The traditional solution to the problem of other minds has been the analogical inference to other minds. Other human beings are very like me. They share the same bodily anatomy with me and they behave very much as I do under similar circumstances. When I cut myself it hurts and I cry out and wince. When other people cut themselves, they do the same. I can thus infer that they are in pain too. There are multifarious such similarities. Put more generally, I know directly that I have beliefs, emotions, feelings, sensations and the like. So I am enabled to infer on the basis of these multifarious similarities that other people also have beliefs, emotions, experiences and the like. In short, I am entitled to infer that other human beings have an inner life and that it is very like mine.
I-ness, however, is extremely primitive to us. Even the Siamese twins, even when joined by limbs do not mistake oneself for the other. Even if they feel pain in their joined limb, that pain is never a shared pain. Each feels his own pain. But at the same time we also know whether somebody other than me is in pain. Or so we claim. What is the basis of such a claim? It is obvious that we cannot feel their pain. Then how do I know that someone other than myself is in pain? Utterances like ‘I had no idea what you are feeling right now’, ‘I will never really know what it was like to be a knight during the crusades’ etc. suggest that in order to understand a person one needs to be that person. This general philosophical proposition, as we all know, is solipsism, which holds that we all live alone being imprisoned in the labyrinth of our own mental states and processes. We can never know whether any being other than ourselves exist or not. Whether the human figure
before me has a mind remains an unanswered question. But such a
solipsistic world is nothing but the burial ground of philosophy.

1.1 THE INTERMEDIATE LINK

Philosophers like J. S. Mill, B. Russell et al assume the analogical
inference for establishing the knowledge of other minds and through
which they desired to get out of this solipsistic world.

It has been observed that we need to make sense of what we observe
in case of other human figures that are so much similar to us. Other
human figures are similar to us in respect of bodily features. They also
similar to us in respect of behavior and responses to similar stimuli.

Are they similar to us in any other manner is the question of the
moment. Based on the above-mentioned similarities, the propounders
of analogical argument hold that they are also similar to us in having minds.

Analogical argument, in general, holds that if two or more entities are alike in one or more ways, then they are probably alike in other ways as well. Therefore, the best explanation of the behavior of other human figures, which are so similar to us in every other aspect, is to hold that they behave as they do (i.e., like us) because they have minds just like us. From my experience of pain I know that I moan, I groan, writhe etc when I am in pain. When I see a person moaning, groaning and writhing in the same manner, I infer that he is also in pain.ii

The peculiarity about the consciousness is not that it is not known to anyone but to only one who is the owner of that consciousness. Only I
experience what I feel, believe or desire. Therefore, our mental life is fundamentally revealed to us alone, as we have privileged access to it.

This is also an important feature of our consciousness that we do not have that privileged access to the consciousness of others, if there is any. Based on this privileged access I know the genuineness of my utterances like ‘I am in pain’ ‘I am happy’ etc. But do I also know that somebody (e.g., Michael) is in pain when he says, ‘I am in pain’, my privileged access being denied to his mental states? Am I in any manner justified in uttering a sentence like ‘He is in pain’ and claiming its truth at the same time? Because here we go from felt pain to unfelt pain. To imagine someone else’s pain on the model of my own is difficult, as I have to imagine a pain that I do not feel on the model of the pain that I do feel. The advocates of analogical inference have tried to rub off this asymmetry between first and third person
‘mental statements’ by means of analogical inference. The basic question is, by what evidence do I know or by what considerations am I led to believe that there exist other sentient creatures; that the walking and speaking figure whom I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts? To put it briefly, how do I know that others possess minds? To such a question J. S. Mill answers in the following manner:

“I conclude that other human beings have feelings like me, because, firstly, they have bodies like me, which I know in my own case, to be the antecedent condition of feelings; and because, secondly, they exhibit the acts, and other outward signs, which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings. I am conscious in myself of a series of facts connected by a uniform sequence, of which the beginning is modifications of my body, the middle is feelings, the end is outward demeanor. In case of other human beings I have
evidence for my senses for the first and last links of the series, but not for the intermediate link. I find, however, that the sequence between the first and the last is as regular and constant in those cases as it is in mine...Experience, therefore, obliges me to conclude that there must be an intermediate link. This, in a nutshell, is the analogical inference that tries to prove the knowledge of other minds. Firstly, I have a body, and other persons also have their respective bodies. Secondly, they exhibit behavior and other outward signs, just like me. Based on these similarities, I can draw the conclusion that the other human beings have feelings just like me. In my own case I know the outward signs of behavior to be caused by feelings therefore the outward signs and behavior exhibited by them must be caused by their respective feelings. I have privileged access but we do not have direct access to the minds of others. It is an indirect and analogical inference
from my own case. Even if minds other than my own exist, I am not aware of them directly. I do not have direct and privileged access to the minds of others. I can perceive the body of others but not their ‘souls’. In my own case, when my body in injured in some way, I feel pain. In the case of another person I only observe the injury and based on this infer that the person concerned must be in pain. I have seen that when I am faced with a problem to which I cannot find a successful solution I become frustrated and also observe myself behaving in a particular manner. When I observe the same reaction in a person other than myself I infer that the feeling of frustration has occurred to him as well. Therefore observing that the bodies of other human beings behave as my body does in similar circumstances I infer that the mental life and series of mental states, which characteristically accompany my bodily behavior, are also present in
the case of others. This is based on analogical argument. Scientific inference concludes that the best explanation of the behavior of the other human figures lies in ascribing mental lives to them by the method of analogical inference. I know that my mental states exist. I believe that they cause some of my physical states; I observe the analogy existing between my physical states and the physical states of others. Therefore, I conclude that their physical states are caused by their mental states.

Bertrand Russell expressed his belief of knowing other minds in an article based primarily around the notion of analogy. His belief is that we are convinced that other people have thoughts and feelings that are qualitatively fairly similar to our own. We are not content to think that we know only “the space-time structure” of our friends but we believe
them to be conscious beings having mental faculties like thinking, feeling, memories etc. Russell uses the example of two friends having a conversation in which memoirs are explored. These two individuals have shared experiences together. They eventually discover that each one’s memoir helps the other’s in recalling information forgotten with time. This incident leads to an interesting result. Russell holds “as it is clear to me that the causal laws governing my behavior have to do with ‘thoughts’, it is natural to infer that the same is true for the analogous behavior of my friend.” 

My friend’s memoir can help me only if he can remember our shared incidents correctly and this is possible if he possesses the capacity of remembering, which in itself is a mental state. Therefore, although I see only the ‘space-time’ structure of my friend, I infer a conscious mind behind that structure nonetheless. J. S. Mill, W. James, A. J. Ayer etc. hold that since what
I know directly is the physical states of others I infer, based on the uniformity of nature, that the physical states of others are caused by their mental states. “We know, from observation of ourselves, a causal law of the form ‘A causes B’, where ‘A’ is a thought and ‘B’ is a physical occurrence. We sometimes observe a ‘B’ when we cannot observe any ‘A’. We then infer an unobserved ‘A’.” Russell explains this notion with the example of a mother and her thoughts. A child from early infancy begins to reflect the thought that its mother may be angry or pleased. When the baby hears a loud voice from the mother it infers that she must be angry, a pleasant voice accompanied with a gentle smile, however, assures it of the mother’s happiness. Russell says that between the beliefs that “mother is angry” and the hearing of a loud voice there exists a gap that is bridged by an inference. To speak generally I observe an association between a mental state of
mine and a particular behavior pattern. When I observe a similar behavior pattern in a being or beings, who I see as similar to myself, I infer by analogy that his or their behavior are associated with mental states that are similar to my own.\textsuperscript{vi}

1.2 OBJECTIONS – CLASSICAL AND OTHERWISE

Analogical inference, as an inductive inference, faces two classical objections.

(i) It is logically impossible to check up on its conclusion.

(ii) It is generalization from only one case and hence unacceptable.

That the analogical argument has a logically uncheckable conclusion is put by Don Locke\textsuperscript{vii} in the following manner: If in an ordinary case we are doubtful about whether an analogy holds, we can check up and see whether it does; but the whole point about the other minds is that
we can never test whether the analogy does hold because what an
individual certainly knows are the contents of his own mind, his
thoughts, experiences etc. The experiences of a given person are
necessarily private to that person. I know my pain but I cannot know
your pain, for you and only you have access to it. I think or believe
that other human beings have feelings like me because -

1. They have bodies like me;

2. I know in my own case, body to be an antecedent condition of
feelings;

3. The third person exhibits the acts and other outward signs, which
in my own case, I know by experiences to be caused by feelings;

Therefore I conclude that they are having feelings like me.
So here I bring other human beings as phenomena, under the same
generalization, which I knew by experience to be mine. Let us take
two sentences

(i) ‘I have a pain’,

(ii) ‘He has a pain’.

I feel my pain and based on the knowledge I infer that he has the same
thing that I have when I have a pain. But his pain is not observable to
me. Even if somehow I were able to get into his mind and experience
his ‘pain’ then it would be my ‘pain’ and not his ‘pain’ anymore. So
the analogical inference is said to be uncheckable because mental
states are not observable by others; and hence, cannot be directly
known, checked or verified.
Therefore it is not difficult to see why one is reluctant to accept indirect (analogical) justification where direct justification is absent.

There is always a risk in indirect justification, for it is essentially an application of a generalization based upon past experiences to a new situation. Under such circumstances if there is no possibility of direct verification one can never be quite sure.\textsuperscript{viii}

Moreover, an inductive argument is acceptable only if it is logically possible that its sample class contains a counter instance to its conclusion. But here it is logically impossible to get in the sample class, which is a counter instance to the conclusion. For I cannot determine by observation that a body does not contain a pain.\textsuperscript{ix}

Philosophers have also tried to establish the validity of the analogical argument in the following manner. It has been argued that sometimes
others infer that I am feeling a sensation, say greed, from my behavior. Now, since I have direct non-inferential knowledge of my feelings, I can check their inferences about me against the facts. Checking them, I find the inference to be always true. So when the inferences of others about my feelings do not go wrong, I can use them myself, to draw conclusions about the feelings of others, in the truth of those conclusions.

But it might be argued that this argument is far removed from reality. Someone might infer from my bodily behavior that I am in pain. In reality I might be extremely happy, but am projecting a pain behavior just to fool my friend or to enact a certain situation. So here this analogical inference fails. It cannot be said that my inference about
others is always correct, since the inferences that others make about my behavior can go wrong as easily as they can go right.

The argument running counter to this might be, that on occasions when I engage in pain behavior but am free from pain, my pain behavior is nonetheless associated with some mental state or the other. Thus, one is entitled to infer that for each body behaving much as one’s own, that many instances of its behavioral states are associated with some mental states.

Arguendo this is true, the above argument raises a question. How can the observed behavior be correlated with its non-corresponding mental states, which is totally absent from the picture, when we are unable to correlate it even with its corresponding mental states? So, what the advocates of this argument are indulging in are mere conjectures that
cannot lead to any kind of knowledge. Moreover, it is quite possible that there are humanoids whose pain behavior is never associated with pain or any type of mental state for that matter, and hence they are totally unlike us. And here again the analogy fails.

It is often argued that analogical argument is nothing but begging the question. Let us take the situation given by Don Locke. If somebody stands on someone’s toe his response is very much like mine when somebody stands on my toe. Therefore, when somebody stands on his toe it hurts him very much, because it hurts me when somebody stands on my toe. But this conclusion follows only on the assumption that where cases are alike externally they will be alike internally as well. And this is to assume just what the other minds skeptics are questioning.
1.3 A CRITIQUE

A philosopher who believes that one must learn what thinking, fear, joy, anger or pain are from his own case, does not believe that the thing to be observed is one’s behavior but rather something inwards. The other human bodies that I see or hear have sensations and thoughts. If I meet a person on a road not familiar to me, and ask him about the location of a house with particular number, and he points to a place and says “There is the house”, then that cluster of noise does not only give me the required information but also indicates that the body which emitted the noises is animated by a mind like my own. I know by introspection that when certain combinations of sounds come from me they are symbols in acts of spontaneous thinking. Therefore similar combinations of sounds not produced by me function as an
instrument to an act of spontaneous thinking on the part of the body
other than me.

But supposing I ask a lamppost for direction and ‘it’ utters the same
set of words, then the same argument as above will prove the
lamppost to be a thinking substance. H.H. Price thinks that one’s
evidence for the existence of other minds is derived primarily from
the understanding of language. So if a body other than my own gives
forth noises I understand, then as it ‘provides some evidence’ that the
foreign body which uttered the noises is animated by a mind, like my
own; therefore, if birds, bushes or anything in this world, if can form
intelligible words as conveying information is evidence enough to
hold that they have minds.
J. S. Mill thinks that this is not sufficient reason to draw an analogy\textsuperscript{xi}.

He opines the lamppost, birds or bushes are not walking, speaking figures and do not have bodies similar to my own, which is an antecedent condition of having any mental state. He further says, “The walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts.”\textsuperscript{xii}

Based on the above, Malcolm\textsuperscript{xiii} holds that it is both words and behavior that indicate a conscious mind. But trees, bushes, or computers as they are logically incapable of behaving in the relevant kind cannot come under the category of beings having consciousness.\textsuperscript{xiv}

Don Locke is of the opinion that the analogical inference to other minds “proceeds from the smallest possible basis to the largest
possible conclusion; it argues from one solitary instance to perhaps, an infinity of cases." Therefore, as Malcolm holds, it would be very weak inductive reasoning based, as it is, on the observation of a single instance.

The advocates of analogical inference base their theory only on behavior. One who believes that one must learn what thinking, fear, joy, anger or pain is from their own case, does not believe that the thing to be observed is only one’s behavior but something inwards. And he believes that the other human bodies that he sees and hears have sensations and thoughts. If I have to infer other minds depending on my own case the crucial move to reach other minds will be to establish a necessary relation between our mental states and our bodily behavior. If and once that relation is successfully established
then that would be the much-needed evidence necessary for 
corroborating the conclusion of the analogical inference presented to 
establish the knowledge of other minds. This crucial causal relation 
between mental and physical or behavioral states once established will 
keep the skeptical doubts at rest forever. Or it seems so at the 
moment.

To sum up the arguments against analogical inference,

1. An analogical argument that proceeds from observed facts 
to logically uncheckable conclusion is not a good analogy.

2. Any acceptable analogical argument must rest on an 
   independently established correlation. But in the case of an analogical 
   argument to other minds there is no appropriate independently 
established correlation for it to rest upon.
3. Analogical inference proceeds from the smallest possible basis to the largest possible conclusion.

4. If behavior and psychological states are contingently related then one could have no ground for referring to the psychological states of others as based on behavioral states of the same.

The next chapter has been devoted to search for such a causal relation and its appraisal. If we are able to establish a causal relation between ‘pain’ and ‘pain behavior’ the next task will be to examine whether this correlation is really the much-needed corroborative evidence that would conclusively bridge the gap between ‘my pain’ and ‘your pain’ and would establish the strong foundation in support of the knowledge of other minds.