typical dream, the dreamer
fails as a rule to produce the associations which would in other cases have led us to understanding, or else his associations become obscure so that we cannot solve our problem without their help.

12. Jane Lockwood, a regular at the Nagshead Tavern, loves to boast. Tonight she comes in, sits down, and begins telling her girlfriends about a date she has with Bart, the captain of the football team. Constantly circulating, she picks up her drink, moving from table to table searching for a new audience. One of her girlfriends tugs the sleeve of another, "Gee I hope what she said isn't true. Things have been going really well between Bart and me." The other girl replies, "Don't worry about Jane, she's just a dreamer."

From these examples, the reader will notice that the word "dream" appears in a number of different contexts. Can we say that there is a univocal meaning for a word like "dream?" With the examples I have provided there does not seem to be. In number 1 the word "dream" is used to express a hope or wish. In number 2 the "dream" is a football pass that is just right. Finally, in example 3 the word "dream" is used to describe events or disturbing experiences which take place while someone is asleep. Notice in example 1, a "dream" is a hope or wish. A hope or wish seems to be fairly compatible with the meaning of the word "dream" that appears in example 2; that is, a football pass that is ideal for a particular situation. However, a hope or a wish is not comparable to a person having a frightening experience such as the
"dream" referred to in example 3. Therefore, we cannot say that there is a single meaning or definition that would be suitable for every use of the word "dream."

What about these other words, i.e. "dreaming," "dreamt," that we have considered in the remainder of the examples? Do we find the same meaning appearing in every example? Not at all. With each example it is possible to construct a phrase which captures the meaning of the original use of the word. What I intend to do is take a reformulated phrase, substitute it in an alternate example, and see if it makes a good fit. If the new word or phrase preserves the original meaning of the word or phrase in the alternate example then the meaning of the word will be the same. If the reformulated phrase renders the passage incoherent and disrupts the sense of the example, then the meaning of the word will be different.

On page 43, we find two examples that profile the use of the word "dreamer." In example 11, Freud's statement could be reformulated this way: "If we attempt to interpret a typical dream the person fails as a rule to produce the associations..." Freud's use of the word "dreamer" refers to the class of individuals who dream. Therefore, we can substitute a number of other words in place of "dreamer" (man, woman, a person who dreams) and the original sense of the passage is preserved. What happens when we take the reformulated phrase or word from example 11 and substitute it in example 12? Here is the result, "The other girl replies, "Don't worry about Jane, she's just a woman who dreams." Immediately we get the feeling that something has gone
askew here. Why is this so? The answer is obvious. The meaning of the word "dreamer" in each of the two cases is not the same.

The reformulated phrase "a person who dreams" fails to make a good fit in example 12 because Freud is using the word "dreamer" in its basic sense, that is in which a person cannot dream unless he is asleep. In example 12, Jane's girlfriend could have said, "Don't worry about Jane; she likes to tell stories." But notice here the word "dream" is being used informally, without the implication that a person needs to be asleep in order to be a "dreamer." This method of reformulating phrases and substituting them in alternative examples again makes us aware that the word "dream" does not have a meaning that is shared by all of its uses.

What can we say about the grammar of the word "dream?" Faced with such a mixed bag of meanings, must we approach each use of the word as an individual case? Or, is there a dominant or fundamental feature to any of these uses of the word "dream?" In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein states:

People who on waking tell us certain incidents (that they have been in such-and-such places, etc.). Then we teach them the expression "I dreamt", which precedes the narrative. Afterwards I sometimes ask them "did you dream anything last night?" and am answered yes or no, sometimes with an account of a dream, sometimes not. That is the language-game. [PI, p. 184].

It is evident from our investigation into the use of the word "dream" that the language-game of telling dreams is not the only language-game in which uses of the word "dream" arise. We have seen that the words "dream" and "dreaming" are used in other situations far removed from
the language-game of telling dreams which Wittgenstein outlines above.

If we look at all the examples I have provided, each use of the word "dream" occurs in a context. Perhaps the best explanation of a context and its significance for philosophical problems associated with dreaming can be had by referring back to a number of our examples. In example 6, suppose Jim's mother were to ask, "What was it you were dreaming about?" after his father had awakened. Would this cause a breakdown in communication between these two people? I fail to see it happening here. A question like this would not be out of place in this situation because the word "dreaming" is being used in the basic sense in which a person cannot "dream" unless he is asleep.

If a statement occurs in the proper context, it makes sense. That is, it has a place in the particular language-game in which it is being used. Context has a strong influence on the grammar of the statements we make and the questions we ask. This is evident if we consider what it would be like for someone to make statements, or ask questions, out of context. If one of the members of the family in example 4 were to ask Dad why Bing Crosby neglected to give an account of what he was dreaming of, (say in the form of narrative) the father would be at a loss for an answer. He would think that the person was joking or had missed the significance of Crosby's song. A question such as, "What is it he is dreaming about?" would reflect a misunderstanding about the way the word "dream" was being used by Crosby in this particular context.

You are standing in a group of reporters (example 7) when Sandy
Hawley is approached for comment about the horse race. What if one of the reporters were to ask him, "What was it you were dreaming about?" Surely this question would be odd, given the context surrounding this particular use of the word "dream." In this example the word "dreaming" is being used informally (figuratively). Hawley might just as easily have said, "For a while I thought the horse was holding back, just about ready to give her all and we would have a chance. But as I entered the Clubhouse turn, I realized I didn't have a chance of winning the race." A question as to what Hawley was dreaming about would also reflect a misunderstanding about the use of the word, because it would suggest another context, i.e. that he was asleep and dreaming while jockeying a horse around a racetrack.

If a statement occurs out of context, it ceases to have sense for us; and for this reason, a statement or question can be meaningful only in an appropriate context. In example 6, the question, "What was it you were dreaming about?" makes sense because it occurs within the language-game of telling dreams, i.e. the proper context (Jim's father was asleep in his easy chair and said some things relating to events that could not be taking place at that time). People do not dream (in the basic sense of the word) when they run a horse race during waking hours. The physical and mental co-ordination required to jockey a horse around a racetrack just does not allow the possibility of being asleep or a question such as, "What was it you were dreaming about?" to gain a foothold here.

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This is not to say that the use of the word "dreaming" in examples 4 and 7 is incoherent and unintelligible. In each case (Crosby and Hawley) the use of the word is acceptable given the context. Most of us who are familiar with the English language understand what Crosby is saying when he sings "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas." The word "dreaming" in this case is figurative or metaphorical, used to express a hope or a wish for more snow. Consequently, this use of the word "dreaming" should be distinguished from other uses where accounts of a dream or questions such as "Did you dream last night?" are an integral part of the language-game. At this point what is worthy of our attention is that the word "dream" appears in many different situations or language-games, (if you will). The language-game of telling dreams that Wittgenstein refers to on page 184 of the Investigations is only one of a host of other language-games which involve the use of the word "dream."

We would do well to concentrate our efforts on the use of the word "dream" where questions such as, "Did you dream last night?" are part of the grammar. Generally it is these and not figurative uses of the word "dream" that have been the source of debate throughout the history of philosophy. It is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions regarding metaphorical uses of the word "dream." Although these uses have been considered, philosophers appear to agree that they fail to play a significant role with questions pertaining to the phenomenon of dreaming. Let us restrict our focus to only those uses in which a
person cannot dream unless he is asleep. I will refer to these uses of the word "dream" as examples of the basic sense of the word.

The basic sense of the word "dream" is employed in several of the examples I have provided. Here is an example that allows us to make some substantial observations with respect to the grammar of phrases and sentences associated with "dreaming." Consider this as a synthesis of the relevant statements contained in example number 9:

I dreamt that we were hunting in North Africa. Suddenly angry natives appeared and took us prisoners. It was all very frightening. One of the natives had a knife with which he cut a series of small "x's" on the back of my wife's neck.

Is there anything unusual about the individual words and phrases the professor has used to give an account of his dream? At first glance there does not seem to be. The language that we use to tell our dreams is identical to the individual words and phrases we use to describe events and experiences in our waking life, with one exception; the use of the phrase "I dreamt" which precedes the narrative.

What is the function of the expression "I dreamt?" How does it affect the grammar of the rest of the narrative that follows it? Let us address ourselves to each of these questions separately. If the professor does not use the expression "I dreamt" to preface his narrative, what would follow? One conclusion must be that he is no longer telling a dream. The professor would be giving an account of a series of events that actually happened:

We were hunting in North Africa. Suddenly angry natives appeared and took us prisoners. It was
all very frightening. One of the natives had a
knife with which he cut a series of small "x's"
on the back of my wife's neck.

Yet, I am sure that we would agree that there is a difference between
these two narratives.

The difference between the two narratives involves a distinction
which I have decided to call the "dream-distinction." It can be
articulated in the following manner. If the events that the professor
describes actually happened, he would be giving a truthful account of
events and experiences that occurred while he was awake. What follows
from this? If you asked him to produce evidence of his trip to Africa
(e.g. plane tickets, photographs, African artifacts, etc.) he would
be able to meet your requests. Further, you could quiz him on tidbits
of African culture that only a visitor to the country would be aware
of. Finally, if you examined his wife's neck, the scars made by the
knife would be there.

However, in example 9, B (the philosophy professor) uses the
expression "I dreamt." Although he uses the same words and phrases he
would telling a story, had it actually happened, he identifies his nar-
native as a dream. The phrase "I dreamt" acts as a signal, an announce-
ment that these words and phrases should not be taken in the same sense
as an account describing events and experiences had they actually
happened in his waking life. The "dream-distinction," once announced,
affects all the words and phrases that go into the remainder of the
narrative. It carries with it the implication that the language-game
of telling dreams is an extension of language-games about actual
experiences, but now qualified with the phrase "I dreamt."

At various places in the PI Wittgenstein invents a language-game for the purpose of clarifying a concept (see PI, #64, 86, 143). He says in a footnote on page 56 of the Investigations that:

What we have to mention in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance, of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature: such facts as are hardly ever mentioned because of their great generality. [PI, p. 56.]

What is interesting about the concept of dreaming is that we have not found it necessary to create a new language-game in order to tell our dreams. Our English vocabulary and normal ways of speaking work just fine.

What would a new language, invented for the purpose of telling dreams, be like? Imagine this case: We encounter a tribe in the forests of New Guinea. They have devised a new technique of telling their dreams. Whenever one of the members of the tribe recounts a dream, all nouns and object words in the dream narrative are pronounced backwards. This jargon prevents other members of the tribe from confusing accounts of waking experiences with dreams. But since we know the language-games in both cases, would the need to do this ever arise? I do not think so; and this only brings out something about the concept of dreaming. In the preceding example, the natives of New Guinea distinguish ordinary narratives from dream narratives by using a different vocabulary. However this language-game of telling dreams employed by these natives would be odd, unlike anything we are familiar with.
We do not employ a different language-game to distinguish dream narratives from the ordinary accounts of events and experiences in our waking life. We prefix our accounts with the expression "I dreamt" and this is all that is needed to identify what we are talking about: "People who on waking, tell us certain incidents... Then we teach them the expression 'I dreamt' which precedes the narrative.... That is the language-game."\(^{10}\)

How then does the phrase "I dreamt" affect the grammar of the rest of the narrative that follows it? Whenever we give an account of a dream, people have no problem understanding what we say. In this respect the expression "I dreamt" alters the narrative and is intimately linked with the sentences that follow it. A number of philosophers, including Wittgenstein, have revealed an awareness of the "dream-distinction" by articulating this point in the following way:

If I say I dreamt that I had a conversation with Ryle, or that University College was on fire, it seems incontestable that it makes no sense to ask whether it was really Ryle, or really University College .... I said I dreamt it, and this means that no real conversation occurred, that it would be senseless to see if Ryle himself would confirm its occurrence, or to enquire whether he and I were geographically close enough for it to be possible. \(^{11}\)

When I report what I did or saw or heard or thought in my dream, I am talking about a character in my dream. This use of the first person singular in the narration of the dream is no more unusual or paradoxical than the use of proper names of actual persons. The relation between the character and the actual person is one of representation: in his dream, a character representing the dreamer may differ as completely from him, and from his conception of himself, as the other characters may differ from the actual persons they represent. \(^{12}\)
It could only be by accident that a man's dreams about the future of philosophy, art, science, should come true. What he sees in his dreams is an extension of his own world, PERHAPS what he wishes (and perhaps not), but not reality. 13

There is ordinarily no request for evidence or proof to substantiate our accounts of dreams. For example, it would be very strange if a group of people, listening to the professor in example 9, were to suddenly jump up and whisk over to examine his wife's neck. This kind of thing just does not happen when someone tells of a dream. A question such as, "Could you show me your plane tickets?" or an examination of the wife's neck are out of place with the language-game of telling dreams. Once the phrase "I dreamt" is announced, an important distinction shifts into gear. People have no difficulty distinguishing the dream narrative from the ordinary one.

Why do I go to great length to point out the significance of this "dream-distinction?" The professor has told a story about a frightening encounter in Africa. But if the experiences mentioned in his dream narrative were actual experiences, his wife would have sustained injuries from the series of events he has described. If you examined his wife's neck the scars made by the knife mentioned in his narrative would be there. The fact is they are not. What sense then can we make of the natives, the scars and the fear mentioned in the professor's dream narrative? If we keep in mind that the use of the phrase "I dreamt" qualifies the remainder of the words, phrases and sentences which follow it, there is nothing to suggest that we have to make any sense of them at all.
The "dream-distinction" outlined above is helpful in pointing out the way in which dream narratives differ from ordinary narratives about events and experiences in our waking life. Keep in mind, though, that the language-game of telling dreams is only one of a number of language-games in which the word "dream" is used. Because the statements which follow the phrase "I dreamt" bear such strong similarity to those which describe waking events and experiences, it is possible that this distinction may be overlooked. And in some cases, where our questions have nothing to do with the language-game of telling dreams it might even be forgotten altogether.

At #90 of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein tells us that a grammatical investigation sheds light on philosophical problems by clearing misunderstandings away, "misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language." Up to this point our investigation has involved looking at the use of the word "dream," its grammar and the context or occasions in which the use of the word can be found. We will now be interested, not with the many and varied uses of the word "dream," but with looking at certain forms of expression that bear a strong grammatical similarity to the forms of expression in which the use of the word "dream" appears.

The fact that Wittgenstein directs us to examine forms of expression from "different regions of language" is significant. He has said that the whole process of using words, "consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven can be called the 'language-game.'"
However, at various places in the PI, he points out that there are an innumerable number of "language-games" which are subsumed under the word "language" (in this respect, see his remarks at #23 of the PI). Given the plurality of language-games it is easy to see that one "game," whose territory is not sharply defined, might shade off into another. I maintain that this is where Wittgenstein believed our misunderstandings about the uses of words and concepts have their root.

A grammatical analogy is a form of expression that has a strong surface similarity when compared with another form of expression. A form of expression may be a phrase or a sentence. What is important is that, though the two forms of expression seem to be similar to each other, a closer examination will reveal that they are not that similar at all. Once we ferret out the meaning of each phrase or sentence and what follows from it, we see that there are substantial differences between the two.

O.K. Bouwsma, in his paper "I Have In Sleep Been Deceived," draws our attention to a pair of statements which have a strong similarity to the expression "X tells a dream":

What do I mean by a grammatical analogy?
Compare the following sentences:
Peter tells his dream.
Peter tells a story.
Peter tells what happened.

Let us begin by considering the ways in which telling a dream is similar to telling a story/telling what happened. A young man has recently witnessed a car accident. Here is his account:

As I recall I had just purchased a package of cigars, left the smokeshop and was standing on the corner,
waiting for the light to change. The light had turned green, but I hesitated, hearing the sound of a car horn piercing the air. Turning to the right, I gasped as a big blue Cadillac screamed into the intersection, smashing into the traffic that had the right of way. It was terrible! There was broken glass, blood and twisted metal everywhere. In my opinion, it was one of the worst accidents I have ever seen.

With a few alterations, a substitution of a phrase or two and some editing, this report could also stand as an example of a dream one might recount on awakening:

As I recall I dreamt that I had just purchased a package of cigars, left the smokeshop and was standing on the corner waiting for the light to change.... There was broken glass, blood and twisted metal everywhere. That was when I woke up.

The similarities between the sentences "Peter tells a dream;" "Peter tells a story," "Peter tells what happened" are fairly obvious. All three practices, i.e. telling a dream, telling a story, telling what happened are alike in that they use the English language. As well, most of the words and phrases used in the practice of telling what happened/telling a story are used in a dream narrative. All three practices involve "telling," that is the details of the story are expressed in words and spoken or communicated to an audience of one or more persons, willing to listen to the account. Finally, telling a dream, telling a story and telling what happened require a memory process. This suggests that all three are similar in that they involve "remembering" something that happened in the past.

Bouwsma's intention, in citing the above "language-games" as examples of what he means by a "grammatical analogy," is not so much
to make us aware of the similarity between the grammar of the three practices but to point us toward how they differ. Perhaps the most important difference between telling a dream and telling a story/telling what happened concerns the problem of verification. If Peter were to relate the details of the car accident, (mentioned on the previous page) i.e. tell a story/tell what happened, there are a number of avenues that we could take to verify his account. We could:

1. ask him for the exact date, time and location of the accident;
2. visit the smokeshop and ask the owner to corroborate his story;
3. search out old copies of the newspaper that might include some of the details of the accident;
4. consult police records to obtain particulars as to who was involved, how it happened, witnesses' statements etc.;
5. approach some of these witnesses (car owners, pedestrians) to get their side of the story.

On the basis of this list, there seems to be a large variety of ways that we could put together a package of details which would allow us to judge whether Peter was telling the truth, i.e. verify his account.

What if Peter were to relate the same accident, but only in the form of a dream narrative? Peter wakes up in the morning and tells me his dream. Can I say anything to contest his report or attempt to amend it? Clearly, we are in a bind as to what avenues we could take to verify
what Peter has said. What alterations could I make? What questions could I ask? It is important to note that if Peter tells a dream, his account of the accident cannot be substantiated by police records, newspapers or testimony from other witnesses. The statements that make up Peter’s dream narrative are peculiar in that they are restricted to his testimony alone. I believe it is for this reason that there has never been a tradition of verification associated with dream narratives:

That is, dream reports are singular, in that they carry with themselves a special self-establishing truth - that is distinct from any other notion of truthfulness or usual methods of checking veracity. And this is almost as much as to say that "truth" does not apply here at all. 17

The second point to notice about the grammatical analogy Bouwema cites is that praise and blame do not apply to dream narratives. We can bring this important difference to light by examining what follows from a typical example of someone’s telling a dream. Consider example 10, page 43, as a case in point:

Peter tells a dream: "I dreamt that I was walking in a forest. Suddenly an angry grizzly bear appeared and began to chase me. It was all very frightening. In making my escape I sustained a number of scratches on my arms and legs."

Peter tells a story: "I was walking in a forest. Suddenly an angry grizzly bear appeared and began to chase me. It was all very frightening. In making my escape I sustained a number of scratches on my arms and legs."

Suppose that Peter really had this encounter with a grizzly bear. His story as an account of events that actually took place things would follow from his narrative, in this case praise and
blame. Let's say Peter relates this encounter to his friends at school. It's easy to see how they might compliment him on his quick wit and agility, "Peter, you were very lucky to escape. You must be a good runner," or "That's a dandy example of some real fancy footwork." In this case they could praise Peter on the basis of his account and their praise would be justified.

The same result is obtained with respect to blame if we consider what it would be like if Peter returned home and related the encounter with the grizzly bear to his parents. Immediately after he finishes his story, his mother begins to chastise him, "When will you ever learn to take care of yourself? Don't you realize you could have been killed?" Could we say that the mother's comments are unwarranted? I do not see how we could. The fact that Peter is telling a story about what actually happened in the forest, leaves him open to these and other criticisms, "You should never have gone out walking in the forest alone. In future, bring a friend or a gun." Therefore, his mother's rebuke is totally acceptable.

But what if this encounter with the grizzly bear is an account of a dream Peter had, say the night before? In this case moral predicates such as praise and blame, would have no place here. Why should he be praised or blamed on the basis of what he dreamt? Notice, if someone were to compliment him on his agility in making his escape after he told his dream, Peter could only take these statements as being made in jest, or jokingly. Also, if his mother were to blame him for being caught in this situation and recommend that he carry a gun, when venturing into
the forest, Peter would probably think these comments were totally unjustified. No one is praised or blamed for what they do in a dream. Although people often take an interest in dream narratives most of us just listen to them with an open mind. It goes no further than that.

From the grammatical analogies we have examined, it appears that there are significant differences between ordinary narratives and dream narratives: 1) that dream narratives differ with respect to consequences, 2) that praise and blame do not apply to dream narratives, and 3) that there is no tradition of verification associated with accounts of dreams. How do these analogies assist us in clearing up confusion about the concept of dreaming?

What happens when someone tells us a dream? Do we question them as to whether they experienced a series of thoughts, images and sensations while asleep? Do we cross-examine them and attempt to verify what they say? Not at all; and this is an important point about the concept of dreaming. In telling a dream, I am not claiming to have been in these places, and observed these events in the same sense I would if I were giving an account of actual events and experiences that occurred while awake. If I did, it would leave me open to demands for proof, attempted amendments of my story, all of which seem utterly absurd if what I give is an account of a dream. All I am claiming when I tell a dream is that I have had a dream, the details of which I find interesting. This is significant. I maintain, and will argue in the following chapter, that any attempt to assert more than this involves a conceptual absurdity far removed from the way we normally tell our dreams and the attitudes and opinions we
have about them.

Summary

At the outset of this chapter it was stated that, from a Wittgensteinian point of view, a grammatical investigation is a type of conceptual investigation. In the following chapter we will bring the results of this grammatical investigation to bear on two philosophical questions associated with dreaming, namely 1) "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" 2) "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" Let us pause briefly now and consider what relevance our investigation into the use of the word "dream" has for philosophy, and how it might help us to resolve the difficulties involved in each of the above two questions.

The question, "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" has been a central concern for philosophers since the publication of Malcolm's Dreaming and "Dreaming and Scepticism." In this chapter we noticed that the word "dream" has a variety of uses. But that there was no single or univocal meaning to be found existing with every occasion in which the word "dream" was used. Philosophers and psychologists continue to seek answers to the questions, "What is a dream?" "What is the essence of dreaming?" in an effort to meet the request left in the wake of Malcolm's position. However, if the word "dream" fails to have a single meaning running through all of its uses, doesn't this cast a dim light on any attempt to answer or contest Malcolm's theory with a definition of the word "dream?" I believe so, and will argue in the following chapter.
that there is something fundamentally wrong with an attempt to provide a definition of the word "dream." I will go on to argue that Malcolm's contention that dreams are not composed of, or identical with thoughts, images, any mental phenomenon occurring during sleep, is supported by a verificationist bent; with the result that because there has never been a tradition of verification associated with dreaming, both Malcolm's theory and solution to the sceptical problem are untenable.

The sceptical problem has been a source of discomfort to philosophers for a number of centuries. Contemporary sceptics maintain that although we may think and be able to prove we are awake there is always the possibility that we are asleep and dreaming. A question begs to be asked here. Do we find the question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" present in any of the examples of ordinary uses of the word "dream" which I have provided? Not at all. Although there is an example in which the question "Am I dreaming?" appears, (see example 5, p. 41) the use of the word "dream" is figurative. That is, the person is not really wondering if he is awake or asleep.

The fact that we fail to find the sceptic's question in any of the examples I have provided would suggest that the question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" belongs to a language-game far removed from ordinary discourse. A grammatical investigation reveals that strange turns of events only give rise to a figurative use of the word "dream," at best. Since the sceptic, in asking the question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" employs a basic use of the word "dream" (in which
a person cannot dream unless he is asleep) will argue that his use of the word "dream" in this question is both illegitimate and unjustified; with the result that because the question fails to express a meaningful possibility, it should no longer be a concern for philosophy.

With these points behind us, let us return to the sceptic and Malcolm's account of dreams. We will see if our grammatical investigation sheds any light on their positions and the problems that have plagued philosophy with respect to dreaming.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

1 It is evident that the sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" fails to find a serious articulation in any of the texts of the ancient and early modern philosophers we have considered. However, this question continues to be maintained by sceptics since Descartes' Meditations. For this reason I have decided to refer to the sceptical question as a "traditional" problem associated with dreaming.

2 See pages 7-9, Chapter I: 19-21, Chapter II.

3 I am certain that questions pertaining to the essence of dreams were debated before the twentieth century. However, the question "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" appears to have its first serious articulation with the evaluations and criticisms that follow after Malcolm's Dreaming (1959). For this reason I have chosen to refer to it as a "contemporary" problem associated with dreaming.


6 See pages 32-35, Chapter III.


9 Here I exclude the possibility that the professor might be telling a lie.

10 Ibid., p. 184.


14 Wittgenstein, PI, #90.

15 Wittgenstein, PI, #7.

16 O.K. Bouwsma, Philosophical Essays (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 163.

CHAPTER V

A CRITIQUE OF THE SCEPTIC'S QUESTION AND MALCOLM
IN LIGHT OF THIS GRAMMATICAL INVESTIGATION

Not to explain, but to accept the psychological phenomenon - that is what is difficult. [RPP, #509.]

In the previous chapter our efforts were directed toward a detailed investigation of the grammar of the word "dream." We can now bring the fruits of our grammatical investigation to bear on two philosophical questions, (1) "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" (2) "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" Let us return to the sceptic and Norman Malcolm's account of dreams. I will examine each position respectively beginning with an analysis of the contemporary sceptical question associated with dreaming. The chapter concludes with a critique of Malcolm's account of dreams as it appears in his book, Dreaming, and in his paper, "Dreaming and Scepticism."

A. An Examination of the Contemporary Sceptical Question Associated with Dreaming

Thus far, attempts to contest the sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" have been unsuccessful. Various philosophers have decided to subscribe to a principle of coherence. Others have sought refuge in elaborate tests and proofs with which one could establish that we are awake. The sceptic refuses to be convinced by any of these.
He continues to maintain that you cannot know you are awake, you can only believe it; and this will always leave the possibility that you may be asleep and dreaming.

In Chapter IV, we had occasion to examine and consider a number of examples in which the use of the word "dream" could be found. During that examination, our attention was drawn to a striking curiosity: that the sceptic's question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" failed to appear in any of the examples I have provided. To begin my consideration of the sceptic's question, let's focus on this curiosity.

I will offer two brief arguments which provide significant reasons for the absence of the sceptical question in everyday discourse. They are: (1) that the sceptic's question conceals a sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming" which, when subjected to analysis, fails to express a meaningful possibility for a waking subject; (2) that questions and statements such as "Am I dreaming?" and "I must be dreaming" are really only the products of a momentary confusion and are not indicative of a serious doubt about whether one is awake or asleep. I will go on to argue that the sceptic has extended the use of the word "dream" beyond the bounds of ordinary language, and that his question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is restricted to a particular language-game, that of philosophy. Following this, I will indicate that the sceptic's question employs a metaphysical use of the word "dream." My consideration of the grammar of the sceptic's question will conclude with an argument which attempts to show that the sceptic's use of the word "dream" is peculiar. Because the question is subject to these grammatical errors, I maintain
that it should no longer be treated as a meaningful philosophical inquiry.

1. The Sceptic's Question Fails to Express a Meaningful Possibility for a Waking Subject

To begin our treatment of the sceptic's question, we might note that beneath its surface lies the sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming." If we subject this sentence to close scrutiny we will notice that it fails to express a meaningful possibility for a waking subject. First, it is necessary to ask, "What is a meaningful possibility?" A meaningful possibility is a state of affairs which has the power to affect my present situation, in such a way that I am justified in living my life, changing my behavior and actions according to the implications of this possibility. For example, let us suppose that I intend to go fishing this afternoon. When I looked out the window this morning the lake appeared clear and calm. However, since noon, radio reports have issued a storm warning for the area and have cautioned all but very large craft to stay off the lake. Since my boat is powered by a very small motor, the possibility of a thunderstorm this afternoon is a meaningful possibility. That is, the possibility of a severe storm coupled with the radio reports are enough to keep me from venturing out on the lake. The consequences that loom on the horizon of this possibility ("It will thunderstorm today") have the power to affect my present state of affairs and my intentions for the rest of my waking day.

Why then does the sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming" fail
to express a meaningful possibility for a waking subject? Consider this as an elaboration: At this moment I am seated at a desk in the Philosophy Common Room, defending my thesis before a committee of three professors and a small audience. Now it is obvious to me that I am not responding to questions about my paper with my eyes closed, and it is with some design and deliberate intent that I listen to their objections, prepare my answers and respond accordingly. What would follow if I were asleep and dreaming? Isn't this a peculiar possibility for a waking subject to entertain?

Notice, a number of absurd consequences would follow if I were asleep and dreaming while defending my thesis. For one, I would not be dressed in slacks and sweater. Since I sleep in pajamas the clothes that I am wearing now would be hanging in the closet at home. Let us say that during my defence one of my committee members begins a difficult line of questioning pertaining to an area of philosophy about which I know very little. At once I begin to falter, stumbling through a number of incomplete answers and my overall performance suffers considerably. If I were asleep and dreaming while defending my thesis it would take little reflection to see that I should have no cause to worry. Since these questions are only questions in a dream (and my performance is but part of a dream) my thesis grade and graduate career would not be affected in the least. Finally, if I am asleep and dreaming while defending my thesis the grade that my committee delivers after deliberating must be imaginary since their evaluation of my performance is just part of a dream.
This example reveals the absurdity of what is involved in the sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming." The sentence fails to express a meaningful possibility for a waking subject because it drags along all kinds of crazy consequences. If it were the case that I were asleep and dreaming while defending my thesis it would follow that the desk that I am sitting at, the reference texts, pens and pencils before me, my committee and the other members of the audience would all become parts of a dream. This is to say no matter how serious the objections against my paper are, however poorly I perform, all of this cannot be considered in the same sense as it would if I were defending my thesis during waking hours. But notice, the senselessness of this sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming" does not shine through like a lighthouse in a storm. One has to do a little spadework before realizing the consequences involved with a remark such as this.

The problem with the question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is its subtle peculiarity. The sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming" stands between us and the sentence "I am awake" because of its ability to masquerade as a meaningful possibility. However, it is not justified in doing so. If it were possible that I am asleep and dreaming while defending this thesis I would have a substantial reason to doubt the statement "I am awake." But life as I know it affords me no occasion to doubt that I'm awake during waking hours, since the possibility that I may be asleep and dreaming while defending this thesis is too insubstantial to father anything but pretend doubts.
2. Questions and Statements Such As "Am I Dreaming?", "I Must Be Dreaming" Are not Indicative of a Serious Doubt About Whether one Is Awake or Asleep

In Chapter IV I argued that a serious doubt about whether one is awake or asleep and dreaming fails to appear in any of the examples in which the use of the word "dream" can be found. There is an objection waiting in the wings and I would like to deal with it now. The objection, made by the sceptic, can be put in the following way: "You say that a serious doubt about whether I am awake or asleep and dreaming fails to appear in any of these examples. Haven't you been dogmatic? Perhaps it's just that your imagination has its limits. There are cases where a person can genuinely wonder whether he is awake or asleep." \(^7\)

Would the following be the sort of example our critic has in mind? Recently, the country of Poland came under martial law. The decision that the military force move in and take arms happened overnight. In this light, the situation in certain cities in Poland changed radically in the space of some twelve hours. Put yourself in the place of an everyday resident living alone in the city of Gdansk. Sitting at the breakfast table you hear a great commotion outside. There are the sounds of machines, clinking and clanging, and people shouting in anger and desperation. Pulling the curtain aside, you see hundreds of uniformed soliders, armed with guns, marching in step down the street. As your eyes scan the roadway you notice tanks and trucks following close behind. You say, "I must be dreaming": pinch yourself and then ask: "Am I dreaming?"
The sceptic, in presenting this example claims to have provided a legitimate case indicative of a serious doubt about whether one is awake, or asleep and dreaming. Does this objection affect the position advanced in this thesis thus far? I do not see how it could. It is easy to see that this situation could give rise to a question such as "Am I dreaming?" or a statement such "I must be dreaming." Nevertheless, I would maintain that in light of our discussion of the grammar of the word "dream," (Chapter IV) such expressions would only be figurative, metaphorical uses at best. Consider what causes our Polish friend to make these statements.

Let us suppose that politics in Poland have been at a lull. Perhaps there has been no sign of political unrest in the city, absolutely no indication the army was massing for a march or prepared to enforce martial law. Suddenly, within the space of twelve hours, martial law had been imposed. When our man in Gdansk looks out the window at the scene in the streets below, he takes in a whole new barrage of events; another world picture if you will. Since very few of these activities jibe with the political atmosphere of the city he's thrown for a momentary loop, baffled and overawed at what is taking place before him.

Could we say, as the sceptic wants to claim, that he is sincerely doubting whether he is awake or asleep and dreaming? I do not think so. Here we need to distinguish between a doubt and a momentary confusion. If the sceptic wants to claim that the citizen's question "Am I dreaming?" is indicative of a genuine doubt, it would follow that our man in Gdansk would not be able to resolve his problem without something to afford
assurance of the certainty that he was awake. The fact that he has pinched himself is not enough to establish, with certainty, that he is awake since the sceptic will argue that it is always possible that he is only pinching himself in a dream. In Chapter I we noticed that Descartes did not arrive at a principle with which he could distinguish waking life from sleep until the Sixth Meditation. Not taking too many liberties, I think it is safe to assume that the dream problem kept Descartes busy for some time, perhaps a few hours—perhaps a few days.

Would we expect the fellow in the Gdansk example to continue asking his question? That is, would he entertain a genuine doubt about whether he was awake or asleep and dreaming say, until the following day? We must not be naive. The resident who looks out his window at the scene in the street in Gdansk is baffled. Tanks, jeeps, and uniformed soldiers are not common fare on this particular street. And, because these events are off the beaten track, they create a surprise. It is this radical shift in scenery that causes our man in Gdansk to make the statements and ask the questions he does.

Questions and statements such as "Am I dreaming?", "I must be dreaming," are really only the products of a momentary confusion. They are not indicative of a serious doubt about whether one is awake or asleep. It would be strange indeed if we thought our man in Gdansk was actually doubting whether he was awake or asleep. His puzzlement at the activity outside his window would last perhaps a couple of seconds. It would take no time at all before this momentary confusion disappeared. To imagine that he performed an elaborate ritual to relieve his confusion
seems wrong. The move from confusion to the realization that he was awake would be next to instantaneous. You would not find our Polish resident rushing down the stairs to the mailbox, searching for a newspaper whose headline would confirm that he was awake, i.e. "MARTIAL LAW DECLARED!" Again, to say that he would approach the people on the street for information as to whether he was awake and not asleep and dreaming seems equally preposterous. The resolution of the problem does not seem to require that kind of effort.

3. The Sceptic Has Extended The Use of The Word "Dream" Beyond The Bounds of Ordinary Discourse

What do I mean when I say that the use of the word "dream" that is employed by the sceptic is extended past the bounds of normal linguistic usage? We have seen that the word "dream" is used in different ways, and in a host of contexts. However, the uses of the word "dream" appear to fall into two distinct categories: (1) the basic sense of the word, in which a person cannot be said to be "dreaming" unless he is asleep, (2) figurative, metaphorical uses where the sense of the word "dream" is used to say "I'm mistaken, confused" and so on.

If we look back at the host of examples in Chapter IV we should take care to notice that puzzlement and confusion rest with figurative uses of the word "dream." When the word "dream" is used in its basic sense, most people speak with a good deal of confidence. That is, they tell their dreams, talk about them, interpret them and make qualitative and quantitative judgements about them without ever suggesting that they
fail to be able to distinguish waking life from sleep. What is interesting is that on no occasion excepting the sceptic's use (a metaphysical use) does a doubt about whether one is awake or asleep and dreaming creep in when a basic use of the word "dream" is being employed. Since the sceptic asks his question as a genuine question (which involves the basic sense of the word "dream" and accordingly a serious doubt about whether we are awake or asleep and dreaming) it confirms that he has extended the use of the word past the bounds of normal linguistic discourse.

4. The Sceptic's Question Belongs to the Language-Game of Philosophy and Involves A Metaphysical Use of the Word "Dream"

The examples provided in Chapter IV were formulated and selected with careful attention to the way we would normally use the word "dream." Since the sceptic's question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is absent from these examples, it suggests that the question may belong to a language-game far removed from our normal, day-to-day linguistic exchange. In line with Wittgenstein's counsel, we would do well to ask: "To what language-game does this question belong?"

In a paper entitled "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" Stanley Cavell tells us that:

"If, in the nonscientific (skeptical) conflict with common belief, words are in some way deprived of their normal functioning, a conceptualization of this distortion will have to account for this pair of facts: that the philosopher's words must (or must seem to) be used in their normal way, otherwise they would not conflict with what should ordinarily be meant in using them;"
and that the philosopher's words cannot be used in (quite) their normal way, otherwise the ordinary facts, examples, and considerations he adduces would not yield a general skeptical conclusion.

It is such a pair of facts, I suggest, that Wittgenstein is responding to when he says of philosophical (he calls them "metaphysical") expressions that (roughly) they are "used apart from their normal language game," that their "grammar is misunderstood," that they "flout the common criteria used in connection with these expressions." 8

According to Cavell, (and Wittgenstein) a word is used "metaphysically" if it is articulated during a discussion of a subject or problem far removed from normal considerations and ordinary discourse. In that the sceptic's challenge involves an epistemological problem that fails to appear in ordinary language it is entirely possible that the sceptic's question involves a metaphysical use of the word "dream."

It is rare that anyone would ask a question such as "Am I awake, or asleep and dreaming?" of themselves or any other--except perhaps is special circumstances. In the Meditations Descartes was concerned with establishing the basis of philosophy, attempting to arrive at a fundamental certainty from which all philosophizing could begin. However, very few people engage in this kind of serious metaphysics while speaking a language. In this respect, Wittgenstein's advice to philosophers at PI #116, is revealing:

When philosophers use a word - "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name", - and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?

What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. [PI, #116.]
If the sceptic's employment of the word "dreaming" is a "metaphysical use" and his question is restricted to the language-game of philosophy it would follow that the possibility of our being exposed to both the use and the question is severely hampered (as it would not if it were part of our normal linguistic discourse).

As we make our way through life it is not uncommon that we are exposed to new and different uses of words. For example, let us say that before entering university I have had virtually no exposure to the discipline of philosophy. During my first year I decide to enroll in an introductory philosophy course. The assignment for the first month of studies involves an in depth examination of the arguments in Norman Malcolm's book, *Dreaming*. Preparing for class one afternoon I am struck by a most interesting passage:

The anciently perplexing question 'How can I tell whether I am awake or dreaming?' seems to me to obtain its force from two errors. One is that of supposing that dreaming and waking might be 'exact counterparts', this being an error that comes from confusing the historical and dream-telling senses of first person singular psychological sentences in the past tense. The other is that of thinking that one must be able to know, to see that one is awake. We are thus brought to a state of paralysis, caught as it were in the grip of contradiction. We think we must know this, yet we realize that we could not. I have tried to expose both errors. [D, p. 120.]

There is something about the question Malcolm cites in the first sentence of this passage that continues to puzzle me. The difficult thing is to determine why. What I want to leave open as a possibility for us to consider is this. At the point that I enter into the discipline of philosophy I will be exposed to new and different uses of words.
I may have had exposure to a number of uses of a particular word such as "dreaming" (basic uses, figurative uses) and know how to apply it comfortably. However, while reading texts such as Malcolm's *Dreaming* and Descartes' *Meditations* I will encounter what Wittgenstein referred to as a "metaphysical" use of the word "dream."

If I have never been exposed to this "metaphysical" use of the word "dreaming" (or better still, seen it employed in just this way) I will be thrown for a momentary loop. This is not to say that I will never be able to understand how the word is being used in the sceptic's question. It is just that he has extended the use of the word in such a way that is unfamiliar to me—and in this respect, puzzling. I am suggesting that this is the case with the sceptical question associated with dreaming.

5. **The Sceptic's Use of the Word "Dream" is Illegitimate and Unjustified**

How then is the sceptic justified in asking this question? Is his use of the word "dreaming" in the question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" a legitimate use of the word? That the sceptic's use of the word "dream" is peculiar can be seen from the following observation.

We could say that the basic sense of the word "dream" keeps a certain company with other words in our language. In this respect the word "sleep" is a prime example, i.e. where one would necessarily be understood to have been asleep while "dreaming" in this sense. In the course of learning a language we become familiar with these words and phrases in such a way that our concept of the word "dream" begins to be defined.
That is, when someone says, "I had a dream" (uses the word "dream" in a sentence with just these words), we expect him to go on to fill in the details of his dream in the form of a narrative. This is because we have become comfortable with a number of words and phrases and the company they keep with this particular use of the word.

When the sceptic asks "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" we are puzzled by the question, perhaps because the words "Am I awake" are not part of the common company of the word "dreaming." That is, the word "awake," when juxtaposed with the words "asleep" and "dreaming" seems peculiar because the words, and accordingly the concepts "awake" and "asleep and dreaming," are never placed at odds with one another in ordinary language. I am suggesting that when the sceptic asks the question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" he brings words and phrases to bear on the basic use of the word "dream" in a new and different way. In doing so, the sceptic creates confusion about the use of the word "dream." It is for this reason I maintain that his use of the word "dreaming" is illegitimate.

In what other way is the sceptic's extension of the use of the word "dream" peculiar? The question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" suggests that we no longer know how to apply these words in their proper context. I argue that the sceptic's use of the word "dreaming" in his question is unjustified for just this reason. There is a sense in which the word "dreaming" would not make an unusual fit with the word "awake." That is, the sense we find in "daydreaming," a fantasy or brand of mental stage setting one might engage in during waking hours. A little
reflection will tell us that we often use the word "dreaming" in this way. But in no case do we use the word "dreaming" to suggest the possibility that one could be dreaming, in the basic sense of the word, while awake.

The peculiar thing about the sceptic's use of the word "dreaming" is that he employs it in a question that is posed as a genuine question. That is to say, by juxtaposing the use of the words "awake" and "asleep and dreaming," the sceptic suggests the possibility that we can and do confuse the use of the words "dreaming" and "awake." Our grammatical investigation has revealed that nothing could be further from the truth. I have argued then, for this reason that his extension of the use of the word "dream" in this particular question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" is unjustified. On the basis of the arguments I have provided, and because the sceptic's question is subject to these grammatical errors, I propose that the question, "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" should not continue to be treated as a meaningful inquiry for philosophy.

B. A Critique of Malcolm's Position on Dreaming

Norman Malcolm's Dreaming and "Dreaming ans Scepticism" are important contributions to philosophical literature in that they too attempt to show that the sceptical question associated with dreaming is unjustified. In attempting to meet the sceptical question Malcolm argues that sleep has no experiential content. But in doing so Malcolm raises another question; "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of
mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" It is Malcolm's contention that dreams are not composed of, or identical with thoughts, images, sensations or conscious experiences of any kind. I will begin with two brief criticisms of Malcolm's position and then subject his position to a number of considerations which came out of our grammatical investigation in the previous chapter.

Following this I will argue that from a Wittgensteinian perspective, Malcolm's treatment of mental phenomena during sleep is far too restrictive. Furthermore, I maintain that if his argument against scepticism is based on this treatment of mental phenomena during sleep it is not strong enough to undercut the sceptic's position. I will go on to argue that Malcolm's treatment of dreaming commits him to a position that is in some degree of tension with recent advances in science and psychology. Finally, I will argue that his position involves a move away from ordinary language, the questions, statements and conventions that comprise our concept of dreaming. If we can show with success that his position is left with too many unhappy results a case can begin to be made for our grammatical investigation; as a more plausible alternative for dealing with philosophical problems associated with dreams. Our critique will conclude by evaluating: (1) Malcolm's treatment of "sound asleep" (2) Malcolm's application of the word "criterion."

1. Two Brief Criticisms of Malcolm's Position

I would like to begin my critique by focussing on what I feel to be two weak points in Malcolm's position on dreams. While it is not my
intention to elucidate these objections in any detail, they are important because they reveal that his position is not as defensible as it first might seem. The first difficulty at the heart of Malcolm's position is that it cannot accommodate any other phenomena associated with sleep without difficulty. This is evident if we review a number of statements central to his position and consider them in light of his treatment of nightmares.11

According to Malcolm the criteria of someone's being sound asleep are that his eyes are closed, his body inert, his breathing rhythmical and that he is unresponsive to stimuli of moderate intensity.12 Further Malcolm contends that dreams are not composed of, or identical with thoughts, images, sensations (mental phenomena of any kind) because sleep cannot have any content of experience.13 I maintain that his position is restrictive for the following reason.

Let us suppose that we are of the opinion that dreaming is a mental phenomenon which occurs during sleep. What is unusual about Malcolm's position is that if a sleeping subject fails to satisfy any of the criteria cited above, Malcolm refuses to consider this person as being "asleep." Malcolm, in "Dreaming and Scepticism" tells us that a thought, feeling or sensation which is unexpressed during waking hours, but finds expression in a speaker's testimony at a later date, legitimately establishes the occurrence of that mental event. What is unusual is that while he credits the later testimony of a person who was awake while these thoughts occurred, he refuses to allow it in the case of a person who claims to have had mental activity during sleep:
Whereas it is false that a man who is sound asleep could, while he is sound asleep, give any signs or indications that a certain thought was occurring to him or that he was experiencing some sensation. For any sign of this would also be a sign that he was at least partly awake. [U & S, pp. 116-117.]

It may be thought that we could appeal to the sleeper's testimony after he awakened. If we have no way of establishing that he knows how to use the sentence other than by appeal to his testimony, then we cannot appeal to his testimony. [U, p. 11.]

In denying the occurrence of mental activity during sleep Malcolm also claims that while a waking subject did not express the thought, feeling or sensation at the time he COULD HAVE, whereas this is impossible for a sleeping subject. This attitude has its problems for Malcolm when he offers some remarks about nightmares. For we could imagine a case where indirect evidence would lead us to suppose that sleeping subjects do have mental phenomena during sleep. I am staying overnight at your residence room; you retire to bed while I stay up to finish a term paper. A little after one o'clock you begin to thrash about in your bed. Ten minutes later you wake up and relate the details of a dream which you prefer to call a "nightmare."

The behavior of this sleeping subject seems to suggest that he did experience mental phenomena during sleep. The fact is that we often use the word "nightmare" in this way and there would be no question as to whether this person was asleep when this happened. Still, on Malcolm's account a person who showed signs of experiencing some kind of mental phenomena would not be asleep, he would be partly awake. Nor would a man who was tossing about, crying out and groaning in the throes of a nightmare be a good example.
of a person asleep. To say that someone having a violent nightmare is 'asleep', is to make a natural extension of the use of that word beyond its primary use. [D., p. 28.]

This is indeed a most puzzling position.

If we consider the way we use the word "nightmare" we notice that Malcolm has been too restrictive with this view. A little reflection will tell us that we use the word "nightmare" to describe a disturbing dream during sleep. A nightmare may be a bit more dramatic in character, more frightening in nature but it is a "dream" just the same. On Malcolm's account a person that fails to satisfy all the criteria of "sleep" is no longer dreaming—he is partly awake. However, there are different kinds of dreams in which the behavior of the sleeping subject does suggest the possibility of the occurrence of mental phenomena during sleep. Since Malcolm's position runs into problems in this respect, it is evident that he has limited his consideration of sleep in such a way that his position cannot easily accommodate these other phenomena (nightmares, sleepwalking) of sleeping subjects.

My second criticism of Malcolm's position concerns an inconsistency that is extremely damaging to his position that dreams are not conscious experiences. Malcolm equates sleep with being unconscious. For this reason Malcolm argues that a dream cannot be composed of, or identical with, any kind of mental phenomena or conscious experience:

The description would have to be of some conscious experience. But having some conscious experience or other, no matter what, is not what is meant by being asleep. [D., p. 12.]
Consequently the philosophical claim, 'When people dream they are aware of their dreams' (or: 'Dreams are conscious experiences'), says absolutely nothing. [D, p. 59.]

What is puzzling and inconsistent with his view that dreams are not conscious experiences is that Malcolm also wants to say that a dream has content:

If someone tells a dream we do not think of doubting its occurrence on the ground that his sleep was thoroughly quiet and relaxed. In this sense of 'dream' a dream has content... which is described when the dream is related. [D, p. 63.]

If we compare Malcolm's two claims, (1) Dreams are not conscious experiences and (2) Dreams have content, it is clear that his position begins to have its problems. For if a dream is not composed of, or identical with any conscious experience but yet has "content," we are left in a muddle as to what this "content" consists of. If it cannot be included in the list of mental phenomena Malcolm cites (thoughts, images, sensations, impressions), or composed of a conscious experience of any kind it seems odd to suggest that a dream has content—and then refuse to offer the reader an explanation of what this content entitles. 16 This question pertaining to content finds no clear resolution with Malcolm's account of dreaming. Yet if dreams occur during sleep and a dream has content (which Malcolm is prepared to admit) 17 it would follow that what is fundamental to his position (sleep has no experiential content, dreams are not conscious experiences) could be called into question. For if Malcolm wants to have it that sleep has no experiential content, but that a dream does have content (in some sense) he still owes us an explanation of what he takes the "content" of a dream to be. As a
result of this unusual statement ("Dreams have content") it is my opinion that Malcolm's position that "dreams are not conscious experiences" is subject to criticism.

2. Malcolm and the "Dream-Distinction"

We will now bring the grammatical considerations of Chapter IV to bear on Malcolm's position on dreams. The question, "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon during sleep?" continues to be a primary concern for philosophers. In Chapter IV we noticed that the word "dream" has a variety of uses; but that there was no single or univocal meaning to be found with every occasion in which the word "dream" was used. Malcolm is reluctant to define what a dream is or provide a definition of dreaming. He says: "I am not trying to say what dreaming is: I do not understand what it would mean to do that." The difficult thing is to see how Malcolm is justified in arguing that dreams are none of the things that philosophers have commonly supposed them to be. Philosophers continue to seek answers to the questions, "What is a dream?" "What is the essence of dreaming?" in an effort to meet the request left in the wake of Malcolm's position. In light of our discussion of grammar in Chapter IV I maintain that there is something fundamentally wrong with these attempts to provide an essential definition of the word "dream." I will also argue that Malcolm's position is a product of a mistake in argumentation, in which he overlooks a fundamental distinction articulated in the previous chapter.
In Chapter IV we gave consideration to a distinction that I thought necessary to introduce, i.e. the "dream-distinction." This distinction was brought forward to show the reader that when people tell their dreams they do not wish their account to be taken in the sense as they would if they were giving an account of events that took place while they were awake. That the distinction is understood by the person telling the dream can be seen by his use of the phrase "I dreamt" or other similar locutions, "Last night I had a dream" "I had a dream in which" at the beginning of the narrative.

Is there anything which would lead us to suppose that a group of listeners would be confused or at a loss to understand what is being said when someone tells a dream? That people understand the significance of the phrase "I dreamt" is evident in the attitude they take toward dream narratives. People who are familiar with the concept of dreaming who have had dreams and told them to others have acquaintance with the language-game of dream-telling. When someone begins a narrative with the phrase "I dreamt," the reaction people have toward it may appear similar to the attitude one adopts while listening to a normal account of events--but there is much about it that is different.

During our discussion of the grammar of the word "dream" we considered a number of analogies that exist between dream narratives and normal accounts. It was shown that while the statements in a dream narrative bear a strong surface similarity to statements made in normal accounts, there are significant differences to be found existing between them: that praise and blame do not apply to dream narratives; that there
is no tradition of verification associated with accounts of dreams; that dream-telling statements differ with respect to consequences.

When a person begins a narrative with the phrase, "I dreamt" those within earshot understand that there is a difference in the way the speaker is using the words in his narrative and the way in which he wants them to be understood. Why then would anyone in telling a dream, or discussing the phenomenon of dreaming, want to claim that we reason, judge, imagine etc. and have experiences in the same sense that people do them and have them when awake? According to Norman Malcolm, people do make this kind of claim:

The difficulty for my thesis is the following. Suppose someone relates a dream in which, say, he was very frightened of horses. He shows a persisting fear of horses throughout the day and says it is the same feeling he had in his dream. Should we not take this testimony as establishing that he had a certain feeling when asleep in the same sense that he now has it when awake? If so, sleep can have a genuine 'content of experience'.

[D, p. 91.]

What's more, Malcolm states that psychologists and various notable philosophers subscribe to the opinion that we reason, judge and have sense impressions in the same sense as we do when awake. It is precisely this view, that one can reason, judge in the same sense that one can have these experiences while awake, that Malcolm attempts to contest.

Malcolm believes that where these other philosophers and psychologists go wrong is in thinking that we do reason, think, etc. during sleep in the same sense as we do when awake. The first pitfall with holding an opinion that we can reason, judge in the same sense during
sleep is that it allows scepticism to get its foot in the door: "This manner of comparing dreaming and waking inevitably results in the sceptical question: 'How can I tell whether at this moment I am awake or asleep?' and in the sceptical conclusion: 'I cannot tell.' As well, if we allow that we do reason, judge, during sleep in the same sense we do while awake the principle of coherence fails as a refutation of scepticism. This is because the principle of coherence is based on the same absurd notion, i.e. that one is able to tell that one is dreaming while asleep.

Malcolm makes much of this error, saddling philosophers Ayer, Russell, Kant, Descartes, Aristotle and Plato, psychologists Dement and Kleitman and the English-speaking public with it at numerous places in both Dreaming and "Dreaming and Scepticism." However, is Malcolm correct in saying, as he does, that these philosophers, psychologists and language-users can be held responsible for making this kind of error? That is, do these philosophers in their treatment and refutation of the sceptical problem make the claim that we reason judge in the same sense as we do when awake? Do scientists, psychologists in their investigation of sleep and dreams work under the assumption that we have experiences in the same sense while asleep as we do while awake? Finally, do people, familiar with the language and concept of dreaming imply that we do reason, judge, in the same sense while dreaming when they awake and tell their dreams? I do not see how this could be so.

Perhaps the most important philosopher to be considered here is Descartes. The sceptical problem associated with dreaming is treated with

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specific reference to Descartes and Malcolm's references to the "error" mentioned above are made largely with Descartes in mind. Yet, to say, as Malcolm does that Descartes makes the claim that in dreams we reason, think, have sensations in the same sense we do while awake is not clear at all.

During the First Meditation, Descartes entertains the possibility that he might not be seated in front of the hearth, but asleep in his bed. He says, "But I am speaking as though I never recall having been misled, while asleep; By similar illusions!" Descartes' use of the word "illusions" here deserves attention. We could say that the word "illusions" embraces for Descartes all the mental phenomena he believes can occur in sleep as in his waking hours, i.e. thoughts, imaginings, feelings, sensations and so on. Notice though, that if all of these activities during sleep are "illusions" then Descartes cannot be making the claim that we think, judge, reason, etc. during sleep in the same sense we do while awake. By calling these mental phenomena "illusions," Descartes is making the "dream-distinction," drawing a sharp line between what is real and what is dreamt. Therefore there is no reason to suppose, as Malcolm does, that Descartes wants his statement to be taken as a claim that we have these experiences in the same sense. Because Descartes is aware of the "dream-distinction" it would appear that Malcolm has attributed more to the Cartesian position than is evident in the text of the Meditations. For this reason, I argue that Malcolm has little justification in claiming Descartes is responsible for an error in this respect.
What about psychologists and scientists concerned with the investigation of sleep and dreams? In their efforts to propose new physiological criteria for the opinion that people do dream while asleep, are they making the claim that we think, reason, make judgements etc. during sleep in the same sense as we do when awake? Again, Malcolm has difficulty pleading his case. He tells us:

Many philosophers and psychologists have thought that when one dreams one reasons, judges, imagines, has sense-impressions, and so on, while asleep. They have thought that to dream is to do those acts or have those experiences in the same sense that people do them or have them when awake. There may be differences in degree of clarity, intensity or coherence, but that is all. [D, p. 51.]

However, if these philosophers and psychologists maintain (along with the claim that we enjoy mental activities during sleep) that there are differences in degree of clarity, intensity and coherence of experience, then this is not indicative of a claim that we do them or have them in the same sense at all.

Do people, familiar with the language-game of telling dreams, claim that they think, reason and judge while asleep in the same sense as they do while awake? If we step back from doing philosophy for a moment a question such as this is very unusual. These questions do not get asked in the normal give and take of people listening and telling their dreams. At #309 of the PI Wittgenstein asks:

What is your aim in philosophy? - To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.

For some time I have felt that Malcolm's position is reminiscent of this
situation Wittgenstein refers to. In order to provide a conclusive refutation of scepticism with respect to dreaming Malcolm decided to propose that dreams are not composed of, or identical with, any kind of mental phenomena occurring during sleep. However, because we don't tell our dreams and discuss the phenomenon of dreaming in such a way that suggests we claim to have had these experiences in the same sense as our waking life, it would seem that Malcolm is the victim of confusion (the fly trapped in the fly-bottle)-not us. I believe that if Malcolm had kept in mind the "dream-distinction" articulated in Chapter IV he would have realized that no one, in telling a dream or talking about one, makes that kind of claim.

3. Malcolm and "Sound Asleep"

In his paper "Dreaming and Scepticism", Malcolm tells us that:

When a person is sound asleep he cannot have any sensations, thoughts and feelings at all; sound sleep cannot, in this sense, have any "content of experience." [D & S, p. 114.]

Because "sound sleep" cannot have any content of experience, Malcolm is confident that he has given us a substantial argument which can be used to destroy the foundation of the sceptical position associated with dreaming:

A consequence of my argument is that there is no room for the sceptical question (a) "How can I know whether I am awake or sound asleep" - for the question is absurd, since if I raise it I am not sound asleep. [D & S, p. 121.]

In Malcolm justified in using the phrase "sound asleep" as a tool to dismantle the sceptic's position? I do not think so. In this
respect it is useful to take a good look at what Malcolm means by "sound asleep." I will maintain that Malcolm's use of the word "sound asleep" cannot be used to destroy the sceptical position associated with dreaming.

Malcolm points out that the phrase "dead to the world" is synonymous with the phrase "sound asleep." This seems acceptable. If my roommate is lying on the bed, very still, with his eyes closed and is totally oblivious to the conversation going on around him and the vacuum cleaner screaming in the hallway, it is safe to say, "He's dead to the world." However, is it right to say, as Malcolm does that a person, when sound asleep cannot have any sensations, thoughts or feelings at all? I think that Malcolm is too restrictive with his use of the phrase "sound asleep" in this case.

Suppose that last night I sat up and watched my roommate while he slept. During the night I noted that his eyes were closed, his breathing rhythmical and he was unresponsive to the residence caretaker who roamed up and down the hall with an electric sweeper all night. In the morning, my roommate woke up and related a dream in which he said his girlfriend had left him for another man. As much as he tried to tell her he loved her she refused to listen to him. Just before he woke up, he remembered having an uneasy feeling. He doubted if he would ever see her again. My roommate said this dream seemed like a very real experience at the time.

We must be careful of the sense in which Malcolm is asserting that "if a person is in any state of consciousness it logically follows what he is not sound asleep." The example which I've provided seems to suggest the opposite, namely that we do have mental activity while
sound asleep. Malcolm has given the reader a tailored definition of "sound asleep." That is, Malcolm has defined "sound asleep" in such a restrictive way that it is impossible for a sound sleeping subject to experience anything at all.

I do not think Malcolm had his eye on the way we use the phrase "sound asleep" when he defines it as he does in "Dreaming and Scepticism." Notice, Malcolm is correct in asserting that we use the phrase "sound asleep" in our language to describe a person who is unresponsive to external stimuli. That is, if someone were to enter the room while I'm observing my roommate and ask "How's he doing?" I would say "He is sound asleep." This is how people use the phrase "sound asleep." However, we do not use the phrase "sound asleep" (à la Malcolm) to say "At this point in time a sleeping subject cannot have any feelings, sensations or thoughts of any kind at all." When people use the phrase "sound asleep" they do not use it in such a way to exclude the possibility of having mental phenomena during sleep. If they did, we would never be able to make sense of what a person was saying when he wakes up and tells a dream.

In order to provide a conclusive refutation of the sceptic's position Malcolm attempts to maintain a definition of "sound asleep" that is too strict. His definition of "sound asleep" is only valid if we limit ourselves to the claim that a sleeping subject is unresponsive to external stimuli. His definition in no way indicates that a body that is physically inert and unresponsive to external stimuli cannot have mental phenomena during sleep. Because Malcolm adopts such a restrictive position with respect to the phrase "sound asleep," I believe his use of
the phrase does not justify his argument against the sceptic's position.

4. Malcolm and "Criterion"

In Chapter III, we saw that Wittgenstein could not be held totally responsible for the notion that a criterion is a decisive piece of evidence. It was Wittgenstein's opinion that whether or not we choose to appeal to a criterion or criteria will depend on the question being asked of us. With certain kinds of questions, he intimated, an appeal to criteria failed to play any purposive role at all. This is significant when we consider how Malcolm uses the word "criterion" in his book, Dreaming.

For Malcolm, a "criterion" is something that settles a question with certainty. He tells us in Chapter III, "The Criteria of Sleep" that the application of a criterion must be able to yield an affirmative or negative result. Later in his book Malcolm brings this interpretation of a "criterion" to bear on the concept of dreaming:

One may think to overcome these difficulties by allowing that the descriptions that people give of their private states provides a determination of what those states are and whether they are the same. But if one takes this line (which is correct) one cannot then permit a question to be raised as to whether those descriptions are in error or not--for this would be to fall back into the original difficulty. One must treat the descriptions as the criterion of what the inner occurrences are. "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" (Wittgenstein, #580). [D, p. 55.]

Malcolm cites dream-telling as the "sole criterion" of dreaming on the authority of Wittgenstein. However, I believe that this interpretation of a "criterion" has its problems when he applies it to the concept of dreaming.
We will recall that it is not part of Wittgenstein's position that a concept which has criteria is always employed on the basis of those criteria:

The concepts of pain, of mental images, and of personal identity have criteria which Wittgenstein discusses at length; but none of these criteria, he says, are applied when a man says of himself that he has a pain or an image. 32

Why then would anyone insist on waking testimony as the "sole criterion" of the concept of dreaming as Malcolm does? 33 If a question about whether someone's had a dream amounts to nothing more than an inquisitive gesture, why is it so important that criteria be established with respect to dreams? Charles Dunlop offers this suggestion:

In the context of Malcolm's rejection of "received opinion" this approach is readily understandable. For if behavior were admitted as a criterion of dreaming, then sense could be made of the thesis that dreams occur in "physical time," and an avenue would open up for the "verification" of memory claims and for physiological studies concerned with dreaming. 34

Malcolm's reasons for refusing to accept any additional criteria, besides waking testimony, seem to be: (1) people would have to be informed when they woke up as to whether they had dreamt or not - instead of their informing us as it now is [D, p. 80]; (2) in order to teach someone "the new concept of dreaming" we would have to explain the physiological experiment that provides the new criterion, [D, p. 81].

He concludes that:

Considering the radical conceptual changes that the adoption of a physiological criterion would entail, it is evident that a new concept would have been created that only remotely resembled the old one. To use the name 'dreaming' for the new concept would spring from
confusion and result in confusion. All of this can be avoided by holding firmly to waking testimony as the sole criterion of dreaming.

[U, p. 81.]

We need to ask: "Would this new concept of dreaming spring from and result in the confusion that Malcolm suggests?" I do not think so. Let me explain why.

According to Malcolm, the only way to prevent conceptual confusion is to hold fast to waking testimony as the sole criterion of dreaming. Yet it is not clear that our concept of dreaming is derived solely from descriptions of dreams. To give waking testimony the only place on the stage highlights the dream narrative at the expense of the phenomenon, i.e. the telling of the dream at the expense of the phenomenon itself—having the dream. I would argue that to turn a blind eye to the phenomenon is to neglect an essential part of what it means to have the concept "dream." REM studies and laboratory experiments have been very influential in the investigation of dreams in the past twenty years. We would do well to ask: "Do we think of these experiments as misguided efforts? Do we think that these individuals interested in investigating the phenomenon of dreaming are confused? Are we puzzled by their discoveries in such a way that we are no longer able to determine if we had a dream when we wake up?" Not all all. We still awaken and tell our dreams in the same way we always have. It is not the case that the concept of dreaming has been altered in the radical way Malcolm suggests it would.

This being so, it is evident that Malcolm's application of a criterion is in some degree of tension with recent advances in science.
Since it is possible that our concept of dreaming can accommodate additional criteria without radical concept change, Malcolm has been unduly restrictive in citing dream-telling as the sole criterion of dreaming. In this respect his interpretation of Wittgenstein's notion of "criterion" (as a decisive piece of evidence) has its problems. I would question whether Wittgenstein would have claimed that our concept of dreaming is derived solely from descriptions of dreams. It seems to me that in light of his remarks on pain and mental imagery, Wittgenstein would have placed dreaming in the category of an "inner process." Therefore, the justification for an appeal to any criterion with respect to dreams would still remain questionable.

At #307 of the PI, Wittgenstein asks:

"Are you not really a behaviourist in disguise? Aren't you at bottom really saying that everything except human behaviour is a fiction?" - If I do speak of a fiction, then it is of a grammatical fiction. [PI, #307.]

When Wittgenstein speaks of a "grammatical fiction" at #307, what he appears to be saying is that the unreality or fictive nature of an "inner process" is deeply embedded in language. Wittgenstein does not claim that an "inner process" is a fiction in the sense that it does not exist. Rather that when we start to talk about processes such as "thinking," "sensing," "dreaming," and attempt to discover their essence, our efforts are stymied by our forms of expression, our ways of speaking. This is not to say that an "inner process" is a meaningless notion, but that our ways of speaking hold us at-bay and prevent us from dealing with these fictions in a profitable way.
It should be noted that from a Wittgensteinian point of view there may be some problems with attempts on the part of scientists to establish objective criteria for dreaming. In the twenty years since the publication of Malcolm's *Dreaming*, sciences such as psychology and neurophysiology have taken a strong interest in the investigation of objective criteria with respect to dreams. While it is clear that the intentions of these scientists and psychologists differ from those of the philosopher at times these men of science commit themselves to an interpretation of dreaming that smacks of the "conceptual confusion" Malcolm predicts. Witness this quote taken from a recent news article:

"All this shows that for certain activities at least when we dream we are doing them, we are really doing them. They are not just imaginings," says Dr. LaBerge.

Although this text is somewhat lacking in substantive detail it appears that the statements offered by this journalist (via LaBerge) contain a hint of conceptual confusion. If LaBerge means to suggest that a sleeping subject can consciously "indicate" when he intends to begin singing a song or counting to ten, we are left with a rather bizarre picture of dreaming. It takes little reflection to see that there is something odd (conceptually confused) about saying that the blink of an
eye is evidence that people do have thoughts, images and sensations while asleep. Why then do I continue to maintain that Malcolm's position is too restrictive?

In the previous section we noticed that there were severe difficulties with Malcolm's interpretation of "criterion" as something which settles a question with certainty. As a final consideration, I wish to examine and critically evaluate Malcolm's application of Wittgenstein's remark that "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" [PI, #580.] Wittgenstein offered this remark in connection with what I will call his "other minds" argument. Consider this example as an illustration: Suppose my friend is standing beside me and thinking that I am poorly dressed. What if he says to himself, "Kevin is poorly dressed?" Clearly, I have no way of knowing what my friend is thinking unless he manifests his thought in some kind of behavior. If my friend were to say, "You should have worn dress pants" and his statement were accompanied by a grimace I would have something substantial to go on. However, just the thought without outward expression is not enough. Wittgenstein is saying that we cannot talk about this "inner process" in someone else, at least in any kind of meaningful way.

The essence of Malcolm's argument is this: "Dreaming cannot be the having of thoughts, images, sensations because it is theoretically impossible to verify that a person had them while asleep." He is hesitant to approve of any advances made by scientists and psychologists with respect to the possibility of establishing objective criteria for dreaming for the reason that these criteria would involve the stipulation
of new convention and ultimately conceptual confusion. When confronted with scientific evidence, say a number of blips and squiggles on a graph sheet, Malcolm might say, "All well and good for science. But these are not images, thoughts, sensations and judgments. Here you have only altered the concept of dreaming."

At best Malcolm seems to take any scientific evidence for dreaming to be only an approximation. The hard evidence still remains to be had. What would satisfy Malcolm? What would it take to convince him that we really do have mental phenomena when we sleep? Here we must be careful. In order to substantiate the position that people do have mental phenomena during sleep you would have verify that someone was having images, thoughts, sensations while the person was asleep. This would involve:

(1) Observing the images, thoughts in each case;

(2) Establishing that the subject was aware of having them (perhaps he could communicate them to you).

It is obvious both of these avenues are impossible. The first implies you could tap in on a mental process and observe it like a picture show. The second suggests a person could communicate with you and be dreaming at the same time. This is a strange picture of the phenomenon of dreaming, to be sure.

There is a conceptual absurdity lurking at the heart of the verification procedure mentioned above. The problem with an attempt to observe and establish that sleeping subjects do have mental phenomena during sleep seems to involve a physical impossibility rather than a
theoretical one. In this respect, Malcolm's contention that dreams are not composed of, or identical with thoughts, images etc. appears to be supported by a strict verificationism. Yet it is not clear that there need be any pressing reason to pursue an attempt to verify mental phenomena in a sleeping subject. When we are involved in telling a dream, are we claiming to have experienced a series of thoughts, images, which could be verified on demand? Of course not. This sort of "thought," "image," "sensation" talk seems to be absent from the statements which comprise our dream narratives.

The fact is that there has never been a tradition of verification associated with dreaming. Although it is most appropriate to speak of a verification problem with respect to dreams, it is difficult to see why Malcolm attempts to bring this problem to bear on philosophical questions associated with dreaming. When I prefix a story with "I dreamt" people's ears prick up. They are interested in what I say, but that is as far as it goes. For this reason, it seems unusual that Malcolm, a philosopher who claims the concept of dreaming is derived from descriptions of dreams, pushes for a tradition of verification in the first place.

On Malcolm's account, if someone woke up and suggested they enjoyed thoughts, images, sensations (Malcolm does not specify whether the person is merely claiming that these activities occurred in a dream) he would argue that testimony is not indicative of having had those mental phenomena while asleep. Yet it does not seem clear that Malcolm's insistence on a verifiability principle is enough to support the notion
that the existence and occurrence is legitimate in one respect, while meaningless and unfounded in the other. If he refuses to credit waking testimony as a criterion in this case, it is obvious that he has restricted his consideration of criteria to the kind of things his argument is specifically designed to exclude.

Malcolm seems to be saying that if you cannot express the thoughts, images, sensations you claim to have while asleep then dreaming is not having those thoughts, images etc. If you claim that you thought, judged, had images or feelings while asleep, Malcolm would say you are mistaken. What I think Malcolm neglects to emphasize enough is that the language we use to tell dreams is a descriptive language. Granted, there are utterances in our language that lack referents (Ah-Choo!, Ugh!). But the language we use in telling a dream is not made up of these expressions. The language that we use to tell our dreams has the same vocabulary as the language we use to refer to thoughts, sensations, and feelings that we have while awake. In this respect, we are put off balance when we hear Malcolm argue that dreams and dreaming are not all these things we have supposed them to be. What we should notice is that Malcolm has altered the intention of Wittgenstein's statement "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria." Malcolm has made a qualitative judgement about dreaming on the basis of verifiability. It seems that if we cannot establish that certain things occur, (thoughts, images, judgements, sensations), then dreaming cannot be those kinds of things. I am unsure if Wittgenstein would have approved of this move.
Wittgenstein did not intend to argue that we could not speak meaningfully about our own mental processes. Further, it is not clear that he wanted his statement about an 'inner process' standing in need of outward criteria to be used as a tool to make distinctions about what dreaming may or may not be. Wittgenstein was only making us aware of the difficulties involved in speaking about these processes in other people. This is not to say that we cannot speak about, or have opinions about, our own.

When a person is asked, "Did you dream last night?" it is a rare occurrence to find him answering "Yes" and then at a loss to say anything else. The language-game of telling dreams is descriptive, and our dreams are often described quite vividly. This seems to substantiate the opinion held by other philosophers, i.e. that dreams are composed of mental phenomena rather than support the position that they are not. It is clear then that my disagreement with Malcolm's use of Wittgenstein's remark at #580 of the Investigations is justified.

Summary

A book such as Malcolm's Dreaming throws our cognitive wheels into motion. We say, "Here's a fellow that denies that dreams are composed of, and identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep." We begin to form our own opinions about what dreaming "is"—after a while we think that somehow Malcolm has to be wrong. By denying that dreams are identical with, or composed of thoughts, images, he leaves us with little choice other than to say that they are, or come up with a
better explanation of what dreaming is (a definition of the word "dream"). Yet, if we choose to meet Malcolm in this way we assume that there is one right answer to be had here. I maintain that this is where we as philosophers lose track of our bearings in language, the conventions that surround dream-telling, and join Malcolm in the philosophical fly-bottle.

In denying that dreams are identical with, or composed of mental phenomena Malcolm dangles an epistemological carrot in front of us. The difficulty is to avoid attempting to meet this question by searching for the essence of dreaming. If we attempt to prove that dreams really are thoughts, images and sensations this is where we, as philosophers get into trouble. What kind of attitude do I have toward the phenomenon itself? Do I want to say that I do have thoughts and images while asleep... in the same sense that I had them while awake? Do I know what these experiences called "dreams" really are? If I do, would I want to call them a series of thoughts and impressions? These are most unusual questions; but some of the questions that a book such as Malcolm's Dreaming draw to the surface. I have argued, though, that these are questions which people engaged in speaking the language and telling their dreams are not familiar with. And because these questions fail to find a place in the conventions that surround the phenomenon of dreaming, they are questions that philosophers, are neither justified, nor required to answer.

We have noticed that in charging Descartes, Kant and other scholars with the mistaken claim - that we think, reason etc. in the same sense while asleep as we do when awake, Malcolm overlooks the "dream-distinction" articulated in the previous chapter. As well, he
commits a serious mistake in argumentation by supposing that philosophers, psychologists and the common man have ignored it as well. It is for these and other reasons which I have mentioned that Malcolm's Dreaming and "Dreaming and Scepticism" provide philosophy with an unsatisfactory attitude toward dreams and an unrealistic interpretation of Wittgenstein's contribution to philosophical problems.

This thesis has attempted to meet the sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" by contesting its grammar in light of the use of the word "dream." I began this discussion by saying that if we could make any headway it would be gained attempting to refute the sceptic by charging him with a grammatical error, that of unjustly extending the use of the word "dream" beyond the limits of ordinary language. Most people, in speaking a language experience no difficulty distinguishing the use of the word "awake" from the words "asleep" and "dreaming." The fact that we know how to use these words in a number of ways suggests that we have no problem distinguishing waking life from dreams. The sceptic, however, in juxtaposing the words "awake" and "asleep and dreaming" mars our credulity and confidence in language. What is normally considered a natural but significant distinction in linguistic usage now becomes a metaphysical puzzle.

By using the words "awake" and "asleep and dreaming" side by side to stress similarities in grammar rather than differences the sceptic throws us into a quagmire. Yet, if we cease our metaphysical inquiry for a moment we are struck by the grammar of this question. We discover that we are not used to using these words or hearing them used in just
this way. For this reason I have argued that a grammatical investigation of the sceptical question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" provides the most plausible alternative as a way of tackling this question that philosophy can pursue.

Looking back at the history of attempts to deal with the sceptical question, we notice that Malcolm's thorough treatment of this problem deserves much credit. This is because he is one of the first contemporary philosophers to make a strong criticism of the legitimacy of the sceptic's question. Yet by attempting to refute the sceptic on the basis that sleep has no experiential content, Malcolm tries to tackle a fundamentally philosophical problem in a most unusual way. According to Malcolm the "illegitimacy" of the sceptic's question rests in the fact that it is impossible to make judgments, have thoughts, experience sensations while asleep. The unfortunate thing about Malcolm's charge of "illegitimacy" is that if one still favors the opinion that sleeping subjects do have mental phenomena during sleep his refutation of scepticism goes by the board.

In sum, Malcolm deserves recognition for contesting the sceptical question associated with dreaming. Still, to attempt to refute scepticism on the grounds that sleep has no experiential content seems to commit Malcolm to a rather limited and unimaginative view. In order to refute Malcolm you would have to show that people do have thoughts, images and sensations while asleep. I maintain that this is something that philosophers are clearly not able to pursue with any hope of success. In this case it would seem that we must leave the last word to science.
And because science has suggested, with some justification that people do have mental activity during sleep Malcolm has clearly stretched the limits of philosophy a little too far in attempting to meet the sceptic's challenge.
Chapter V

1 I have decided to refer to the question "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" as a traditional philosophical problem associated with dreaming; the question "Are dreams composed of, or identical with any kind of mental phenomenon occurring during sleep?" as a contemporary problem associated with dreaming.

2 Descartes, Leibniz, Ayer, see Chapter I, pp. 7-10.

3 Nelson, Pearl, see Chapter I, pp. 8-9.

4 Here the reader is directed toward Peter Unger's Ignorance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 1, where he states: "The type of scepticism for which I argue is perhaps the most traditional one: scepticism about knowledge. This is the thesis that no one ever knows anything about anything."

5 The argument which I provide here bears some similarity to the position advanced by Malcolm in D and D & S, i.e. that the sentence "I am asleep" fails to express a possibility because it is an inherently absurd form of words (a logical impossibility; see D, p. 109). However, Malcolm's analysis of the sceptic's question finds support in his opinion that sleep has no experiential content, a position which I continue to take exception with. Therefore, rather than attempt to subscribe to Malcolm's position I have chosen to restrict my argument to an analysis that reveals that the sentence "I may be asleep and dreaming" fails to express a meaningful possibility for a waking subject.

6 My debt to Descartes is obvious here.

7 This example was suggested during a discussion of the sceptical problem with Dr. Pinto and Branko Bilcar. It is not clear that either of these two individuals subscribe to a firm sceptical position with respect to dreaming. Therefore, this example which they have cited may be subject to the same criticism which they have put forward against my position.

9. The basic sense of the word "dream" in which a person cannot dream unless he is asleep.


11. See D, pp. 28, 29, 62, 100.


15. Ibid., p. 105.


17. Ibid., p. 58.

18. Ibid., p. 59.


24. Descartes, M, p. 77.

26 Ibid., p. 114.
27 Ibid., p. 110.
28 See pp. 29-31, Chapter III.
29 Malcolm, D, p. 60.
31 Ibid., p. 55.
33 Ibid., p. 81.
35 Malcolm, D, p. 81.
36 See Pit, 239, 290, 377, 404.
38 Malcolm, D, p. 51.
POSTSCRIPT

Why shouldn't I apply words in ways that conflict with their original usage? Doesn't Freud, for example, do this when he calls even an anxiety dream a wish-fulfilment dream? Where is the difference? In a scientific perspective a new use is justified by a theory. And if this theory is false, the new extended use has to be given up. But in philosophy the extended use does not rest on true or false beliefs about natural processes. No fact justifies it. None can give it any support.

Wittgenstein, Culture and Value

In the previous chapter I argued that the sceptic has extended the use of the word "dream" and that the use of the word "dream" in his question is both illegitimate and unjustified. The purpose of this exercise has been to show that because the sceptic's question is subject to these grammatical considerations and confusions it should not be treated as a meaningful philosophic inquiry. Let me conclude by offering a brief restatement of the position I have put forward in this paper.

It is difficult to imagine circumstances that would give rise to a question such as "Am I awake or asleep and dreaming?" Speaking with sincerity I can say that up until the time I became seriously interested in philosophical problems I had never asked myself this question, except perhaps in jest. As a human being, like any other, I need sleep to survive. On countless occasions my sleep has been invaded by dreams--these dreams have been sometimes vivid, sometimes puzzling. However, I have never had any difficulty separating my dreams from waking life.
I have always thought that others could too; at least until I read Descartes. I believe that a great many philosophical hours have been ill-spent attempting to devise tests and proofs to decide whether we are awake or asleep and dreaming. Why should we continue trying to provide an explanation? To be sure, we may continue to encounter strange shifts of scene that throw us into momentary confusion—but these expressions of surprise ("Am I dreaming" "I must be dreaming") are not indicative of someone seriously doubting whether he is awake or asleep and dreaming. If there is nothing out of joint with our world there is no reason to think that we are asleep and dreaming. To think that you are dreaming is as much as saying "All is illusion." Can we live under this thought, for very long? I do not see how we could. It is a frightening picture. It leaves me helpless—torn away from my regular seat at the control panel.

In an effort to resolve this disturbing feature of the sceptic's question various philosophers have attempted to provide what they feel to be a conclusive refutation of the sceptical position associated with dreaming. The arguments put forward in Norman Malcolm's *Dreaming* and "Dreaming and Scepticism" are, in a large part, formulated with the intention of refuting the sceptic's position. However, in order for Malcolm's refutation to succeed one must subscribe to the position that sleep has no experiential content; a position that seems unduly restrictive and subject to additional objections.²

This paper has gone to some length to argue that a question as to whether one is awake or asleep and dreaming is not debated or hashed
over in ordinary language. It has a limited group that subscribe to it with any interest and this group will probably be found seated in a philosophy classroom. If it were the case that I genuinely thought I was dreaming, or remained in doubt about it I would not be able to move a muscle in language or life. It is for this reason that I have argued from a Wittgensteinian perspective, to suggest that a grammatical investigation of a traditional and contemporary problem associated with dreaming are perhaps the best way of tackling these questions that we, as philosophers can pursue.
FOOTNOTES

Postscript


2In this respect see my argument which is developed in the section entitled "A Critque of Malcolm", Chapter V. Here I offer a number of objections against Malcolm's position as advanced in D and D & S.
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VITA AUCTORIS

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