

DESCARTES' PHILOSOPHY OF MIND ITS CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

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'Property was thus appalled
That the self was not the same
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called'.

Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida*.

C. D. Broad remarked while concluding his survey of Descartes' philosophy in *Ethics and History of Philosophy* that his views on the relation of the mind and the body are 'clear and distinct but clearly odd and distinctly incredible'. The terms in which Descartes stated the problem almost ensured the impossibility of its resolution. The reasoning that culminates in the 'cogito ergo sum' requires the total separation of the body from the mind. The two are regarded as separate substances each with its distinctive essence, their essential natures having nothing in common. We may, as good empiricists, give up the dualism of substances and substitute for it qualitative difference, difference in levels or even different ways of speaking. This approach, apart from its inherent vagueness, leaves a residue of dualism which makes some philosophers uncomfortable. For them the ideal solution would be physicalism. Since there is a great deal of variation in terminology and scope for confusion, we shall take physicalism to stand for analytical behaviourism or the thesis that statements about mental processes can, in principle, be reformulated into logically equivalent statements about actual and possible behaviour. If the thesis can be successfully maintained a wholesale reduction of the mental to the material would be effected and perplexity about the mind body problem, which has troubled philosophers since the time of Descartes, would vanish without a trace. But unfortunately the translatability thesis cannot be sustained. In the twenties of this century, and for some time afterwards, it was maintained by logical positivists led by Carnap. He apparently maintained it to his dying day¹. Other eminent philosophers in the English speaking world, however either rejected it or came to abandon it. A. J. Ayer for example,

who accepted the thesis concerning other people's experiences when he first wrote '*Language Truth and Logic*' very soon jettisoned it together with the asymmetry in meaning between first person and third person psychological statements which his position forced on him.

The near universal abandonment of the translatability thesis is understandable. It is not very difficult to see that the required equivalences between psychological statements on the one hand and behavioural statements on the other do not in fact hold. Mental processes are obviously related to bodily happenings in all sorts of ways. But the connections between the two are casual and contingent and are empirically discovered. This is especially true of the co-relations between mental processes and brain events. (Sometimes a bodily component is analytically contained in the personal concept of e.g., laughing, 'sneezing' etc. But this does not invalidate the above statements). There is no *logical contradiction in admitting that a certain pattern of bodily behaviour occurs, and yet denying that the corresponding mental process occurs*. The rejection of the translatability thesis does not mean the return of cartesian dualism. Ryle does not offer precise definitions and logical translations but analyses mental concepts primarily in terms of dispositions to behaviour in specifiable contexts while offering *ad hoc* solutions to particular difficulties and threatening the dualist with the infinite regress' —the old bugbear of philosophers. He leaves a considerable residue of inner processes, not analysed further in terms of behaviour. But his views are broadly physicalistic or naturalistic, though the success of his enterprise is hard to judge. This determination not to allow the return of the cartesian ego is not confined to Ryle and the positivists. It motivates philosophers of widely differing outlooks like Ayer, B. A. O. Williams and Parfitt (who are nearest to traditional philosophy) and the various advocates of the Identity Theory.

The Identity Theory

The most elaborate exposition of the theory is by Prof. D. M. Armstrong in his '*A Materialist Theory of the Mind*' (M.T.M.) who also refers to it by the alternative expression 'Central State Materialism'. But he shares with the early exponents—J.C.C. Smart, Herbert Feigl, U.T. Place—the basic approach as also the fundamental assumptions and methods by which the *identification* of mental processes with states of the brain can be rendered plausible. The identity theory accepts

the lack of conceptual or logical connections between psychological and physical descriptions. But it attempts to salvage some thing for physicalism by substituting factual identity for logical or analytical identity. Borrowing Frege's well known example Prof. Smart argues that mental processes may be identical with corresponding brain events (commonly alleged to be their causes) in the same way as the morning star is identical with the evening star though the expressions 'morning star' 'evening star' are not synonymous². An example that serves the theory even better is the identity of a lightning flash with a pattern of electrical discharge. Nobody nowadays would object to the identification on the ground that our preceptual reports of lightning are very different from the physicist's account of an electrical discharge.

An objection that almost springs to our mind is the undeniable fact that men could talk meaningfully and truly of their sensations, feelings, thoughts, memories etc. long before the discovery of their neural correlates by physiology. Adapting a remark by Locke we may say that God has not made men a two-legged creature with a bare capacity for sensations and leave it to neurophysiology to tell him what precisely they are. Even a neurophysiologist is not examining his own brain when talking about his mental processes. Does it not follow from all this that reports about sensations are not reports about brain events? The advocates of the theory think that the objection loses all its force once it is realized that they have given up the translatability thesis. When we report on experience of having an after- image, what we mean is not some statement of the form 'I have such and such a brain process.' But this does not show that what we report is not *in fact* a brain process. In general, we can have a contingently true statement of the type ' $A = B$ ' and we can very well know that something is an A without knowing that it is a B.³

This answer is quite correct and plausible, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. A person can know of something say X, that X is A without knowing that X is B. When in fact X is B. But then there must be at least two different ways of 'locating', 'pinpointing' or identifying X via two different characteristics or aspects of X. And it can easily turn out that we know that X satisfied one of the descriptions without knowing that it satisfies the other. An ordinary citizen of Baghdad may have in fact met and talked to Harun-al-Rashid without knowing that the queer fellow he encountered was in reality

the Caliph. Even if mental processes are identical with brain events they must have characteristics other than the electrical and chemical properties discovered by physiology. It does not follow that the attributes noticed by the subject of experiences are irreducibly physical attributes totally different from the attributes which figure in the physiological account. They could very well be *other physical attributes*. But it must be admitted that this is not a very appealing view to take. For we shall have to postulate new forms of energy in the world and receptor cells in the organism to selectively respond to them, all unsuspected by contemporary science. Not a very tempting prospect for those who advocate the Identity theory on the ground that it is the most simple, economical unified theory of the world in the light of knowledge provided by physics and physiology.

One element in the response to this difficulty is to regard reports of sensations and images by the subject to be vague colourless and neutral, consistent with dualism as well as the identity theory. According to Prof. Smart the relation between introspective reports and those of the scientist are exemplified by the relation between the two statements :

1. Someone is coming through the garden.
2. The doctor is coming through the garden.

This general approach is shared by Armstrong who defines a mental state as a state of the person apt for bringing about a certain type of behaviour and also in certain cases a state apt for being brought about by a certain stimulus.⁴ But is it true that our reports of sensations and feelings are so vague and noncommittal as is made out? We do not always find it easy to describe our feelings because they change rapidly and also because their qualities cannot be categorized and checked and rechecked like those of a solid, stable material object in front of us. But for all that we do classify them, recognize them and compare them. There are the broad distinctions between different sense-modalities and within each sense modality there are qualitative distinctions such as the distinction between a bang, a buzz, a thud, a tinkle, a screech, a crash etc., among sounds as heard. Older psychologists distinguished the simple constituents of a complex emotion (awe into fear and wonder) and distinguished between emotions and feelings. Patients describe their pains and aches to the doctor, indicating where they are felt, whether they are intermittent or continuous, the character

they have, such as throbbing, burning, stabbing etc. And of course great novelists describe the inner thoughts and feelings and changing moods of their characters and with all respect to Ryle, with next to no indication of their behaviour. How could we do all this, unless the brain events, which on this view are identical with our experiences, at least have some irreducibly physical attributes of which we are introspectively aware and which are different from the attributes studied by neuro-physiology?

The second element in the attempt to avoid irreducibly mental qualities is to stretch the dispositional analysis of mental concepts to cover desire, memory and even perception, and to accept their basic workability in spite of persistent and unresolved difficulties. Prof. Armstrong defines perception 'as nothing but the acquiring of true or false beliefs concerning the current states of the organism's body and its environment (MTM P. 209). A belief itself is to be understood in terms of selective and discriminative behaviour (MTM P. 340). This still leaves a residue of 'raw feels'—sensations and feelings—whose occurrential character is hard to deny. These are to be specially accommodated by the identity theory. Take Prof. Smart's analysis of 'this is red' where what is 'given' may be a sensation or after-image, or better still, of 'I see a yellowish orange after-image'.⁵ The analysis of the former is : 'a normal percipient would not easily pick this out of a clump of geranium petals though he would pick it out of lettuce leaves'. The latter is analysed thus : 'there' is *something* going on *which is like* what is going on when I have my eyes open, am awake, and there is an orange illuminated in good light in front of me, that is, when I really see an orange' (the italicized words are quasi-logical and topicneutral. Hence, we are told, they are compatible with dualism and also the identity theory and its materialism).

What are we to say of the argument? Assuming that the brain event when I see an orange is in fact similar to the pattern of brain excitation when I see an orange after-image, the fact remains that I am not aware of either of the two neural events. How then can I report that they are similar? Prof. Smart himself suggests that for his account to be successful, we should be able to report two processes as like one another without being able to specify in what respect they are alike. But surely the argument requires much more. It credits us with the feat of reporting two terms to be alike when we are

not given either of them. Moreover the analyses are not just imprecise, as Smart admits, but more radically inadequate. Their acceptance would lead to the conclusion that the word 'red', for example, would not have the meaning it now has, if the world did not contain geraniums and lettuce leaves. The defect cannot be remedied by choosing different 'standard exemplars' for our definition; for the crucial error is to make the procedure for learning the meaning of an expression part of the meaning itself. To turn an account of our introspective reports of these experiences into non-committal reports of corresponding neural events, is really to put the cart before the horse.

It is said notably by Place⁶ that the language in which we describe our sensations - i.e., the looks and feels etc. of things, is a phenomenal language which is dependent upon public, physical language and is a modification of the latter in certain circumstances. We begin by learning to recognize the real properties of things in our environment. It is only later that "we learn to describe our consciousness of them.... in those cases where the appropriateness of his normal descriptive habits is in doubt; (the individual) learns to issue... protocols preceded by a qualificatory phrase like 'it appears', 'seems', 'looks', 'feels' etc." Similarly, Prof. Smart speaks of the change from talking about the environment to talking about one's perceptual responses, being a matter of inhibiting⁷ certain reactions because one has learnt that in the prevailing circumstances they are unlikely to provide a good indication of the state of the environment. The upshot : there are no 'private' qualities inhering in mythological objects appearing on an internal television screen.

This answer raises many questions particularly in the context of the causal theory of perception⁸. As it stands it does nothing to remove the difficulty concerning explaining or 'locating' secondary qualities in the world of the physicalist's conception. On this view, the objects in the world including human brains are composed of the particles favoured by the latest theories of mathematical physics and possess only spatio-temporal, structural and dynamical properties with some chemical properties thrown in. The identity theory cannot dump perceived colour etc. in the mind - not even as the internal accusatives of acts of sensing. (These latter would be simply electrical discharges in the brain even if admitted). To accept a world of non-material, non-mental sense-data would spoil the beautiful simplicity of its world-picture. - Neutral monism, of course would water down its hearty and vigorous materialism

and to regard colour etc. as *appearances* to the observer of the 'real' properties would bring back dualism and the mind.

But even if we accept this account of sensations and after-images there are other kinds of mental processes, such as thinking, remembering, experiencing various emotions etc. talk about which can hardly be regarded as talk about the way things look, feel, sound etc. Place frankly states⁸ and Smart seems to suggest that these alleged mental acts can be analysed in terms of dispositions to behave, along the lines suggested by Ryle and Wittgenstein. Personally I think that this is an over-optimistic assumption. Whatever may be the achievements of Ryle and Wittgenstein, I don't think they have succeeded in abolishing private mental processes. (In the case of Wittgenstein it is even doubtful whether he wanted to achieve this result). Remembering, experiencing anger, anxiety, sorrow etc. thinking about a problem and so on have as much an occurrential air⁹ as much to be things that go on¹⁰ as sensations and images. The fact that many mental predicates are often used dispositionally and have a 'behavioural' content does not lead to the conclusion that they are never used to refer to inner experiences or that this reference to inner experiences is not of primary importance in their use. So, unless the Identity theory can provide an explanation that will cover all kinds of mental processes, its claim to have got rid of irreducibly psychical processes, and attributes cannot be taken seriously.

It appears very strange that none of the advocates of the Identity theory has bothered to ask himself whether mental processes can be identified with brain processes if what can be truly predicated of one of them cannot even be significantly predicated of the other. Prof. Broad pointed out more than nearly half a century ago that we cannot speak of a sensation as slow, circular or swift. But these can be predicated of brain events with perfect propriety. On the other hand, sensations and perceptions can be clear or confused but not brain events. Prof. Smart admits that so far no meaning has been given to such talk, but that we could do it if we wanted to⁹ by adopting a convention which would be an addition to and not a contravention of our existing linguistic rules. A more subtle suggestion is that of Hilary Putnam that statements like "a feeling of pain is identical with an excitation in the thalamus" can come to *acquire a meaning* by scientific advances and may even be regarded as true.¹⁰ This will probably take place

if physiology advances to a stage where it would be able (i) to 'derive' from physical theory simple laws of common-sense or 'mentalistic' psychology (ii) secondly to make predictions which we are unable to make at present.

It is no objection to such a view that probably neuro-physiology would never reach this stage. Let us suppose that perfected neuro-physiology would one day be able to make predictions with the help of comprehensive theories, as accurate and detailed as those of Physics today. Should we then be justified in saying that mental processes *are* brain events, just as we say today that 'light' *is* "electro-magnetic radiation" or "Temperature *is* the mean kinetic energy of a body". Putnam thinks that in both the cases the justification for accepting an identity or rejecting it in favour of perfect correspondence apply with equal force. There is, however, an important difference between the two cases. Even if one day neuro-physiology sets up detailed correlations between highly specific mental processes and equally specific brain events it will have to rely upon the introspective reports by the subject of experiences. *Otherwise it would have nothing to correlate with brain events.* The neurologist will have to apply the same stimuli to a number of subjects under controlled conditions and note that they report the same kind of experiences. The acceptance of the truth of these introspective reports is essential to the establishment of general principles of correlation between mental and neural events. Once our table of 'conversions' is available as a ready reckoner, we can 'read off' the experience of a subject by observing his brain state. But suppose that on a certain occasion the physiologist observes a brain state which he 'identifies' as a pain but the subject insists that he has no pain or that the physiologist 'observes' that the correlate of pain does not occur and yet the subject reports pain, what are we to do? If we are satisfied that he is neither lying nor has made a verbal mistake, we shall have to revise our tables and look for more exact correlations. We would be unwise to dismiss him as an ignorant person untrained in the techniques of science. (That way lies the road to a new Scientific Inquisition). This is because the introspective reports provide not merely evidence for our correlation but also *supply one of the terms to be correlated.* Contrast this with what happens say, in the case of the kinetic theory of heat. Our feelings of heat and cold may be the beginnings of our ideas of temperature — and

within limits they provide rough indications of temperatures of bodies. But once it reaches a certain stage of sophistication physics ignores them altogether and dismisses them with contempt when they conflict with its pointer-readings. Our feelings of warmth and cold are only 'appearances' <often misleading >-of the real temperature of a body. Similar considerations apply to the identification of light with electromagnetic waves. The philosopher who tries to accomodate 'appearances' within the total scheme of things has a problem. The physicists none. The subject has a veto here in neuro-psychology which he is denied in physics.

Another, perhaps even more important difference between the identities effected by science and the identity proposed by our theory is that in the case of the former there is an already well-established criterion - viz. spatio temporal continuity in the case of objects and location in the same region at any given time in the case of events. In identifying mental processes with neural correlates which are normally regarded as their necessary and sufficient conditions, location in the same region cannot be used as a criterion because, as noticed by us, mental processes have no spatial and extensible characteristics. If, on grounds of economy and simplicity, we stipulate that mental events are where their casual determinants are, are we doing any thing more than :

- (i) rejecting a subject of experiences in the manner of Hume, and
- (ii) reviving the old theory of epiphenomenalism and dressing it up in new clothes?

Anomalous Monism-the tortuous path to physicalism

The Identity theory can be regarded in two ways. First of all as an attempt to salvage a naturalistic view of the world from the break-down of the translatability thesis. From another point of view it assumes < on reasonable scientific grounds, psychophysical parallelism. More specifically perfect correlation and co-variation between mental events and brain events is taken for granted and then invariable concomitances are converted into identities for economy and unification. The two view-points are not incompatible. In Davidson's anomalous monism the naturalistic motive is there, but it is essential to his argument for the Identity theory, to deny the possibility of psycho-physical laws. It follows, unless one takes a non-Human view of causation that perfect

correspondence between mental events and brain events is not possible either. Davidson's views are set forth in the essay on 'Mental Events'. This can be read with two others 'Psychology as Philosophy' and 'The Material Mind' which contain further comment and answers to objections. All the three are included in '*Actions and Events*'. (AE) This argument for anomalous monism depend on the following propositions. Davidson calls them assumptions but they express very reasonable beliefs based on experience :

1. Mental events (singular identifiable) are sometimes causes and effects of physical events.
2. Each true singular casual statement of this kind is backed by a strict casual law, i.e., if m and p are events related as effect and cause they belong to kinds of events connected by our law or they satisfy descriptions which instantiate a law.
3. Physical events are subject to law and under physical theory constitute a closed system.

The mental does not constitute a closed system. With the help of these it is demonstrated that the connecting law mentioned in 2 cannot be psycho-physical. No such principle can be a strict law. Hence M and P in our symbolical illustration *must fall under physical descriptions if they are to instantiate a strict law*. Hence M too is a physical event. An analogous argument works if M is the cause and P the effect. So, every mental event that is causally related to a physical event is a physical event. (*Actions and Events* p.223-225).

The reason why mental events (events answering to mentalist descriptions) cannot be governed by strict laws is that they cannot be pinpointed with accuracy. 'There is no assigning beliefs to a person one by one the basis of his behaviour, his choices or other local signs no matter how plain and evident.' (AE. 221). Again, 'It is a feature of the mental that the attribution of mental phenomena must be responsible to the background of reasons, beliefs and intentions of the individual. There cannot be tight connections between the two if each is to retain its allegiance to its proper source of evidence (AE. 222). A. J. Ayer in his (*Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*' (P.187. ff) objects that if mental events cannot be pinpointed accurately enough to be related by a strict law, why should it be assumed that they can never-the-

less be sufficiently accurately pinpointed to be the terms of a casual relation. The proper conclusion of Davidson's argument is either that mental events are not casually related at all or, that they do not need the backing of a strict law to be so related. The argument is even more inconclusive than Ayer takes it to be. He points out, in passing, that it does not follow from the argument either that events have no accurate mental descriptions or that the description is not known to the subject himself. In fact Davidson ignores self-knowledge through out his discussion. Towards the end of his 'Mental Events' (A.E. 223) he fleetingly refers to his saying 'nothing about the supposed privacy of the mental, or the special authority an agent has with respect to his own propositional attitudes'. His defence is that this appearance of novelty would fade if we were to investigate the grounds for accepting a scheme of translation. This last presumably is a scheme for the mutual translation of behavioural and psychological statements. But there is no such scheme which does not acknowledge and accept the authority of the agent. The extensive use of the method of 'Verbal report' <a sensitized acceptance of introspective data- in correlating certain patterns of stimulation on the one hand and experience of sensations of colour or after-images on the other, is testimony that even the most hardened behaviourist cannot dispense with the authority of the agent, at any rate, at the present state of our knowledge. A more recent example is Dr. Penfield's co-relation between stimulation of different areas of the clinically exposed brain and the subject's reports of his experiences. Moreover Davidson does not seem to realize that the dependence of psychological assertions on an indefinite background and their constant revisability does not mean that what is asserted is indefinite. Such assertions both mental and physical, can be as definite as the situation permits. He *seems to pass from indefiniteness of assertion to the assertion of the indefinite*. If this is so there is no need to subsume mental events under physical descriptions to render them worthy of instantiating a strict law. We can of course be content with a law which is approximately true. One cannot be sure of having understood Davidson's contention correctly. There is an absence of illustrative examples throughout, except the rather unnecessary one of belief in life on Mars.

Davidson exaggerates the difference between his version of the Identity theory wherein individual dated unrepeatable events are identified one with another, and the more usual version where kinds of mental

events are identified with kinds of brain events. The causal statements with which he starts are singular causal statements. But such statements are accepted as true only because we have evidence that there are general causal principles between kinds of events and believe that our particulars instantiate these kinds. His own stipulation that our singular causal statement is backed by a strict causal law connecting kinds of events to which our cause and effect belong admits this. There is thus no incompatibility between asserting identity between individual events and asserting it in the case of kinds of events. Indeed the former logically depend on the latter unless they are true fortuitously or as a result of lucky guess work.

This comes out clearly in Davidson's reply to Mr. Attfield, appended to his 'Psychology as Philosophy' (A.E. 241-42). Attfield argues that anomalous monism is inconsistent and that it follows from the premises of Davidson that there are psycho-physical laws. Suppose the perception of a fly in Attfield's mind at t , is identical with the neurological change, P , at t , in Attfield. Further, there is a causal law that connects P with another physical event, P at $t-1$. Hence the law, that connects P (which is a perception) with p' is a Psychophysical law. Davidson accepts the premises and rejects the conclusion. This is basically like arguing, Davidson comments, that from (i) Scott is the author of *Waverly*, (ii) Jones believes that the author of *Waverly* wrote *Waverly*, it follows that (iii) Jones believes that Scott wrote *Waverly*. The argument fails because mutual substitutivity of coreferring singular terms (and also of equivalent functional expressions) breaks down in intentional contexts. This is an odd reply because it presupposes that the thesis of extensionality breaks down in intentional contexts, where as *Physicalism, in any form, cannot be maintained unless the thesis is shown to be adequate*. Davidson extends the point to non-extensional contexts, for, causal laws connect events not-extensionally but as described in one way or another. If every p is followed, after a suitable interval by P and P is in fact I , it does not follow that there is a law that connects P and I . Here I , symbolises some perception or intentional experience and P , P and I correspond to H , F and G in Davidson's reply. But what about the relation between P and I ? Unless the two, are related by invariable or nearly invariable concomitance, the law connecting P and P will be of no interest to psychology and cannot take the place of a psycho-physical law.

“ Beyond Behaviourism and Dualism ”

The relation of the mind to the body is one of the few philosophical problems directly tackled by Wittgenstein. Here, as elsewhere, his claim is that he does not offer any theories or explanations but dispels doubts and confusions, by an unprejudiced survey of the workings of our language. The problem—rather a tangle of related issues—is discussed as the problem of a correct analysis of our statements about persons and their experiences. In spite of his profession of neutrality, the main target of his hostile criticism is dualism of some sort—according to which statements about experiences are about inner, conscious, occurrences irreducible to observable bodily behaviour. The nerve-centre of his attack on such a view is that it involves a private language in which each subject—and he alone—can refer to his mental processes, and that such a language is logically impossible. If words for mental processes are endowed with meaning by ostensive definition of private objects, they should never function as elements in our intersubjective communications, as they in fact do. But, if words like ‘pain’, ‘toothache’ etc. do not refer to and even cannot refer to subjective processes, are we not compelled to embrace the view that they are equivalent to descriptions about actual and possible behaviour? Wittgenstein and his defenders say ‘No’. What are the motives and reasons for maintaining this apparently indefensible position?

It is of course possible to read undiluted behaviourism into some of the pronouncements of Wittgenstein. The famous ‘Beetles in the box’ passage (*P.I.* 293) leads up to the conclusion : ‘If we construe the grammar of the expressions on the model of object and name, the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant’. Even more emphatic and final is the statement from Zettel (487) ‘Joy designates nothing—neither any inward nor any outward thing’. In spite of these and some other similar pronouncements, it would be wrong to regard Wittgenstein as a behaviourist. He clearly rejected the view that descriptions of behaviour logically entail the truth of experimental statements. Given this, to emphasize that ‘an inner process stands in need of outward criteria’ rather implies that the two are distinct. Nor is this merely a matter of inference. There are explicit rejections of behaviourism, in his “Notes on private Experience and sense-Data”. He raises the question, ‘Do you mean that you can define pain in terms of behaviour?’ and answers : “But is this what we do if we teach the child to

use the expression "have a tooth ache"? Did I define : "Tooth ache is such and such a behaviour"? This obviously contradicts the normal use of the word". Again in *P.I.* 304. We have, "But you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain-behaviour accompanied by pain and pain-behaviour without any pain? —Admit it? What greater difference could be there? And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a nothing — Not at all — It is not *something* but not a nothing either. The conclusion was that a nothing would serve as well as a something about which nothing could be said". "It is not easy to decipher the significance of some of the above statements. But there is enough textual evidence to show that Wittgenstein was not and did not consider himself to be a behaviourist.

Anthony Kenny in his contribution to "The private language Argument" suggests that the behaviourist and anti-behaviourist passages can be reconciled in the light of the attack on the primacy of ostensive definition in the earlier passages (27-35) of the *Philosophical Investigations*. It is true that the full significance of Wittgenstein's comments can be appreciated only in the light of his attack on the equation of meaning and naming and the central role, on this theory, of ostensive definition in endowing signs with meaning. But, as the examples of colour and shape make clear, the criticism applies equally to ostensive definition of physical qualities and objects and not merely to mental processes and their qualities. Wittgenstein argues that the simple ceremony of pointing to something while uttering a word is not uniquely and unambiguously efficacious in determining the meaning of a sign. But he has no tendency to deny that our language contains names of physical objects and their qualities. On the contrary, one of the principal points made by him is that we misconstrue the grammar of our talk of experiences when we regard psychological words as standing for inner private, processes, thus assimilating this language game to the language game of describing the physical world.

The contradiction would, in a way, disappear if we take the view that Wittgenstein is not saying any thing about psychological words which he would not have said about words referring to physical objects. This rather startling view is put forward by Peter Winch in his Introduction to the "*Studies in the philosophy of Wittgenstein*" edited by him. He writes : 'And if we wanted to describe the language games in which we give names to material objects in the same sort

of depth as Wittgenstein is here describing the language-games of talking about one's sensations, it would be equally important to insist that "the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant". The reason for this is, of course, not that no object is involved in these language-games, but rather because (to adapt a phrase used by Wittgenstein in a different connection) *that* part of the grammar of the expressions is clear enough. What we need to understand is the context of practices and interests which gives the purely formal conception of an object some definite sense in particular cases. For this reason it seems to me that it might be a symptom of confusion to insist too vehemently and for too long that 'pain' is not the name of an object. Of course it would be equally confusing to insist too vehemently and for too long that 'pain' is the name of a object? Unfortunately Winch does not tell us how long and how vehemently we should practice the two movements of this Hegelian process to attain philosophic wisdom.

How then are the ambiguities and vascillations in our minds if not Wittgenstein's— to be removed, and a clear explanation offered of how we can reject both behaviourism and cartesian dualism? We may get some help if we leave aside, discussions of the impossibility of a private language, and the name-object relation, and turn to Wittgenstein's resolution of the doubt concerning other minds. The subjective, private, character of our experiences is but the obverse of the coin of which scepticism concerning other minds is the reverse. It is the lurking threat of solipsism that makes many philosophers turn away from dualism as from a blind alley. If it is true that each one of us has direct access only to his own experiences, we are condemned to making precarious inferences about the contents of the minds of others. Such inferences are supposed to be justified by analogy between my behaviour and the behaviour of others. But analogical argument, in this context, is utterly inadequate if not radically defective. A necessary base for philosophical doubt as well as philosophical attempts at justification of belief in other minds is the contrast between the direct and certain knowledge I have of my own experiences and the indirect, problematic nature of my knowledge of the experiences of others. If we can get rid of this contrast we shall have demonstrated the emptiness of the sceptical position. Wittgenstein achieves this desirable result by the surprising method of maintaining that I cannot meaningfully be said to know, for example, that I have tooth ache. "Other people cannot be said

to learn of my sensations only from my behaviour, for I cannot be said to learn of them. I have them. The truth is it makes sense to say of other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it of myself" (*P.I.* 246).

There are several points of interest here. First of all there is the insistence that where doubt is senseless affirmation of knowledge is equally senseless. This has a continuity with Wittgenstein's insistence in the *Tractatus* that tautologies do not provide any knowledge but only facilitate the understanding of proofs. However, the statement 'I am in pain' is obviously not a tautology. Since the above is not a genuine declarative sentence, according to Wittgenstein, prefixing it with 'I know' cannot result in a genuine proposition. Anthony Kenny thinks that the point made by Wittgenstein here is based on the picture theory of the *Tractatus*. He writes : A description must be independent of what it is to be compared with, if it is to be assessed as a correct or incorrect description.

'I am in pain', since it is an utterance which is a criterion for my conscious state, is not independent of it and so cannot be a description of it in the same way as 'There is a chair in the corner' may be a description of it'. (*op. cit.* p.225). If this is the point being made it is of doubtful value. Wittgenstein grants that others can sensibly say of a person that he is in pain. 'He is in pain', said by others of a person P is made true or false by a certain state of affairs in the world. 'I am in pain' uttered by P of himself is made true or false by the same state of affairs, unless, on *independent grounds* we show that the latter utterance is non-declarative. It would be paradoxical to allow that a third person psychological statement is true and yet maintain that the corresponding first person statement is senseless. Moreover, if we grant as we all do, that when a man is in pain he cannot be mistaken. It does not follow that his declaration about his pain, when he makes one, is not independent of his being in pain. What makes the utterance true is not fact of its being made but the fact which it asserts. The picture theory, like any version of the correspondence theory, cannot demand more and the logical demand, central to it, is fulfilled, in the present case. In addition, he can lie about it, and it would be very strange to maintain that we can lie in a situation where we cannot tell the truth. According to Wittgenstein 'I know I am in pain' when I am in pain, expresses

no empirical proposition but a proposition of grammar to the effect that doubt in such cases is non-sensical. In the notes he composed in the last eighteen months of his life and published under the title '*On certainty*', the same line of thinking is adopted about the certainties of commonsense on which Moore based his proof of the external world. He castigates Moore, not for maintaining that such propositions are true and certain but for declaring, for example, 'I know this is a hand' in a situation where this is pointless and is in fact a misuse of the expression. 'I know'. If 'I know etc.' is conceived as a grammatical proposition it properly means, 'There is no such thing as a doubt in this case or "The expression 'I don't know' make no sense in this case"'. And of course it follows from this that 'I know' makes no sense either' (*On Certainty* p.58). (Compare *Blue and Brown Books* 54-55 for an application of this approach at the other end, to "We cannot know when another is in pain").

As an explication of the ordinary use of 'I know' and similar expressions this may be largely acceptable. However, two points are perhaps, worth making. It may be to make a grammatical point to say that I cannot be mistaken about my pain. But is it not legitimate to ask, "Why do we adopt this rule of grammar?" Surely we do not issue a decree that doubt is impossible in the case of certain propositions whereas it is permissible in others? There must be some differences in the circumstances in which different sorts of propositions are accepted and methods of their verification. Though we have some liberty in adopting alternative rules, the grammar we adopt reflects facts, especially certain broad features of the world. To explain certainty or lack of it, sense or nonsense, in terms of grammar, is a good first move but not a very satisfactory final move. Secondly, it is not very difficult to construct examples and not entirely imaginary either, where avowals about one's inner feelings are perfectly in order and serve a practical purpose. If a doctor who has failed to alleviate the pain of a patient doubts the correctness of his complaints the patient may say "you can take it from me. The pain has not lessened" or with exasperation, 'I know my pain better than you' Whether or not, it is natural to prefix 'I know' to such avowals is a point of minor significance. It is important to note that in the above example the patient may be wrong. He may be a hypochondriac who exaggerates his pains. I may be the best and final judge of whether I am in

pain or not, but I may misdescribe what medical men call the 'modalities of the pain'. So, if it is the possibility of error that is needed to lend respectability to such propositions, it is available and we may, with advances in neurology and bio-chemistry, even devise methods of detecting and discounting such errors.

If, at one end, Wittgenstein destroys the certainty of self-knowledge, (rather shows it to be a phony certainty, not the kind we took it to be) equally at the other end, he dispels doubt by maintaining that scepticism concerning other minds expresses no genuine doubt. "Just try in a real case to doubt some one else's fear or pain" he challenges us. (*P.I.*303). He grants of course that the behaviour criteria do not logically entail the occurrence of the mental process of which they are criteria. Since pain can exist without its normal expressions, (they can be suppressed) and may be absent when the symptoms are present, (these can be simulated or artificially induced) behaviour criteria are neither logically necessary nor logically sufficient. Never-the-less they are adequate and in normal cases lead to certainty. 'Am I less certain that this man is in pain than that twice two is four... Does this show the former to be mathematical certainty? The kind of certainty is the kind of language game". (*P.I.* Part II P. 224). If the sceptic persists and says that we have no right to be sure in this case, as the certainty involved is not logical or absolute certainty, Wittgenstein makes short work of him, "But if you are certain isn't it that you are shutting eyes in the face of doubt? — They are shut". (*op.cit.*) The precise import of these moves is not very obvious though the goal is evidently to cripple the sceptic at the starting point. Various interpretations have been offered by many including Reinhardt in the '*Studies*' edited by Winch. But every suggested interpretation of what Wittgenstein is doing is accompanied by the qualification that it follows from his views, or is a part of it, without an explanation of what precisely his contention is, or of the central point of his remarks. We can however consider some of the possible interpretations.

1. Wittgenstein is suggesting that doubt is senseless unless there is specific ground for doubt. We can, be and sometimes are mistaken about the inner processes of other persons. But so much is contained in our admission that behavioural criteria do not entail statements about mental processes. This does not legitimize idle, motiveless doubt. So in the absence of specific grounds for doubt the claim to knowledge

is to be accepted, especially when the conditions in which inner processes are ascribed to others approach paradigm cases.

2. The above contention can easily develop into the view that doubt is possible and admissible in particular cases. But generalised doubt is not only pointless but also logically vicious. We can deny or doubt the truth of any particular description, but to maintain that we can do this in the case of all such statements is meaningless. To borrow an analogy from Ryle, it is as if, shaken by the discovery that many coins accepted as genuine by us are counterfeit, we were to conclude that all the currency in the country is illegal. The point made by Wittgenstein is that the language game we play when we talk of persons and their experiences has certain basic rules which constitute its framework. We cannot play the game and yet reject the framework. To do this would be to do something incomprehensible, though it may not be logically self-contradictory. Wittgenstein says repeatedly that there can be no justification for a language-game as a whole. Particular moves within the framework can be criticised and accepted or rejected by reference to the rules of the game. We may change the rules of the game or even opt out of the game-though this is hardly conceivable in the case under discussion. But we cannot question the rules of the game, when engaged in playing it. Ultimately we can play and say that our language-game is part of a form of life which has to be accepted.

3. The outward criteria for inner processes do not logically entail the truth of psychological assertions. But for all that they are logically adequate. The natural expressions or symptoms of pain are not connected contingently with pain. They are part of the concept of pain. Totally unexpressed mental processes, like totally inaudible speech, are incomprehensible.

What makes the connection between mental processes and their concomitants more than contingent is the total setting-social and physical-in which the game is played, and also the nature of the game. Strawson who takes this view of the relation between M- predicates and P- predicates in other ascriptions, gives the analogy of the relation between the description of the visual characteristics of a playing cards and their ranking in a game. From the descriptions of the cards together with the rules of the game it follows that a king ranks above a

queen and a queen above a knave of the same suit. But the rankings certainly do not follow from the physical character of the cards alone. This is a telling metaphor but it may not serve our present purpose very well. The rules of a card game are all conventional whereas laws connecting mental processes with their bodily accompaniments are natural and are discovered from experience, not laid down by us according to our purpose and convenience. It is possible to pursue this approach and seek other models and explanations. But the main thing is that further elaborations are needed and needed badly in this case and also in the case of the two earlier approaches. Like Wittgenstein's appeal of rules of grammar this is a good beginning but hardly a comfortable resting point.

Has Wittgenstein succeeded in rejecting cartesian dualism without at the same time embracing behaviourism? As understood by contemporary philosophers dualism involves not only immediacy and privacy of subjective experiences but also the assertion of the problematic character of other ascriptions which must rest on a precarious argument by analogy. If Wittgenstein's suggestions for resolving the problem of other minds are successful, or promising, to that extent, we have moved away from dualism. But if we reject behaviourism whether analytical behaviourism of the type sponsored by Carnap or the more recent versions of the identity theory-then dualism of some kind becomes inevitable. In the old-fashioned metaphysical language we may say that the rejection of reductive materialism logically implies that there are mental processes qualitatively different from material processes and irreducible to them. It is a little difficult to understand why Wittgenstein insists that first-person psychological statements are not statements. Presumably words for sensation and feelings figuring in them do stand for inner processes. And if we grant as he does, that such a statement can be false even when, in some cases, the behaviour criteria as satisfied, it follows that their *meaning* is not given by descriptions of behaviour. If so, what do we gain by denying them a referential role in self-ascriptions?

- Dualism in this minimum interpretation is implied by the admissions which he makes is implied by the admissions which he makes and if the way out of scepticism suggested by him is acceptable there is no reason why a dualism should not accept it. It is all very well for Wittgenstein to say "There is a kind of mental disease which looks for and finds what would be called a mental state from which

all our acts spring as from a reservoir" (*Blue and Brown Books*, p.143). He speaks in a similar vein in *P.I.* 308. But we have mental pictures and myths not only in postulating mental processes, not given to us, but also in supposing that there is life on Mars or that there are things totally unperceived by us and so on. There is of course a kind of mentalism which he and Ryle successfully refute—viz the kind that regards mental events as taking place in a very thin supersensible medium. Spirit is only superfine gaseous matter. This is perhaps the natural, inevitable way of thinking of the common man. But it is not the view of Descartes, Plato or the Vedāntin.

I have not discussed the private language argument partly because I discussed it in a paper composed more than twenty five years ago. (*Journal of the Philosophical Association-India* XI-39). In it I expressed agreement with Ayer's criticism of the argument and elaborated it further. I thought then and I still think that Wittgenstein's demonstration of the impossibility of a private language rests ultimately on *general scepticism concerning memory*. Secondly contrary to his own prescription Wittgenstein is not describing ordinary language but recasting it, reinterpreting large segments of it to serve his philosophical purpose. Both the points were made crudely and in a slap-dash manner but the proliferating literature on the subject in the last twenty five years has not convinced me that these contentions are indefensible. Reforming our language, even for philosophical purposes, is not blameworthy in itself. 'Revisionist', is a term of abuse only in communist polemics and philosopher need not be afraid of it. But we must be aware of what we are doing. And when we arrive at conclusions about the world on the basis of our examination of existing linguistic usage, we must be careful to avoid the pit-falls of this kind of *a priori* reasoning. There is, after all, an enormous ontological argument in reasoning that since our language is such and such things cannot be, or must be so and so.

Concluding Remarks :

I have successively reviewed prominent attempts in the English speaking world to get rid of Descartes' dualism and the philosophical burden imposed by it. We yield much, though not every thing, in giving up reductionism or the translatability thesis. We can still banish cartesian egos if we accept some version of the Identity theory based on perfectly respectable, naturalistic speculation against an analytical background. But of the Identity theory we can say that 'the more

it changes, the more it remains the same.'—'utterly implausible. The perplexity of Descartes now takes on a more serious shape. We can still get rid of his immaterial substance, by maintaining, as Strawson does, that a person is an indissoluble unity to whom both material and psychological predicates are equally applicable. To many this would seem to be a restatement of the problem rather than its resolution. So far as ordinary usages go some support the one- subject theory and some the two- subject theory. We can in fact, distinguish three classes of predicates. Those that can be ascribed to the body such as height, weight, complexion etc. Those that can be ascribed with varying degrees of naturalness to 'my mind' instead of me. 'My mind was elsewhere when the organ shook the air'. 'To me alone these came of thought of grief', 'the mind of man is like unto on insurrection' etc. Finally activities like walking, laughing, even pretending to laugh, opening a door etc. are best ascribed to a person regarded as a unity.

We may make the mind *existentially* dependent upon the body particularly the brain. The mind would then cease to be a substance losing its capacity for independent existence. We may avoid the worst excesses of epiphenomenalism by allowing a limited operational efficacy to mental processes once a stable well-organized series of them comes into existence as a result of the integral functioning of the brain. We cannot perhaps *define* personal identity in terms of bodily identity; but we can attempt to show—as many contemporary philosophers do—that there is no criterion of personal identity *internal to the experiences of a person*, and though such a criterion e.g., memory, may be used for certain purposes it is ultimately parasitic on bodily continuity. Ayer's attempt (which he gave up later) to reinstate the no-ownership theory and some of Strawsons arguments against the Cartesian ego depend on a failure to distinguish clearly between a procedure for identification and a principle of identity. It can be frankly acknowledged that we employ different criteria of personal identity on different occasions. They converge normally but can diverge in certain real as well as imaginary situations. Since personal continuity depends causally on bodily continuity, a person insisting on a subject for the sake of form, can have one either in the person as a whole or in the brain.

In fact, the identity theory becomes far more plausible if, instead of identifying particular experiences with brain events, it identifies the mind with the brain. Prof. Armstrong does this but to be plausible

at all he must provide for the location of secondary qualities somewhere in the wide world and allow irreducibly psychical qualities, if not psychical processes. It comes as a surprise when he maintains that his central state materialism is compatible with the logical possibility of a disembodied mind (*M.T.M.* P.91). According to him anyone envisaging such a possibility is conceiving the mind as a spiritual substance, and mental states as states of such a substance and not of the brain. Since the identity of the mind and the brain is only contingently true and spiritual substances are logically possible, we can cheerfully grant the logical possibility of a disembodied mind. This is perhaps to miss the point of the objection and put too much weight on the contingent truth of our equation. The objection is that the truth of the identity theory would make survival in a disembodied state or in association with some other material structure *logically impossible*. We start with an untutored conception of mental processes, based on introspection and independently of conflicting philosophies of mind. But if mental processes so conceived, were identical with brain states, then the continuation of these would be *impossible*, when the brain is dissolved on death. Ex-hypothesi, survival is logically possible. Therefore the Identity theory is not true. One can of course be wary of granting the *logical possibility of survival, reincarnation* etc. Though such a possibility has been granted by many including A.J. Ayer, it can be argued that what we are trying to envisage in such a case, when clearly stated, will reveal some kind of incoherence if not logical contradiction. In any case survival is highly improbable on a naturalistic view. Descartes was not only a person with a scientific outlook but was one of the inaugurators of it. If he were persuaded to throw away his religious piety as a burdensome baggage, perhaps he would have embraced some form of naturalism. In that case mental substances would go overboard but some ineradicable dualism of aspects, or qualities, would remain. The well-known phrase 'the ghost in the machine' which crystallizes the ridicule of Descartes in recent times does not seem to be justified. The ghost is there however much we may whistle to keep up our courage.

NOTES

1. See his footnote to 'Psychology in the language of physics' in *Logical Positivism* Ed. A.J. Ayer. In this he maintains that 'anger', 'desire' etc. are like the scientific concept of 'electron', postulated to explain observational data.
2. 'Sensations and Brain Processes' *Philosophical Review* LXVII 1959, included in *Body and Mind* (Ed; G.N. Vesey), P.428.
3. *B.M.* 428-429
4. *M.T.M.* P.82. The first half of the definition clearly implies a rejection of epiphenomenalism. Indeed Armstrong argues that his theory is compatible with the *logical possibility* of survival. Of this more later.
5. *B.M.* 430-432.
6. *'Body Mind and Death'* Ed. A.G.N. Flew P.284-286. Armstrong's account of experience of mental images, as 'doubly eccentric'. They are not the result of sensory excitation nor do they give rise to potential beliefs. *MTM* P. 300.
7. *B.M.* 434.
8. Russell arrived at the Identity Theory through the causal theory of perception long before it was put forward as a solution to the mind-body problem. See 'Mind and Matter' in *Portraits from Memory* apart from relevant chapters in *'Analysis of Matter'*, and *'Human knowledge : Its Scope & Limits'*.
9. *B.M.* 433
10. *'Dimensions of Mind'* Ed. Sydney Hook pp.155 to 157.