# MIND, BODY AND EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

It is a common notion that we have minds or souls in addition to or distinct from our bodies. This common notion, however, is considered by many to be philosophically unacceptable. This being the case many philosophers have attempted to account for the mental in terms of the physical. This thesis examines four such attempts. The type identity theory, functionalism and eliminative materialism are examined and rejected. A token identity statement is adopted and defended. The defense of the token identity statement rests on its form which takes the subject of experience to be central. While consciousness is not explained by this identity statement, I argue that it does enable us to accommodate the mental within a physicalist framework.

Contents

## Introduction

Are we something distinct from our bodies? Is there a substance existing in the world, a mental substance, that is distinct from the physical world? These are the sorts of questions that people working on the mind/body problem try to answer. One problem with answering these questions in the positive is that causal interaction between the mental and the physical can't be explained. It seems to us that our beliefs, desires, etc., cause us to behave in certain ways. I believe it is raining outside so I take my umbrella with me when I leave the house. But if mental events are not physical events, if they are outside the realm of physics, they cannot be part of the causal chain of physical behavior. If you believe that both minds and bodies exist and that they are distinct in nature, you are a dualist. And because you are left in the uncomfortable position of not being able to explain causal interaction between minds and bodies you will have very little company in the philosophic community.

The alternative to dualism is monism. There are two sorts of monist positions. Phenomenalism and physicalism or materialism. Phenomenalists believe that everything is mental. This doesn't necessarily imply that physics is false. What it does imply is that physics is not the final explanation of the universe. It exists within the mental

realm which is the final explanation. While this position has its merits -- it allows us to hold onto our belief in the existence of mental life, it faces no problems about the phenomenal nature of experience, it accomodates causal interaction between the mind and body -- it is not a position that many people accept. It seems too fantastic to be true. In order to hold this position one must give up his or her belief in the reality of the physical universe. If that's not enough, after one's belief in the physical universe is gone, it's a short step to solipsism wherein your individual self is the whole of reality and nothing else (including other people) has an independent existence.

This leaves us with physicalism as apparently the only tenable position. But physicalism has its problems too. There are a variety of positions, however, open to the physicalist. This thesis will be an examination of four of the most widely held physicalist positions. I shall discuss the type identity theory, functionalism, eliminative materialism and token physicalism. The central concern of those hesitant about or opposed to physicalism is that in a reduction or elimination of the mental to the physical, there is no place for the phenomenal nature of our experiences. This concern will surface in each chapter of the thesis.

I will ultimately answer no to the question of whether we are something distinct from our bodies. I will

argue that physicalism can accomodate our mental experiences and that this is possible through adopting token physicalism.

## TWO PROBLEMS WITH THE TYPE IDENTITY THEORY

> For a full description of what is going on in a man you would have to mention not only the physcical processes in his tissues, glands, nervous system and so forth, but also his states of consciousness: his visual, auditory, and tactual sensations, his aches and pains. That these should be correlated with brain processes does not help, for to say that they are correlated is to say that they are something 'over and above'. ...So sensations, states of consciousness, do seem to be the one sort of thing left outside the physicalist picture, and for various reasons I just cannot believe that this can be so. That everything should be explicable in terms of physics ... except the occurence of sensations seems to me to be frankly unbelievable.(1)

This statement from J.J.C. Smart expresses his motivation behind his attempt to identify sensations with brain processes. The kind of identity theory Smart argues for is now referred to as the type identity theory. The hope of the type identity theorist has been that general types of physical conditions (brain states) would be found that would match up with psychological types. This is to be contrasted with the token identity theory. According to this theory, general psycho-physical identities won't be found. Thus, while its true that every mental event is identical to some physical event, the class of events we call pains or beliefs do not correspond to any general class of distinct physical events. The token identity theory will be considered later. In this chapter I will be concerned only with the type identity theory. More

specifically, I will be concerned with two objections to this theory.

Every time I have a pain c-fibres fire. These events are perfectly correlated. Furthermore pain does not appear to be correlated with anything else. This is the ideal kind of case which the identity theorist believed science would be able to present to us. Of course, science would likely not give us anything as simple as c-fibre firings. It would likely be a complex set of interactions of neurons in the brain and receptors in other parts of the body. But science would give us a natural category or kind (albeit complex) such that whenever an event of this kind took place an event of the kind we now call pain would take place. Assuming now that we have found this 'natural kind', what is to prevent us from accepting the identity theory? Why should we not now say that pain is in fact a brain state and the identity theory was right after all? Smart considers the objections.

Smart first considers two problems which arise from concerns about meaning. The first objection is essentially that I can describe and discuss my sensations without knowing anything about brain physiology. This objection only stands if the mind/brain identity is a necessary rather than contingent identity--only if it is analytically true that pain=c-fibre firings. Smart, of course, contends that we will discover identities and hence they are contingent. The first objection then is

answered quite simply by saying that the identity being proposed is contingent. "...there can be contingent statements of the form 'A is identical with B', and a person may well know that something is an A without knowing it is a B."(2) The second objection is that since it is only a contingent identity that is being proposed, it is possible that sensations are not brain processes. Thus, when we report a sensation we are not reporting a brain process. This objection, Smart points out, rests on a false theory of meaning. While it certainly shows that terms for sensations do not mean the same thing as terms for brain processes it doesn't show that, in fact, they couldn't both refer to the same thing. This objection could only succeed if the meaning of an expression was what that expression named.

Smart presents an admirable defense to most of the objections he considers. Of the two objections I shall concern myself with here, Smart considers only the first. This objection does not appear to be sufficiantly answered. The problem has come to be known as the 'properties problem'.

The problem pertains to the apparent inability of the identity theory to account for mental properties. Thus, even if the identity theorist succeeds in establishing his claim that mental events are nothing more than brain events, he still has to explain the properties of mental events. "That is, it may be possible to get out of

asserting the existence of irreducibly psychic proccesses, but not out of asserting the existence of irreducibly psychic properties."(3) Psychic properties include such things as an after image having the property of being 'a yellowish flash' or a pain being sharp, intense or throbbing. Smart doesn't want to deny that statements employing these property terms are capable of being true or false. He doesn't want to deny the meaningfulness of such statements. This being the case he must somehow account for these apparently irreducible psychic properties.

Before presenting Smart's proposed solution to this problem, the problem itself needs further examination. Smart has made a distinction between mental events and properties. Thus, pain is an event that has the property of being painful. The sensation of warmth is an event that has the property of being warm.This distinction is itself questionable. Instead of having one thing on the mental side of the identity statement to identify, we now have two. But we do not have two experiences, the pain and the painfulness. Once this distinction is made it is difficult to see how the pain event, as distinct from the property of painfulness, is a 'mental' event at all. Having secured an identity between a mental event and a brain process doesn't seem to amount to very much if feeling or phenomenal experience is left out of the equation. Identifying or accounting for the phenomenal experience is

the hard part. For this reason the success of Smart's account of mental properties is central to the success of his theory.

That Smart takes this to be a very serious and difficult objection is illustrated in the radical nature of his reply. He attempts to account for these psychic properties by introducing what he calls a 'topic-neutral' or 'quasi-logical' language. "When a person says --"I see a yellowish orange after image", he is saying something like this: "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.""(4) What counted as a psychic property in the first sentence, the content of the experience, is accounted for in the second sentence by positing an object; an orange. Thus, the second sentence apparently contains no psychic properties. It only contains no psychic properties, however, if no psychic properties are involved when we see an orange. However, earlier in the article Smart has given an analysis of the perception of colours which rests on dispositions to behave. We will assume for now that this kind of analysis works. Through this translation, then, the psychic properties disappear and we are left with the unproblematic case of an object being coloured orange. The experience is no longer orange. An orange is orange. And the experience of an orange after image is like the

experience of an orange.

The problem with Smart's proposal arises when we attempt to analyse just what the relationship is between the first sentence and the second sentence of his translation. "If Smart's proposal is intended to mean that the second sentence has the same meaning as the first, or that we can translate the first sentence into the second as we might translate a Hebrew sentence into English, then his claim is clearly false. It can be shown that the second sentence does not have the same meaning as the first and it has been argued that any so-called topic neutral sentence would fail to be an adequate translation of those sentences we use to make direct reports of our sensations and feelings."(5) It seems to me that it is an inadequate translation because when we make sensation statements we simply are not talking about object properties. We are not talking about properties of an orange or an orange object when we talk about orange after images. We are talking about properties of our experience. And we are not related to our experiences in this objective kind of way. Rorty describes the difficulty in the following way.

> I believe that any attempt to defend the translation form will inevitably get bogged down in controversy about the adequacy of the proposed topic neutral translations of statements about sensations. There is obviously a sense of 'adequate translation' in which the topic neutrality of the purported translations

> ipso facto makes them inadequate. So the proponent of the translation form of the theory will have to fall back on a weaker sense of "adequate translation". But the weaker this sense becomes, the less impressive is the claim being made, and the less difference between the identity theory and the non-controversial thesis that certain brain processes may be constantly correlated with certain sensations.(6)

And Bernstien sums it up as follows: "...the more one stresses that our non-inferential first person reports of sensations can be translated into topic neutral language, the more it looks like one is trying to resolve the apparent disparities between "sensation talk" and "physicalist talk" by arbitrary stipulation."(7)

Since the original and translation form of the senstence proposed by Smart don't mean the same thing, we can only make them mean the same thing by stipulating that they do. The identity theorist, in his attempt to defeat dualism, begins by claiming that science will discover an identity between mind and brain but ends up having to stipulate an identity. Identity acheived by these means is unacceptable. What the identity theorist has in fact done, at least in Smart's case, is to have shifted the dualism he began with from its root in events or processes to a new position in properties. In solving the problem of identitfying mental events with physical events the identity theorist is left with the equally difficult problem of identifying mental properties with physical properties.

If we assume that the problem of mental properties has been solved, and there is no longer any a priori problem with the type identity theory, we ought still to be reluctant to hold this thoery and wait for the scientific discovery of its truth. We should be reluctant because the theory is empirically highly implausible. This kind of objection was not considered by Smart in his article "Sensations and Brain Processes". The reason for this is perhaps partly due to the fact that Smart limited his discussion to sensations and did not consider other kinds of mental events such as beliefs and desires. The objection, it seems to me, holds much more strength when intentional mental events are taken into account. The objection is presented by Hilary Putnam in his article "The Nature of Mental States". While Putnam appears to agree that the objection is stronger when all mental events are considered, he evidently takes the problem to be a serious one even if we only consider sensations. I will present Putnam's argument and then attempt to show that upon examination it can be weakened in the case of sensations.

> Consider what the brain state theorist must do to make good his claims. He has to specify a physical-chemical state such that any organism (not just mammal) is in pain if and only if (a) it possess a brain of suitable physical-chemical structure; and (b) its brain is in the physical-chemical state. This means that the physical-chemical state in question must be a possible state of a mammalian brain, a reptillian brain, a mollusc's brain (octopuses are mollusca and certainly feel pain), etc. At the same time it must not be a possible (physically possible) state of the brain of any

> physically possible creature that cannot feel pain. Even if such a state can be found it must be nomologically certain that it will also be a state of the brain of any extra terrestrial life that may be found that will be capable of feeling pain before we can even entertain the supposition that it may <u>be</u> pain.
>
> ...Finally, the hypothesis becomes still more ambitious when we realize that the brain state theorist is not just saying that <u>pain</u> is a brain state; he is, of course, concerned to maintain that <u>every</u> psychological state is a brain state. Thus if we can find even one psychological predicate which can clearly be applied to both a mammal and an octopus (say "hungry"), but whose physical-chemical correlate is different in the two cases, the brain state theory has collapsed. It seems to me overwhelmingly possible that we can do this.(8)

Part of the strength of Putnam's attack on the identity theory is derived from the ambiguous nature of the conditions he sets out for the identity theorist to meet. Hence, while there certainly is some strength to Putnam's attack, it can be weakened considerably by attending more closely to the conditions. The identity theorist must first specify a physical chemical state with which he identifies pain. Once he has done this he will be allowed to ascribe pain only to those creatures that have the right kind of brain and whose brains are in that state. First of all these two conditions can be collapsed into one. The first condition will necessarily be met if the second one is met. For to be in the right kind of brain state implies that the creature has the right kind of brain. Secondly, it may turn out that having a brain of suitable physical-chemical structure is not a stringent requirement. For in specifying a physical-chemical state

the brain state theorist would presumably take into account the fact that pain is ascribable to creatures with brain structures very different from ours. The specification would thus, presumably, not be so narrow as to apply to only one group of creatures such as human beings. The specification in fact could be very broad. Of course, the less stringent the specification, the less the theory looks like an identity theory. If, for example, we have a very lengthy statement of disjuncts claiming that pain=AvBvCvD,etc., it would appear that we had not discovered a 'kind' of physical event identical to the psychological event we call pain but rather that we were simply listing the physical conditions existing in those cases we suspect of being pain. It does, however, seem quite possible that some criterion could be found that is not so weak as to be vacuous, yet not so strong as to exclude cases of pain in creatures whose brain structures are different from ours.

Next there is the problem of extra-terestrial life. To deal with this case we can invoke a line of reasoning that Putnam himself advanced in another of his articles, "Meaning and Reference".(9) Putnam defines a planet he calls Twin Earth as exactly like Earth with the one exception that water on Twin Earth is not H2O but XYZ. It is, however, functionally equivalent to water. Twin Earthlings drink it, swim in it, water their plants with it, etc. Putnam claims that this stuff, "XYZ water", is

not water. We can't be referring to it when we talk about water. It can only be referred to as water (TE). It seems to me that the same line of reasoning can be applied to the present case of pain. Unless extra-terrestrials fullfill the conditions we have discovered are necessary for the application of the term we cannot ascribe pain to them. Of course, if they exhibit pain behavior or undergo states which are functionally equivalent to pain we may want to ascribe to them pain(ET). Thus, the extra-terrestrial case does not seem to be much cause for concern.

I have been defending the plausability of the identity theory against Putnam's attack only with regard to pain. I believe that sensory states, such as pain, are the only kinds of cases in which the type identity theory is defensible against the charge of empirical implausability. It is not defensible in other cases of mental events, i.e., in cases of intentional mental events. Nagel puts it this way.

> It seems likely that there will be general identities of a rough kind for non-intentional states, such as having particular sensations or sensory impressions, since the physical causes of these are fairly uniform. But one can be practically certain that intentional mental states, even if in each particular case they are identical with some physical state, will not have general physical counterparts, because both the causes and effects of a given belief or desire or intention are extremely various on different occasions even for the same individual, let alone for different persons. One might as easily hope to find a general equivalent, in molecular terms, of a buildings'

collapsing or a brides' being unsafe.(10)

A theory of mind should be able to account fot all mental events. A theory that may hold promise for some kinds of mental events but that doesn't have a chance with others must be considered incomplete. This is the state in which Putnam's objection leaves the identity theory. The empirical implausibiltiy objection thus stands as a strong and serious objection.

Two ojections to the identity theory have been considered in this chapter: the theory is empirically implausible and it offers no adequate account of mental properties. One or the other of these has convinced just about everyone that the type form of the identity theory doesn't or can't work.

## Notes

1)Smart, J.J.C., "Sensations and Brain Processes", in Borst, C.V., (ed.), The Mind/Brain Identity Theory, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1975, pp.53,54

2)Ibid,p.58

3)Ibid, p.59

4)Ibid, p.60

5)Bernstien, Richard, "The Challenge of Scientific Materialism", International Philosophical Quarterly, V.8m 1968, p.261

6)Rorty, Richard, "Mind-Body Identity, Privacy and Categories", in Borst, C.V., (ed.), The Mind/Brain Identity Theory, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1975, pp.190,191

7)Bernstien, Richard, "The Challenge of Scientific Materialism", International Philosophical Quarterly, V.8, 1968, p.262

8)Putnam, Hilary, "The Nature of Mental States" in Block, N., (ed.), Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol.1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980, p.228

9)Putnam, Hilary, "Meaning and Reference", The Journal of Philosophy, Vol.70, 1973, pp.699-711

10)Nagel, Thomas, "Physicalism", in Borst, C.V., (ed.), The Mind/Brain Identity Theory, St. Martin's Press, New

York, 1975, pp.224,225

## FUNCTIONALISM ISN'T VERY FUNCTIONAL

The type identity theorist had faith in the discovery of psycho-physical laws. Psychology would become law -like because psychology was ,in fact, nothing over and above neurophysiology , which is physical and hence follows physical laws. We have examined two problems with this view. One is that it is implausible that for every type of psychological state, we will find some discrete neurological state with which we can identify it. The second problem was that in asserting an identity the properties of mental events are left unaccounted for. Functionalism overcomes the first objection , while maintaining faith in a law-abiding psychology. Thus, while mental entities may have no physical essences they may have functional essences. And if this is the case distinctive sorts of psychological laws may exist--not psycho-physical laws, but psycho-functional laws. Functional events, like neurophysiological events, follow laws. Functional events are formalizable and can be realized by machines. The functionalist project is to formalize the mental by identifying it with causal role. In this respect it is like the type identity theory. And because of this likeness it, too, is subject to the properties problem. Any time we try to formalize concepts that are not currently formalized, or make law-like events

that don't presently appear to be law-like, we must refine our concepts and restrict the kinds of events which are to count as genuine and in need of explanation. That is, we narrow the field of inquiry. There is nothing wrong with doing this in principle, but caution is necessary. We must be careful not to exclude from our new analysis important aspects of our old view. While J.J.C. Smart took heed of this cautionary advice and recognized the need of an explanation of mental properties, the functionalists appear not to be concerned. They don't appear to think that the contents of mental events are in need of an account.

In this chapter I shall examine the functionalist position as proposed by Daniel Dennett. I will concentrate on his theory as it is advanced in his influential and thought provoking chapter from Brainstorms, "Intentional Systems". Of course, Dennett's position is not the only form that functionalism can take. This fact will be addressed in my concluding remarks. I will offer two critisizms of Dennett's functionalism. One is based on his reduction of intentionality to machine operations, while the second concerns the functionalist form of the properties problem -- the content problem.

The functionalist takes what is called a top-down approach to understanding mental events. Instead of starting with physiology and attempting to show how it gives rise to behavior, he or she begins at the top with

behavior and asks how that behavior can best be explained and predicted. We can best explain and predict the behavior of some of the things we interact with in the world by taking them to be intentional systems--that is, systems that have goals, beliefs and desires and that use intentional strategies. Dennett claims that this is how we best explain and predict human behavior and also some computers. His method is to begin by giving intentionality to those systems that we can best interact with by doing so, and then to look for mechanisms that will "explain" why the system is treated as intentional. "In seeking knowledge of internal design our most promising tactic is to take out intelligence loans, endow peripheral and internal events with content, and then look for mechanisms that will function appropriately with such 'messages' so that we can pay back the loans."(1) The success of Dennett's proposal depends on 1) whether or not the loans can be paid back in functionalist coin and 2) whether cases of correct ascriptions of mental events <u>are</u> cases of taking out loans. Of course if the answer to the second condition is negative, the whole project of attempting to pay back the loan is misguided. It seems to me that there are strong reasons to believe that this is indeed the case. However, I do feel that Dennett's proposal is novel and intriguing and that it is deserving of attention.

For Dennett a belief or desire is nothing over and above the mechanically realized functional role of that

belief or desire. The mechanism in which that functional role is realized is not important. It is only important that it is mechanically realizable. We posit beliefs and desires in order to explain behavior. In order for them to count as explanatioms they must have causal force. In order for them to have causal force, they must be realized in a physical system. Thus, in offering explanations in terms of functional specifications, those specifications must in principle be realizable in a physical system. It is in this way that we avoid what Jerry Fodor calls 'functional pseudo-explanations'. Fodor gives this example."Here is a theory of the (occasional) human capacity to provide true answers to questions posed; Inside everyone's head there is a universal question answering device. The class of such devices is functionally specified as follows. A universal question-answerer is a function from questions onto their answers; given a question as input, it provides the answer as output." (2) This kind of functional specification is avoided by the functionalist because it is not mechanically realizable. The relations in terms of which psychological kinds can be specified are, on the functionalist view, restricted to those in terms of which Turing machine program states can be specified. It appears, then, that psychological states, defined as functional states, are by definition realizable since they are specified in terms of Turing machine realizable

states.

Dennett's plan was to pay back the loans he took out on intelligence by finding mechanisms that would function appropriately. But from what has just been said it would seem that we don't really have to look for these mechanisms. The intentional mental events that Dennett is interested in explaining are only those that are mechanically realizable. Thus, while Dennett implies that he is going to go looking for appropriate mechanisms -- giving his project the tone of an empirical investigation -- he really begins with the mechanisms. He begins at least, with a formalized notion of intentionality. If he actually went looking for mechanisms or formalizable (mechanically realizable) events to identify with our current psychological kinds, he would indeed be undertaking an empirical investigation and he could discover things. This is preumably the method, for example, by which an association between c-fibres and pain would be discovered. What Dennett is actually doing is starting off with a stipulated notion of intentional mental events. The mental events he sets out to explain are not those of our common sense folk psychology. They are a formalized version of them. If we don't accept this formalized version, Dennett's project doesn't get off the ground. Dennett's premise seems to be something like the following. The nature of intentional mental events is exhausted by an analysis in which only their causal role

is employed. Causal roles are functionally specifiable and machine realizable.

The functionalist can be understood as asserting a combination of two types of theories. He or she is at once a token physicalist and a type identity theorist. While the traditional type identity theory identifies types of mental events with types of physical events, the functionalist takes types of mental events to be concepts -- abstract theoretical entities, and identifies them with another concept, causal role. In ascribing mental events to something, then, we are referring to whatever it is that is responsible for that causal role. This is the token physicalist aspect of the theory. Mechanisms (whether they are made of biological stuff or steel) are identified that function appropriately with messages to fullfill the causal role specified by the ascription. In any particular system to which we ascribe mental events, those events get reduced to machine operations. I would like, at this point, to grant Dennett's premise and accept the type identity statement of the theory. This allows us to consider whether the reductionist aspect of the theory works. Granting then, that mental events are identical to, or nothing over and above the causal role we take these events to play, can they, in the particular case, be reduced to mechanical operations?

Before moving on to consider the reduction I would like to make it clear that a reduction is indeed what

Dennett has in mind. Part of the appeal of functionalism has been, I think, that it appears to be a theory that allows us to hold onto intentional mental events -- that is, it doesn't require us to reduce them -- while at the same time it offers us a formalized psychology. While the latter is true, that is, it does offer us a formalized psychology, the former is a misunderstanding of functionalism as is illustrated in the following passage from Dennett.

> Any time a theory builder proposes to call any event, state structure, etc., in any system (say the brain of an organism) a signal, message or command or otherwise endows it with content, he takes out a loan of intelligence. He implicitly posits along with his signals, messages, or commands something that can serve as a signal-reader, message-understander or commander, else his signals will be for naught, will decay unrecieved, uncomprehended. This loan must be repaid eventually by finding and analyzing away these readers or comprehenders; for failing this, the theory will have among its elements unanalyzed man-analogues endowed with enough intelligence to read the signals,etc., and thus the theory will postpone answering the major question: what makes for intelligence? ...whenever a theory relies on a formulation bearing the logical marks of intentionality, there is a little man concealed.(3)

And further on Dennett claims "Intentional theory is vacuous as psychology because it presupposes and does not explain rationality or intelligence."(4) Dennett takes rationality and intelligence to be explainable at the level of design. In fact, he appears to equate rationality with what he calls 'optimal design'. We can say that someone or something is rational or operating from optimal design if that thing operates according to what rationality suggests. It may be the case, however, that

intentionality precedes rationality rather than the other way around.

It is often ambiguous just what Denntt intends to be reducing. Sometimes it looks as though he is concerned primarily with intelligence, and at other times, intetionality. I have been taking him to be concerned with the latter. It seems, however, that he can only succeed with the former. Reducing complex mental proccesses to elementary ones that are machine realizable has, in fact, already been successfull -- hence, Artificial Intelligence. This kind of reduction of intelligence has proved helpful in delineating the problems to be worked out in investigations of mental events. For if in your analysis of mental events, you appeal to intelligence as a distinguishing mark of the mental, we can simply show you that machines are capable of intelligence. If you claim that they are not <u>really</u> intelligent because they lack intentionality, the reply will be that that's another question. If we make a distinction between intelligence and intentionality and claim that the latter is not necessary for ascription of the former, we will end up agreeing. For machines can perform processes such that when those processes are performed by a person we call them intelligent. The question, then, is not of the intelligence, but of the artificiality, i.e., of the intentionality. Since if we agree to operate with a notion of intelligence as distinct from intentionality it is

painfully obvious that intelligence can be reduced to machine operations (adding mchines, calculators, computers) Dennett is to be taken as claiming more than a reduction of intelligence. Unfortunately a reduction of intentionality is not to be found. Fodor puts it this way.

> The point is that machine operations -- <u>including elementary machine operations</u>--are themselves characterized in ways that involve intensional idiom insofar as their specification is relevant to their role in psychological explanations. For intensionality -- as opposed to intelligence -- it's (as you might say) a dual aspect theory all the way down, with intensional characterization specifying one of the aspects and mechanical characterization specifying the other. Because this is true from top to bottom, reduction of complex operations to their elementary components buys nothing vis a vis the elimination of intensionality.(5)

Recall that Dennett's method was to "endow peripheral and internal events with content, and then look for mechanisms that will function appropriately with such 'messages'." This was supposed to pay back the loan. Mechanisms are not intentional so we were supposed to have gotten rid of intentionality -- exorcised the little man that was supposed to have been concealed. But if in order for beliefs to be reduced to mechanisms, those mechanisms must be characterized intentionally themselves, we haven't gotten rid of intentionality.

For something to count as playing the causal role of the belief that P, the language that must be used will involve other beliefs and desires. We will not be able to call mechanical event B the belief that P unless mechanical events A and C (the cause and effect of B) are characterized in intentional terms. We can treat events A,

B and C either as mechanical events or intentional events. We cannot say that A and C are mechanical and derive from them B as an intentional event.

There are two levels operating -- the intentional level and the design level. Dennett is claiming that the first is reducible to the second. On the first level we have beliefs, desires, etc., and on the second level we have mechanical events like switches being flipped. There are causal events taking place on both levels. We also have what I have called a type identity statement from the functionalist. The belief that P is identical with whatever plays the causal role of the belief that P. Something is the belief that P in virtue of its causal role in the mental life of the system. If the functionalist holds onto this notion of what it is to be the belief that P, then she can't also hold that mechanism B is the belief that P because mechanism B doesn't play <u>that</u> causal role.

Lets consider a case. We ascribe to a chess playing computer the belief that 'if I move my knight forward I will win the game.' Call this the belief that P. In order for us to ascribe this belief we need conditions A and C (plus an assumption of rationality). A is the desire to win the game. C is the action of moving the knight. Call this level 1. At level 2 we have the following events. A: switch 1 flips switch 3; B: switch 3 flips switch 6; C: switch 6 flips switch 9. On level 1,

event B fullfills the functionalist causal criteria. On level 2, event B does not fullfill this role. It can only fullfill this role if events A and C are already identified with A and C on level 1. Only if A and C have already been identified as intentional events and their intentionality is utilized in the description of events can mechanical event B be identified with the belief that P. But if this is the case then, as I said earlier, we haven't gotten rid of intentionality. The only way mechanical event B can be taken as the belief that P is if its causal role is characterized in intentional terms. Thus, Dennett's loan on intentionality doesn't get paid back.

There is a problem with this scenario. The computer behaves in a rational manner as an intentional system. Yet when we look into the computer all we find are events of the kind that took place on level 2 - i.e. mechanical, non-intentional events. This fact seems to lend itself to the conclusion that no matter what arguments we advance against the idea, intentionality must be reducible to elementary machine operations. The problem with this is that when we look into the computer we find more than elementary machine operations. We find machine operations that are driven by certain programs. It is because of the nature of these programs that the computer's non-intentional machine operations appear in their eventual output form, to be intentional. As Fodor says:

> computers are symbol-driven symbol-manipulators: their programs are sets of semantically interpreted formulae and their typical operations consist in the transformation of sets of semantically interpreted formulae. ...It is, in short, because they are in this sense semantic engines that descriptions of what computers do and how they do it are characteristically shot full of intensional idiom. Turing machine functionalism dispenses with appeals to intelligence without dispensing with this intensionality, viz by providing a class of formalisms for which mechanical realizations are trivially available. But insofar as we view the operations of such machines as computations (a fortiori, insofar as we view such mechanisms as psychological models), we are taking these very mechanical processes to be "endowed with content.(6)

With this in mind we can say one of two things. We can agree that since the computer behaves like an intentional system, it is in fact an intentional system, but it is so in virtue of the fact that it operates on semantically interpreted formulae. Alternatively, we can say that while the computer looks like it is intentional, this appearance being due to the fact that it operates on semantically interpreted formulae, it really isn't intentional at all and we are simply mistaken in taking it to be. I think the latter is the proper way to look at it. This is because the intentional appearance of the computer is due, not to the machine operations of the computer, but to the semantic component of the formulae, which the computer doesn't operate on. It only operates on the formalized properties of symbols.

Before going on I would like to summarize what has

been said so far. We decided near the begining of the chapter that two conditions must be fullfilled in order for Dennett's functionalism to succeed. The first was that the loan that was taken out on intelligence could be paid back with functionalist capital. What I have tried to show is that if intelligence is considered distinct from intentionality, then we can pay back the loan. What I have also argued, however, is that Dennett does not take them to be distinct and in reducing intelligence he takes himself to be reducing intentionality. We also discovered that functionalism is a causal account of the nature of mental events. Something is the belief that P just in case it plays the causal role of the belief that P. I argued on the basis of these considerations, that the loan taken out on intelligence doesn't get paid back. If this is the case, the functionalist's computer is just as much a mystery as the human mind. We don't understand the intentionality of either. I then offered an alternative view of this outcome. The alternative is to say that the computer really isn't an intentional system, but only appears to be. It is this second view and its implications that I will now move on to discuss.

Dennett himself might opt for this view. He might agree that the computer is not <u>really</u> intentional,but he might add that nothing (including us) is <u>really</u> intentional. I claimed above that the intentional appearance of the computer is due to the semantic content

of its formulae, which the computer doesn't operate on. The computer operates on symbols -- symbols that have meaning for us. At this point Dennett may claim that we have no reason for believing that the symbols have any more meaning for us than for the computer. The computer manipulates symbols and appears to be intentional and we manipulate symbols and appear to be intentional. That the computer is operating on formalized symbols, resulting in the appearance of intentionality should be taken as evidence that we also operate on formalized symbols with the same result. All this stuff about semantic representation and meaning is just extra baggage. Moreover, this extra baggage is not explainable. On this picture, intentionality didn't really get reduced when we looked inside the computer. Rather, we discovered that there is no such thing as intentionality. It is just a way of talking.

It seems to me that intentionality is just a way of talking in the case of the computer, but not in the case of most human beings. I offered a second condition at the begining of this chapter that I claimed must be fullfilled in order for Dennett's project to succeed. This condition, more fundamental than the first, was that it must be the case that correct ascriptions of mental events are cases of taking out loans. While this banking terminology does seem appropriate when we are talking about computers, it doesn't seem so, to me, when we are talking about human

beings.

Human beings are the paradigm case of intentionality. If we observe other systems behaving in a manner that looks like the manner in which a human being would behave, we have reason to believe that that system may also be intentional. But since that system is not a human being, and therefore not a paradigm case of an intentional system, we are making an assumption that it possesses all of the properties that are necessary in order for something to count as an intentional system. We do not make this assumption for the paradigm case. Even if we don't know what those properties are, it is necessarily true that we, as typical human beings, have those properties because we are what any other system must be compared with in determining whether or not it is intentional. If we start with a theory of intentionality, that is, a theory about the nature of intentional states, we must believe in the existence of intentional states (whatever their nature may be). We must believe that something clearly has those states. If we end by doubting the intentionality of people, we are not trying to solve questions about the nature of intentional mental events. We are engaging ourselves in the problem of other minds. In order to work on the mind/body problem the problem of other minds must be set aside. If we are trying to explain the mental it is given that minds exist. We are trying to explain something about the nature of human beings. It may

be argued that minds are reducible to something else or that any or all of our theories about what the mind is are false, but that we are trying to explain or explain away something implies that we are taking it for granted that there is something to be explained.

Should functionalism be seen as an attempt to solve the mind body problem or as an attempt to solve the problem of other minds? It seems to me that Dennett is working on the former problem but invoking the latter for support. That is, in trying to show that computers are intentional systems, he ends up saying that we have no reason to believe that people are. This is perhaps a bit unfair to Dennett as he actually ends up claiming that there are no important differences between people and machines when it comes to the ascription of intentionality. One can only reach such a conclusion, however, if he is either a behaviorist --in which case functionalism is no improvement on behavoirism -- or if he holds some account of intentional mental events whereby a machine is able to have such events. The latter is the case for functionalism. It is a causal account of mental events. We should not, therefore, take the functionalist to be working on the problem of other minds, because he assumes an account of intentionality at the outset. The functionalist believes that a) an analysis of intentional mental events which invokes only the causal role of any given event exhausts the analysis, and b) if such an

analysis is correct, intentionality can be legitimately ascribed to machines and reduced to their elementary mechanisms. I have so far argued that b) is false. I don't believe that intentionality can be legitimately ascribed to machines for the reason that intentionality doesn't get reduced to elementary mechanisms.

Before moving on to argue for the falsity of a), I should clarify the point of the present discussion. Unless the functionalist is engaged in a form of the problem of other minds, he or she cannot claim that we are taking out a loan on intelligence in the case of the intentionality of human beings, i.e., the paradigm case. Since they have an account of the nature of intentional mental events,(which I earlier referred to as their type identity statement) they must assume that this account is an account of something. The functionalist method is to assume the correctness of their account in the paradigm case and then to apply it to cases outside the paradigm, such as the computer. Hence, while we do take out a loan on intelligence in the case of the computer, we do not in the case of human beings. It is <u>given</u> that people are intentional systems (even though on the functionalist account this doesn't turn out to mean very much) since if anything is intentional, people are. The loan is taken out only for those cases outside the paradigm.

Anyone who takes herself to be investigating the nature of mental events, assumes that there are mental

events. Her purpose is to capture their nature within a theory. J.J.C. Smart attempted to do this with his identity theory. Functionalism, on the other hand, seems to be offering a theory of something about which it doubts the existence. If it doesn't exist, then there is no need for an account, and if it does then any account given must explain its nature. Functionalism's attempt to reduce intentionality out of existence in the case of machines doesn't work precisely because it has an account of the nature of intentionality that is incompatible with mechanistic reduction.

Is the account of intentionality, i.e. the type identity statement, given by functionalism satisfactory? What determines whether or not something is to count as the belief that P is the causal role of that thing in the mental life of the organism (system). Now that we have seen that even if we grant the truth of this analysis, we can't reduce intentionality, a great deal of its appeal is lost. While we do want an analysis that can account for the causal efficacy, it seems prima facie, that we want more than this. We want an account of their content, of the properties of mental events. Furthermore, it seems that we can't even get an account of causal efficacy with the functionalist proposal. For when we ask in virtue of what does a belief have its causal force, the most plausible response, in virtue of its content, is blocked.

And the functionalists don't appear to have an alternative to this response. But let's ignore the problem of causal efficacy for the moment and consider whether in denying or ignoring the contents of mental events, the functionalists are ignoring something that is indeed genuine and relevant to an analysis of mental events.

John Searle, in his article 'Minds, Brains and Programs' argues that functionalism does indeed leave something very important out of its account. Searle's argument is generally taken to be an argument against the possibility of any psychologically significant progress in artificial intelligence. I will here examine this argument, referred to as 'the Chinese Room Argument', and then show how it is relevant to our pesent purposes.

Many people in the fields of philosophy and artificial intelligence take the ultimate test of intelligence to be the test proposed by Alan Turing in his 1950 article, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence'. In the 'Turing test' we are confronted with the task of distinguishing between a computer and a human being solely on the basis of their answers to any questions we might want to ask. We have no auditory or visual cues to enhance our effectiveness in deciding. Both the person and the computer are behind drawn curtains and their answers to the questions asked are printed out on a teletype machine. If we cannot distinguish the computer answers from the answers given by the person, then the computer passes the

Turing test. It is claimed that if the computer passes the test, we have no reason to deny that the computer is intelligent while maintaining that the person is.

Searle denies that this test is a test of intelligence. He believes that the Turing test could be passed without the computer having something that we take to be essential for the ascription of intelligence. We are asked to imagine an English speaker in a room and in possession of a book of rules in English that contain instructions on how to match Chinese symbols. He has all the instructions so that it is possible for him to answer any question given to him by a Chinese speaker. He looks at any piece of paper given to him with a question in Chinese symbols,

looks in the book for a match, squiggles the appropriate symbol on another piece of paper, and hands it back. It is clear in this case that the person doesn't really understand Chinese, yet he is able to pass the Turing test. Dennett replies to this argument that while its true that the person in the room doesn't understand, the whole system taken together; the room, the insruction book, the paper, etc., does understand. The person in the room, argues Dennett, is analogous to a small part of the inner workings of a computer, and as such, it is easy to see why he wouldn't unerstand Chinese. Searle's response to this is that even if the person memorized all the instructions and was taken out of the room, so that the whole system

was incorporated in the person, that person still would not
understand Chinese. "What this simple argument shows is that no formal program by itself is sufficient for understanding because it would always be possible in principle for an agent to go through the steps in the program and still not have the relevant understanding." (7)

For our present purposes, Searle's argument can be taken to show that a complete formalization of mental events or operations, wherein their contents (semantic) play no role, leaves out something essential, viz., understanding.

Perhaps the most famous argument for there being something left out of reductionist accounts is Thomas Nagel's "What is it Like to Be a Bat". The thrust of Nagel's article is that for concsious beings, beings who have a mental life, there is something that it is like for that being to be what it is. It <u>experiences</u>. It experiences from its own subjective perspective. "It is useless to base the defense of materialism on any analysis of mental phenomena that fails to deal explicitly with their subjective character. ...It is impossible to exclude the phenomenological features of experience in the same way that one excludes the phenomenal features of an ordinary substance from a physical or chemical reduction of it -- namely, by explaining them as effects on the

minds of human observers."(8)

The phenomenological features of our experiences, the contents or meanings of our beliefs, are thus something that at least some philosophers feel are in need of explanation. Smart also recognized this need and attempted to account for them. Functionalists, however, have not recognized this need. Eliminative materialists do not recognize this need either. In fact, they deny the existence of what we refer to as phenomenological experience. Since my next chapter will deal exclusively with this denial, I will not pursue it further here. At this stage it is sufficient to point out that in their attempt to formalize psychology, the functionalists have left out semantic and phenomenological features of experience, and in doing so they have done something that possibly renders their account incomplete.

The functionalist's troubles go on further still. For as I mentioned earlier, the functionalist doesn't have an answer as to how mental events can be causally efficacious. Consider the following case.(9) Take the statement 'He wrote the letter to embarass the government.' If we take A to be desire, B the writing of the letter, and C as embarassing the government, we get the causal chain A->B->C. Now we ask, 'What is the cause of A?' A is the desire to bring C about.But if this is the case, A must be specified in terms of a representation of C, a description of C, or the meaning of C. In short, A

must have content.

An attempt to formalize psychology is admirable. Unfortunately, the functionalist attempt doesn't work. It doesn't work because it doesn't do what it claims to do, i.e., reduce intentionality, and because the formalization it offers doesn't account for things we take to be in need of an account, viz., causal efficacy and phenomenological experience.

There are, it seems to me, two types of functionalism. Only one of these, the one I examined here, purports to offer a complete account of mental events. Functionalists can either be instrumentalists, like Dennett, or realists about mental events. The realists take the computer as a model of cognitive representation and processing, but don't believe that computers actually have mental representations. Since they hold that people actually do have mental representations-- that their beliefs have content-- their functionalism must be supplemented with a view on the nature of these representations. Since I have been arguing for the need of such supplementation, I have no argument with these functionalists. At least I have no basis for an argument until I examine their theory on the nature of mental representations. My purpose here was not to examine the pragmatic appeal of the computer model, but to consider functionalist theory as a solution to the mind/body problem, and instrumentalist functionalism is the only

functionalism in the running.

## Notes

1)Dennett, Daniel, "Intentional Systems", in Brainstorms, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p.15

2)Fodor, J., "Introduction", in Representations, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p.12

3)Dennett, Daniel, "Intentional Systems", in Brainstorms, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p.12

4)Ibid, p.15

5)Fodor, J., "Introduction", in Representations, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p.22

6)Ibid, p.23

7)Searle, John, "Minds, Brains and Programs", Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Vol.3,1980,p.90

8)Nagel, Thomas, "What is it Like to be a Bat?", in Block, N.,(ed.), Readings in the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol.1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980, p.160

9)This example was given to me by Sam Coval.

## THE INELIMINABILITY OF THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM

Eliminative materialism is sometimes viewed as the only possible scenario given the failures of the identity theory and functionalism. Since we can't identify mental events with either brain events or physical events playing certain causal roles it is believed that the possibility of any kind of identification is hopeless. Eliminative materialists claim that the reason these theories fail is because there really are no mental events. These theories are trying to identify physical states, events or processes with something that doesn't exist. Eliminativists view mental events as posited entities within the theory of folk psychology. They argue that folk psychology is a false theory and since it is false the entities it posits don't exist.

I shall begin this chapter with an example of the eliminativist position employing, once again, an argument offered by Daniel Dennett. Dennett's argument is directed toward sensations. He discusses pain specifically. After considering Dennett's particular argument I shall discuss the eliminative materialist position more generally. I will agrue that the eliminativist position is misguided because eliminativists confuse or ignore a distinction between mental events as theoretical explanations of behavior and mental events as conscious experiences. If

this distinction is ignored the theory appears to be a complete account of mental events. It is the appearance of completeness that has led philosophers to adopt this position. Once this distinction is recognized, however, it seems to me that the position must be rejected as a solution to the mind/body problem.

Dennett argues the eliminativist position, concentrating on pain, in his chapter from Content and Consciousness, 'The Ascription of Content'. He begins by asking how we distinguish a painful sensation from one that is not painful. From this he argues to the conclusion that there are no pains. "...'pain' does not refer."(1) "Insisting that above and beyond our ability to distinguish sensations as painful, there is the extra quality of painfulness, is thus insisting on an unintelligible extra something."(2)

At the outset of the argument Dennett does not deny that we can identify pains, but that we can distinguish between that which is identified and the act of identification itself: "...ostension of the quality in this instance cannot be separated from ostension of the discriminating."(3) Support for his claim that we can not uniquely identify pains comes from his considerations of three questions. i)How do we distinguish pains from non-pains? ii)How do we locate pains? 3)What is it about pain that causes us to avoid it? If we attempt to answer these questions in terms of a mental entity or quality

Dennett argues that we end up in a "cul-de-sac". All mental quality answers are circular. "When trying to understand the discrimination of pain, appeal to the quality of painfulness is no advance over the question; it tells us nothing we did not already know. When one is asked how one tells an x from a y and answers that x's have an indefinable characteristic which one is simply able to recognize but not describe, all one is saying is: I can tell--that's all."(4) On the second question, 'How do we locate pains?', Dennett says the following. "We do not locate our pains with the aid of any independently describable qualities or 'local signs' provided us by the sensations, we just <u>can</u> locate them."(5) And on the last question; "The question is dead because there is nothing <u>about</u> painfulness at all; it is an unanalysable quality. We simply do abhor pain, but not in virtue of anything (but its painfulness)."(6)

Dennett concludes from these considerations that the introduction of unanalysable mental qualities leads to a "premature end to explanation".(7) This being the case perhaps the best thing to do would be to <u>abandon</u> the personal level of explanation and move to the sub-personal level. We should, in other words, abandon talk of persons and their sensations and move to brains and events in the nervous system for our explanations. Abandoning the personal level of explanation means that we don't attempt to identify the subject matter on that level with the

subject matter on the sub-personal level. In essence, we give up pain. Instead of pain we have neural impulses and so forth. The physical account will be an account of the compulsion of pain behavior. Pain itself will not be identified since when we move to this level we abandon pain. The explanation of pain on the personal level, in terms of a mental entity is unanalysable and non-mechanistic.

From here Dennett's reasoning can be understood as following four steps. First, since pains are non-mechanistic they cannot be identical with neurons or neural impulses which are mechanistic. Second, to accept pains, which are non-mechanistic, as referential is to commit oneself to dualism--to the ontological acceptance of both the personal and sub-personal levels. And we don't want to commit ourselves to dualism. Third, since pains can be neither identical with nor non-identical with neural impulses(unless dualism is accepted), one of the two categories of terms, the personal or sub-personal, must be non-referential. Finally, the category of neural impulses gives us better explanations so it refers--that of pains does not.

> Given this interpretation it is in one sense true that there is no relation between pains and neural impulses, because there are no pains; 'pain' does not refer. There is no way around this. If there is to be any relation between pain and neural impulses, they will have to be related either by identity or non-identity, and if we want to rule out both of these relations we shall have to decide that one of the terms is non-referential.(8)

This argument offered by Dennett is an example of eliminative materialist arguments in general. The eliminativist strategy is to offer and support three steps of reasoning. 1)Folk psychology is a false theory. 2)Since it is false the entities it posits don't exist. 3)we should abandon psychology and get on with neuro-science. Even though 2) doesn't follow from 1), if 1) is true, it does make the existence of the entities more questionable. The first question we need to ask is if folk psychology is a theory, what is it a theory of? Since psychologists are in the business of explaining behavior, so too, presumably, are folk psychologists. We will take the eliminative materialists then to be claiming that folk psychology is a theory of behavior . I will later consider an alternative to this reading but for now let's assume that this is what they mean. The eliminative materialist claims that mental events are theoretical entities posited to explain behavior and then goes on to argue that this is a lousy theory of behavior. Churchland, for example, points to the failures of the theory.

> So much of what is central and familiar to us remains a complete mystery from within folk psychology. We do not know what sleep is or why we have to have it, despite spending a full third of our lives in that condition. ...We do not understand how learning transforms each of us from a gaping infant to a cunning adult, or how differences in intellegence are grounded. We have not the slightest idea of how memory works, or how we manage to retrieve relevant bits of information instantly from the awesome mass we have stored. We do not know what mental illness is, nor how to cure it.(9)

If we combine Dennett's and Churchland's arguments we end up with a picture of folk psychology as impoverished in terms of explanatory and predictive power through the utilization of entities that we can't identify. This looks like a pretty good reason for concluding that we should abandon the theory. An attempt to refute this conclusion may be made, at this point, which rests on our direct perception of mental events through introspection. It may be argued that Dennett was simply wrong and that there is a method by which we discriminate pain from non-pain and that method is introspection. Whether or not the objects of our introspection work in a theory is irrelevant to the question of whether or not they exist. Since we directly perceive mental events through introspection they must exist. Aside from the fact that I think Dennett's argument still holds, since I don't think that any relevant distinction is to be found in this context between introspecting and discriminating, Churchland has an answer to the claim to knowledge through introspection. First of all, he would argue that none of us are born knowing how to label the states of our introspection. We have to learn how to use the word 'pain', for example, and to apply it in our own case just as we learn to apply it in the case of others. The labels we use or the so called observations we make depend on the context. We were all brought up in the context of the belief in the truth of folk psychology. We were taught that we would observe certain things so we

do.

he eliminative materialist will argue that this argument (the argument from introspection) makes the same mistake that an ancient or medieval person would be making if he just insisted that he could see with his own eyes that the heavens form a turning sphere, or that witches exist. The fact is, all observation occurs within some system of concepts, and our observation judgements are only as good as the conceptual framework in which they are expressed.(10)

If we take eliminative materialism to be a critique of a theory which posits mental events to explain behavior, it looks plausible. But not too plausible. The only plausibility it has is found in the claims that Churchland makes about the failures of the theory. But even here I think Churchland goes too far. Psychologists do know <u>something</u> about learning, intellegence, memory and so forth and are currently investigating such issues. Furthermore psychologists have attempted and investigated a theory that doesn't invoke mental events in an explanation of behavior, i.e., behaviorism, and have rejected it as inadequate. I'm sure, however, there is still room for critisism and perhaps some explanations of behavior in terms of mental events will have to be eliminated. The critique of psychology doesn't, however, recieve any support from Dennett's argument. This is because, as I will argue, Dennett presupposes a certain conception of pain and invokes an invalid distinction. If we concieve of pain in a manner that differs from the conception Dennett offers, his argument to the effect that

'pain' doesn't refer, doesn't work.

But the real problem with eliminative materialism is not whether or not it works as a critique of psychology, but that it doesn't work as a solution to the mind/body problem. Earlier I said that we would understand the eliminativist to be taking folk psychology as a theory of behavior. The alternative to this would be to take folk psychology as a theory of mental events. And the theory is that they exist; that is, consciousness is a theory and if the eliminativists are right, it is a false theory. There are no conscious experiences.

I will first examine Dennett's argument and show that, as a particular argument for eliminating pain, it fails. I will then consider eliminative materialism in the context of the mind/body problem rather than as a critique of psychology. The eliminativists take themselves to be working on the mind/body problem. As such they take themselves to be eliminating, not only mental events as posited entities in a theory of behavior, but mental events as conscious experiences. The eliminativists, however, fail to make this distinction. It seems that they assume that if mental events can be eliminated in a theory of behavior they will be eliminated altogether. But this doesn't follow. Furthermore, the idea that we really aren't conscious, that consciousness is a false theory, seems to me to be simply absurd. If it did follow from

their arguments I think it would constitute a reductio of their view. Since it doesn't follow, however, the problem of accounting for conscious experience doesn't get addressed. I will show, then, that the eliminativists do take themselves to be eliminating consciousness and that their arguments, in fact, fail to support such an elimination.

Dennett's argument depends, like the general eliminativist argument, on pain being an entity--on being something we bear a certain relationship to, something we can observe.He shows that there is no method of locating, identifying or analysing this entity and therefore there is no reason for us to believe that such an entity exists. I agree. There is no reason to believe in such an entity. If our folk psychological belief in the existence of pain depends upon our taking pain to be an entity that we bear a certain relationship to then pain does not exist. But while folk psychology does maintain a belief in the existence of pain it's cetainly not clear that it offers any analysis of the form of its existence. The issue of the form of the existence of pain has been taken up, not by laymen, or folk psychologists, but by philosophers. And most philosophers have given up talk of sensations or beliefs as entities. Instead of talking about pain or after images they talk about having or experiencing pain or after images. The property of feeling pain may still be very real even if there are no pains.

To say that pain exists is not to say that it is an entity that we can discriminate from other entities or that we can locate or even describe. It is true that there is no method by which we discriminate pains from non-pains or locate pains. But this is because we don't discriminate or locate pains at all. Sensations are not things people feel. They are the feelings themselves. In his argument Dennett makes a distinction between discriminating and having a sensation. But to have a sensation is to sense or feel. So Dennett is distinguishing between sensing or feeling and discriminating. It seems to me, that in the context of Dennett's argument this distinction is invalid. Discriminating is not a seperate act. In the context of Dennett's argument sensing or feeling amounts to the same thing as discriminating. We don't both feel the difference between pain and non-pain and discriminate between pain and non-pain. If we do discriminate between pain and non-pain, we feel the difference. And if we feel the difference, we have discriminated. Thus, in asking us how we discriminate pain from non-pain, Dennett is in essence asking us how we feel or sense the difference between pain and non-pain. If the fact that there is no method by which we discriminate leads to the conclusion that there are no sensations it should also lead to the conclusion that there are no discriminations. For if, in this context, feeling and discriminating amount to the same thing, we could argue, following Dennett's own line

of reasoning, that because there is no method for feeling, there are no discriminations. But there are discriminations. Dennett talks about them throughout his chapter. They don't exist as entities any more than pains exist as entities but we don't find Dennett making any assertions about the non-existence of discriminations such as those he makes about pains.

Whether we call it an event, process, state or property, something called 'feeling pain' exists. It exists in the same way that discriminating exists. In fact, feeling pain is simply an example of discriminating which is a more general term. Dennett argues as if the existence of pain depends on there being a distinction between pain and discriminating. If there is a distinction there should be some method by which we identify pain. He concludes that since there is no method there is no distinction and there is no pain. All there is is discriminating behavior driven by neural processes. If the existence of pain does not rest on such a distinction, which I have argued it does not, then Dennett's conclusion is invalid.

Also ivalid is Churchland's analogy between mental events and witches or observations of starry spheres. If we don't conceive of mental events as entities subject to observation--entities that we stand in a certain relation to--and conceive of them instead as states or events we undergo, then we wouldn't make the claim that we directly

perceive them through introspection. To argue against the claim to the existence of mental events based on direct observation through introspection, Churchland assumes that his opponent already holds a view of mental events as entities we are related to.

Dennett took himself to have shown, on the basis of there being no non-circular answers to the questions he posed, that pain is unanalysable and, hence, non-mechanistic. Since brain events are mechanistic, pain cannot be identical with brain processes. And unless we are dualists this is the only option we have. Since this option is ruled out pains must not exist. So far I have been arguing that the circular answers to the questions posed by Dennett can prove nothing since these questions are couched in terms of the invalid distinction between feeling pain and discriminating and the conception of pain as an entity. If we don't buy this conception it neither follows that pain is unanalysable nor non-mechanistic. Furthermore, the event 'feeling pain' need not be identified with a brain process in order for us to reject dualism. Surely there are other options. We may take the event to be 'my feeling pain', for example, which may be identified with my body undergoing some physical process.

In arguing the way he does, taking sensations to be something we discriminate rather than simply a method of discriminating, it doesn't look like Dennett is denying that we have conscious experiences. It looks like he is

simply denying the existence of a theoretical entity that we have posited. However, when taken out of the context of a theory of behavior, mental event terms don't refer to theoretical entities posited to explain behavior. They refer to conscious experiences. It seems to me that any attempt to understand eliminative materialism as asserting any less than the denial of the existence of conscious experiences is doomed to fail.

Before examining how we might attempt to interpret eliminative materialism, let's consider the problem that the eliminativists are supposed to be addressing--the mind/body problem. The mind/body problem arises as a result of appearing to be made up of two kinds of substances. We are physical beings having arms, legs, skin and nervous systems. But we are also persons having conscious experiences. There are two issues motivating us to reconcile these two views of ourselves. The first is the ever increasing pressure from the natural sciences which is a result of their contining successes in explaining the universe in their terms. The more their explanatory power increases the less likely it becomes that human beings exist outside the scientific framework of explanation. The second is the fact that it appears to us that these two aspects of ourselves, the mental and the physical, causally interact. But if this is true, how could it be that something non-physical causes something physical or vise versa? In order to address the mind/body

problem one must believe that conscious experience exists. From here he or she can attempt to accommodate conscious experience within a physicalist framework or, alternatively, he or she can attempt to accomodate science within a mental framework. Either way, if we are to explain the apparent causal interaction between the mental and the physical, reducing our ontology is the name of the game.

But the eliminativists don't seem to be playing the game. My conscious experience of fear causes me (my body) to move in certain ways, to run, for example. The question is 'How can something non-physical cause something physical?' But in order to see this as a problem we must see it as an example of a case in which a conscious mental event causes a physical event. If we never had any conscious mental events which cause physical events we wouldn't posit mental events as explanations of behavior in cases in which we are not conscious of any mental events. Since in many cases conscious intentions, beliefs and desires cause us to behave in certain ways it is the natural next step for the psychologist, folk or otherwise, to posit such events in explaining behavior even when we are not conscious of them. To argue that the entities posited by the psychologist don't exist is not to argue that conscious experiences don't exist. In order to address the mind/body problem one must address <u>conscious experience</u> and attempt to accomodate it. If consciousness

doesn't exist then neither does the problem. For without conscious experience it wouldn't seem to us that we have a problem. Nothing would seem to us to be any way at all.

Perhaps we can understand the eliminativist as accepting that we experience, that we have what we refer to now as pains,desires and beliefs, but that these concepts are loose-knit, ambiguous and a poor basis from which to build a theory attempting to understand ourselves. We should talk about our conscious experiences not in terms of pains and so forth but in terms of neural firings and other such physiological occurrences. Since the concept of pain is somewhat ambiguous, reporting that I have a pain would be a somewhat ambiguous report. It would be helpful, in conveying my experiences to others, if we had more refined concepts available to us. If we could express our experiences to others more perspicuousy we would have a better understanding of ourselves. One way of gaining clarity in our reports might be to report the physiological event corresponding to the experience. Thus, if we learn that every occurence of a sharp stabbing pain is accompanied by physiological event xyz, we would report xyz instead of pain.

Support for this reading of eliminative materialism is found in the following remarks made by Churchland in which he is discussing the nature of our observation judgements. "In all three cases--the starry sphere, witches, and the familiar mental states--precisely what is

challenged is the integrity of the background conceptual frameworks in which the observation judgements are expressed. To insist on the validity of one's experiences, traditionally interpreted, is therefore to beg the very question at issue. For in all three cases, the question is whether we should reconcieve the nature of some familiar observational domain."(11)It looks like Churchland is here calling for a new conception of conscious experiences rather than an abandonment. But on this picture, wherin it is admitted that we have conscious experiences, the mind/body problem gets neither solved nor dissolved. For it is not our labelling of conscious experiences as pains or desires that is the problem. It is the existence of conscious experience, whatever it is called, however it is referred to, that is the problem. And the existence of conscious experience isn't the issue on this picture. But the eliminativists do claim to be working on the mind/body problem and therefore this picture doesn't jive with their other claims.

This picture has implications that the eliminativists deny. First of all, on this picture 'pain' refers. And as we saw this is just the notion Dennett argues against. The claim that I am having pain is nonsensical according to the eliminativists. We are not referring to anything. On the picture I have offered here 'pain' would refer. It would refer to my conscious experience. The picture I have presented is actually simply the identity thesis

accompanied by a view on what language we should use (psychological or physiological) to report our experiences. And the eliminativists are denying the identity thesis. This picture then can't be the one being adopted by the eliminativists.

Perhaps the eliminitivists are claiming that while psychological terms don't refer to our experiences, physiological terms do. While the claim that I am having pain is meaningless, the claim that my c-fibres are firing is not. The problem with this is that 'c-fibre firings' refer to c-fibre firings, not to my conscious experience. If the eliminativists want to claim that to report c-fibre firings is to report my conscious experience they must argue that the event 'my c-fibres firing' is identical with the event 'my conscious experience'. But this identity can't be established since we have no language in which to talk about our conscious experiences. The only claim that the eliminativist allows us to make is that my c-fibres firing is identical to my c-fibres firing. Since there is no place in this picture for conscious experience we can't take the eliminativists to be arguing that physiological terms will refer to conscious experiences.

The only reading of the eliminative materialist position that accords with their claims is one in which consciousness is a false theory. The eliminativists claim that there are no such things as beliefs, desires, intentions and sensations. These terms don't refer. But

what else does consciousness amount to than the having of beliefs, desires and sensations? We now use a certain class of terms, mental or psychological terms, to refer to our conscious experiences. If these terms don't refer the implication is that there are no such experiences. If all the eliminativists were claiming is that there are no such theoretical entities as pains, beliefs, etc., that we posit in order to explain behavior and that our psychological terms should be understood as referring to something other than entities, they would not be advocating the complete abandonment of psychological terms. The eliminativists never come out and say that consciousness is a false theory. They claim that folk psychology is a false theory and that we should abandon its terms since they are non-referential. It seems to me, however, that since we now use folk psychological terms to refer not only to theoretical explanations of behavior but to conscious experiences, and since they claim that these are non-referential, and since they don't attempt to identify physiological terms with conscious experience, they are forced to abandon consciousness along with folk psychology.

Eliminative materialism is not a solution to the mind/body problem. It is an attempt at a dissolution of the problem. Since our psychological terms don't refer there simply aren't any events of the sort we have been worrying about when we worry about accomodating mental

events within a physicalist framework. It seems to me, that when viewed within the context of the mind/body problem, eliminative materialism is simply absurd. Clearly we will not stop having conscious experiences if we change our language from talk about pain to talk about c-fibres firing. It is true, however, that the nature of our experiences may change. Our perceptions are embedded within a certain context of beliefs and desires and within a certain value system. And perhaps, given a different context of beliefs, desires and values, we would experience things differently. My experience of having my tooth drilled by a dentist is not a pleasant one, but if some stranger came at me with a drill and performed the same operation on my tooth as my dentist did, I would likely have a different sensation in the second case from the one I had in the first case and the second case would be much more unpleasant than the first. But so what? So what if our experiences change depending on the context? This has nothing to do with the mind/body problem. The problem is not what kind of conscious experience that I have, but that I have conscious experiences. Conscious experience of whatever sort and however we talk about it still needs to be accomodated.

Accomodating conscious mental experience within a physicalist framework is the heart of the mind body problem. And the heart of the problem is lost sight of by

the eliminativists. They sometimes appear to view the problem as one concerning the nature and existence of entities we posit to explain behavoir. Even if their view is right as a critique of psychology, conscious experience, the heart of the mind/body problem does not disappear. Only mental entities as explanatory entities are eliminated. Mental entities as conscious experiences remain.

If 'folk psychology' only refers to theories of behavior employing mental entities as explanations then the argument that it is false and that these entities don't exist is a plausible argument. If, howverer, folk psychology is also considered to encompass the conception of mental events as conscious experiences, the project of eliminating folk psychology is an absurd project to adopt. If eliminativists take themselves to be engaging in the first project then since they have said nothing about conscious experience they have not adressed thr mind/body problem. Since they claim to be working on the mind/body problem I must conclude that they take themselves to be eliminating conscious experience along with folk psychology and reject their position as absurd. We don't get rid of the problem of accomodating conscious mental experiences by changing the terms we use to refer to those experiences. In a sense this is unfortunate. It would be nice if I could prevent myself from ever experienceing pain again simply by not using the word.

## Notes

1)Dennett, Daniel, "The Ascription of Content", in Content and Consciousness, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1969, p.96

2)Ibid, p.92

3)Ibid, p.92

4)Ibid, p.92

5)Ibid, p.93

6)Ibid, p.93

7)Ibid, p.93

8)Ibid, p.96

9)Churchland, Paul, Matter and Consciousness, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1984, pp.45,46

10)Ibid, p.47

11)Ibid, pp.47,48

## ACCOMMODATING CONSCIOUSNESS

Token physicalism is more a premise than a theory. The premise is that each token of a mental event is identical to some physical event. The physicalist can take one of two approaches to the mind/body problem. He or she can attempt to explain consciousness or conscious mental experience within a physicalist framework or he or she can attempt to accomodate mental experience within the physicalist framework. It seems to me that in accomplishing the latter task we will have solved the mind/body problem. Though certainly worth pursuing, the former task is much more formidable and need not be completed in order to solve the mind/body problem. The question, then, that I shall pursue in this chapter is whether, equipped with the token physicalist premise, we can accomodate conscious mental experience within a physicalist framework. I shall begin by explaining why I approach the problem as a physicalist --that is, why I believe the best approach to the problem is to attempt to accomodate mental experience within a physicalist framework.

Various reasons or beliefs motivate materialism. Some are materialists because they strongly believe in the truth of a particular theory of which they happen to be advocates. For others, however, the motivation for adopting a materialist stance precedes their acceptance

or proposal of a particular theory. Some, it seems, are simply awed by the progress made in science and are sure that science will provide answers in the arena of philosophy. For others, such as J.J.C.Smart, 'awe' is perhaps too strong a word. He claims that since science can explain everything else in the universe, it is simply implausible that consciousness should be given a special status outside the realm of scientific explanation. To this line I am unsympathetic. But my lack of sympathy rests not only with my feeling that consciousness does have a special status, but with the belief that not everything else is explainable in terms of science. Psychology is not the only area in which a materialist framework seems out of place. Sociology, political science and other so-called social sciences involve knowledge that has no place for, or certainly finds no explanation in, a materialistically reduced framework.

A final motivation for accepting materialism, which happens to be the concern that motivated me, is simply the pressure to reject dualism and phenomenalism. This pressure shouldn't be underestimated. Dualism can't explain causal interaction between the mental and the physical and phenomenalism denies us the belief in physical reality. The phenomenalist may reply that materialism denies the existence of mental reality. If this really were so I wouldn't be a materialist. But beyond this, it seems to me that dualism and phenomenalism

must be rejected because even if I accept the ontological distinctness or uniqueness of the mental one of the major difficulties facing the physicalist is not overcome.

The problem is the subjectivity of experience. The feeling that 'I' am the subject of my experiences, that there is an essential subject, is not accomodated by the physicalist picture. Thomas Nagel expresses the problem in this way:

> States of my body, physical states, are, admittedly, physical states of me, but this is not simply because they are states of that body but because in addition it is my body. And its being my body consists in its having a certain relation, perhaps a causal one, to the subject of my mental states. This leads naturally to the conclusion that I, the subject of my mental states, am something else--perhaps a mental substance. My physical states are only derivitavely mine, since they are states of a body which is mine in virtue of being related in the appropriate way to my psychological states. But this is possible only if those psychological states are mine in an original,and not merely derivative,sense; therefore <u>their</u> subject cannot be the body which is derivatively mine.(1)

This objection seems, prima facie, to be a very strong one against physicalism. However, as Nagel himself goes on to point out, this strong intuition of their being an essential subject of experience, an essential 'I', is not accomodated by any other theories including dualism. The same argument can be run against a mental 'I' as a physical 'I'. My psychological states are states of me.

> It can be shown that if we follow out this argument, it will provide us with equally strong reasons for rejecting any view which identifies the subject of psychological states with a substance and construes the states as attributes of that substance. A non-corporeal substance seems safe only because, in retreating from the physical substance as a candidate for the self, we are so much

occupied with finding a subject whose states are originally, and not just derivatively mine--one to which the physical body can be related in a way which expresses how it can be mine--that we simply postulate such a subject without asking ourselves whether the same objections will not apply to it as well: whether indeed any substance can possibly meet the requirement that its states be underivatively mine.(2)

Since our intuition that there is an essential non-derivative subject of experience cannot be accomodated by either a physicalist or non-physicalist theory, it cannot be sustained as reason to accept dualism over physicalism. My motivation for adopting physicalism, then, is based not on a belief in the merits of any particular physicalist theory, or out of a respect for science, but in a rejection of non-materialist theories. So I am going to approach the problem as a physicalist. And the problem, once again, is of accomodating conscious mental experience within a physicalist framework.

Token physicalism overcomes one of the problems that Smart faced with his type identity theory. In order for Smart's theory to be true it would have to be the case that for each occurrence of a type of mental event there would occur some corresponding type of physical event. This kind of scenario is avoided by the token physicalist as he or she claims only that for each occurence of a type of mental event there occurs some physical event. He or she doesn't predict that a type of physical event will correspond with the type of mental event. But the type

identity theory faced another kind of problem that the token physicalist theory does not overcome. It was argued that while Smart offered a theory of the identity of events he failed to account for the properties of mental events. He failed to account for the fact that the event 'pain' feels painful or the fact that in the event of sensing a yellow after image one senses yellow. Mental events, it was argued, have phenomenal properties. Events like c-fibres firing don't. This objection is not taken care of simply by adopting the token physicalist premise. I think, however, that it can be met. I will first introduce and illustrate a token identity statement and then I will attempt to defend the statement against the charge of unaccountability of properties or content. Finally, I will consider some other objections that may be raised.

Working with the assumption that we are not made up of two basic kinds of stuff, and that the one kind of stuff that we are made of is physical, I believe that the physicalist framework can accomodate mental experience by adopting the following identity statement which was proposed by Thomas Nagel. A person's having a sensation is identical to his body being in a certain physical state or undergoing a physical process. "Notice that both terms of this identity are of the same logical type, namely (to put it in neutral terminology) a subject's possessing a

certain attribute. The subjects are the person and his body (not his brain) and the attributes are psychological conditions, happenings, and so forth, and the physical ones."(3)

To illustrate the kind of identity being claimed let's consider the following questions. How do we give the physical correlate of being happy or believing in God or wishing it was Friday? We don't. We can't. Asking the question in this way presupposes that there will be a single physical description matching each one of these states. The question ignores the fact that these states are states of subjects. Wishing it was Friday isn't an event. Someone's wishing it was Friday is an event. And Mary's wishing it was Friday is a different event from Jane's wishing it was Friday. Furthermore, Mary's wishing it was Friday on Monday is a different event from Mary's wishing it was Friday on Wednesday. The more promising question to ask is how do we give a physical correlate of Mary's wishing it was Friday now? According to our identity statement a person's having a mental event is identical to that person's body undergoing a physical process. Thus, Mary's wishing it was Friday now is identical to Mary's body undergoing a physical process.

Let's consider an analogous example. How do we give the physical correlate of a bridge's being unsafe or a couch being comfortable or a curve in the road being tricky to manuvere?(4) We can't. Since every bridge is

different and different bridges will be unsafe for different reasons there will not be a type physical description matching the type description of 'unsafe'. However, since each particular bridge is identical to a physical description of that bridge, a particular unsafe bridge will be identical to a physical description of that bridge. There will not be a type physical description of the type psychological description of wishing it was Friday, but for each token of that type psychological event, there will be a physical event. A person wishing it was Friday will be identical to a physical description of that person at the time she is wishing it was Friday just as an unsafe bridge will be identical to a physical description of that bridge.

To take the analogy a step further, once we've got the particular bridge that is unsafe, and the particular person that is wishing it was Friday we can investigate the process that that person's body is undergoing, or the physical changes between the bridge when it was safe and now that it is unsafe. We could discover that a particular bridge's being unsafe is identical to that particular bridge's having a cracked foundation. It seems unlikely, however, that we will be able to specify so clearly the process a person's body is undergoing while she is wishing it was Friday. But from what we already know about the body we know it will be a brain process and the more we learn about neurophysiology, the closer we will come to

specifying the process. And while wishing it was Friday is a very specific mental event, some mental events such as being happy or sad or in pain are in need of further psychological clarification. That is, we need to be able to specify the psychological states more adequately and more discretely in order to specify the neurological states more adequately and discretely.

But even if we can specify a particular state of a particular person, and that state is characterized psychologically as state x, and is identical to physcial state y in that person, it seems unlikely that state x will be identical to state y in another person. This is true at least for most intentional mental states because the causes of these states will vary significantly between persons and will vary between times even for the same person. For non-intentional states, sensations, we will probably find more systematicity between persons and within persons between times because the causes of pain, for example, are more uniform.(5)

I turn now to the most difficult problem facing the physicalist, the problem of properties or content. Even if there is no type/type identity between mental events and physical events an identity between a mental event and some physical event is being claimed and, so the objection runs, mental events have content or mental properties while physical events do not. It seems to me that the

properties problem can only arise if certain assumptions are made at the outset. We must assume that mental events can be seperated from their properties and that they can be considered without refrence to a subject. Smart and others have made these assumptions. In order for Smart to believe that he had identified mental events with physical events but mental properties were 'left out' and thus required seperate treatment, he must have assumed that events and properties could be seperated. And to speak of pain rather than of someone's having a pain as the mental event we are concerned with is to assume an objective nature of pain. It seems to me that both these assumptions are misleading. An event unaccompanied by any phenomenal properties wouldn't seem to be a mental event at all. Pain unaccompanied by the property of painfulness would simply be a non-conscious physical event. And for a pain to exist is for someone to have it so it shouldn't be seperated from the subject.

There are not two sorts of mental phenomena that the physicalist must accomodate--events and properties. Rather, a mental event is defined or specified by mental properties. Any attempt to identify a mental event with a physical event where the mental event is considered as distinct from its properties (such as the attempt made by J.J.C. Smart) is doomed to fail because a mental event without phenomenal properties is not really a <u>mental</u> event at all. The problem of accounting for the phenomenal

properties of mental events was faced by Smart because he began by attempting to identify events as distinct from their properties. Events and properties were thus two aspects of our mental lives that the identity theorist needed to reconcile with the physicalist picture. Mental states, processes, events, properties and entities have all been adopted at some point or another as the problem that the physicalist must accomodate. It seems to me that it doesn't matter how we label the problem as long as we recognize it to be a problem about conscious experience. What needs to be recognized is that in whatever terms we use to describe mental experience we are describing one phenomenon. We are talking about the same thing whether we talk about it as a state, event, process or property. I propose to talk about conscious experience as an event and to treat what we call properties as a description or specification of that event rather than as something in addition to it.

The events we are concerned with are conscious sensing, percieving or thinking. A necessary condition for the existence of such events is a conscious subject. Following from the distinction between mental events and properties is the separation of mental events from subjects. While the property of feeling pain can't exist without a subject, if we can separate this property from the event, the event can be considered without considering the subject. So we get an objective kind of event like a

c-fibre firing. And we get the kind of identity statement that Smart offers, i.e., pain becomes identical to c-fibres firing. And then, of course, we're back to the problem of properties. If, however, we begin by recognizing the event to be indistinguishable from its properties, we simply cannot consider the event without the subject.

I think that this is very important for two reasons. First of all, I think that the objective nature of the Smart identity statement is, in itself, a good reason for rejecting it. For a pain to exist is for someone to have it. Pain is inextricably tied to a subject. C-fibre firings don't seem to be. So while we have a subject as a necessary condition on one side of the identity statement it doesn't appear to be a necessary condition on the other side. Of course, in order for there to exist c-fibre firings there must exist a brain. But unless we also identify conscious subjects with brains we still have a conscious subject on one side and not the other. If Smart hadn't distinguished between events and properties he wouldn't have seperated the physical event from the subject. The second reason that the inclusion of the subject in the identity statement is so important is because subjects of experience are what the mind/body problem is all about. Rather than attempting to identify mental events with physical events and then instantiating this event in a subject, we should be trying to identify

the subject's mental experience with that subject's physical experience. The mind/body problem isn't a problem about the nature of events out in the world. It is a problem about the nature of events undergone by a conscious subject. The question is whether the nature of some of those events requires that we, as subjects, are made of two kinds of stuff, mind stuff and matter stuff, or whether we can be made of just matter. For these reasons any identity statement that treats mental events as existing distinct from their properties and which, following from this distinction, seperates mental events from subjects, must be rejected.

The central role of the subject is captured by the identity statement I am supporting. The identity proposed is between a subject's having a pain, for example, and his body's undergoing a physical process. When we realize the central role of the subject and the fact that a mental event is not an objective kind of event that exists in and of itself, the properties problem doesn't arise. Thoughts or sensations don't have properties in the ordinary sense because they don't exist in and of themselves. They exist only insofar as people have them. The event, the belief that p, or the event,pain, do not have the property of being p or being painful. The event is a subject's experienceing pain or p. That is, although we speak of a pain as being sharp or a belief as being the belief that p, my having a pain isn't sharp and my believing that p

isn't p. Since we speak of pains as being sharp we are mislead to believe that there is some mental event or entity 'pain' in addition to the feeling of painfulness. When we speak of mental properties we must remember that these properties are not something over and above the event. They are descriptions or ways of specifying the event. Now since my having pain isn't painful it is no mystery that my body undergoing a certain brain process isn't painful. Nagel offers a more vivd illustration of this point "Although I may have a visual sense impression whose attributes of form and colour correspond closely to those which characterize the "Mona Lisa" my <u>having</u> the sense impression does not possess those attributes, and it is therefore no cause to worry that nothing in my brain looks like the "Mona Lisa""(6)

If we construe mental events as persons having experiences of such and such sorts rather than as the experiences in themselves the properties problem doesn't apply. While I believe this to be the right way of construing mental events I also feel that the manner in which this construal of mental events avoids the properties problem isn't completely satisfactory. But this feeling is no longer a feeling of dissatisfaction over the issue of mental properties. It is no longer a question of how we can identitfy mental properties with physical properties. The question now is, 'How can it be that we, as purely physical beings, have experiences of a

phenomenal nature?'. How is it that we can feel pain or have yellow after images or thoughts that p? In other words, how can it be that we are conscious? An answer to this question is not to be found in the identity statement I am considering. But that doesn't mean that the identity statement is false or even incomplete. We are right in feeling that something has been left out of the picture by this identity statement. But we would be wrong in believing that this lack of explanation of consciousness precludes the identity statement in question from offering a solution to the mind/body problem. There is a difference between showing how something can be the case and that it is the case. Showing how it is that purely physical beings are conscious would be to explain consciousness while showing that purely physical beings are conscious would be to accomodate consciousness. In achieving this later task we would be solving the mind/body problem as we would no longer have any reason for positing a mind or soul or mental substance in addition to our bodies.

While the biggest obstacle to establishing a mind/body identity has been the problem of properties, showing this concern to be misplaced doesn't leave us completely home free. In addition to the problem of properties, there are two other objections that have traditionally been levied against the physicalist. The first concerns location. It is argued that while physical

events can be spatially located mental events have no location. On the view of mental events that I have offered here,however, pain is not an event but my having pain is an event. The event is located, then, wherever I am located. That is, the mental event has been located as best as it can be when we locate the subject undergoing the event. And this should be no surprise since the same is true of physical events. "...we locate events by locating the particulars or things that "undergo" them. Something explodes in an explosion, and the explosion is located where the thing that explodes is located ; when there is a fire, something burns, and the fire is where the burning thing is; and, similarly, a death takes place where the dying man is located. Particulars are located first; events and states are located relatively to particulars."(7) If my having a pain is identical to my body undergoing a certain process, then the mental event and the physical event are located in the same place, wherever I (and my body) happen to be.

The second objection facing the physicalist concerns the issue of the privacy or subjectivity of mental events. There are two aspects to this objection. Firstly, while it is impossible for me to be in pain and not know it, it's possible for a bodily process to take place and me not know it. Second, you can observe my bodily states--they are suseptable to public viewing-- but you can't observe my mental states. As for the second aspect of this

objection, if the identity theory is right, we will be able to observe mental events. If my having a belief or a sensation is identical to my body undergoing a physical process then observing my body undergoing this process will be observing my having a belief or sensation. Of course, since intentional mental events are unlikely to correspond to any generalized physical process, we won't be able to tell that we are observing my having the belief that p ot the desire that q. Perhaps we will be able to tell for the more generalizable states such as pain. This is an empirical question. Regardless, however, of whether or not we can tell that we are observing my having the belief that p, if we are observing the right physical process that my body is undergoing corresponding to my having the belief that p, then we are observing my having the belief that p.

Returning now to the first aspect of this objection, it seems to me to amount to no more than the claim that mental events are only contingently, rather than necessarily, identical to physical events. And that my believing that p is contingently identical to my body undergoing process x implies that I can know about the one without knowing about the other. I can know I'm in pain without knowing that my c-fibres are firing. That I necessarily know that I am in pain is true in the same way that 'the morning star is the Morning star' is true. And that 'the Morning star is identical to the Evening star'

is true in the same way that my having a pain is identical to my body undergoing physical process x.

At the begining of this chapter I claimed that I would pursue the question of whether or not we could accomodate conscious mental experience within a physicalist framework. I have discussed why I chose to approach the problem as physicalist and why I believe the mind/body problem to be a problem of accomodation rather than explanation. I would now like to turn to the issue of why I have limited my discussion to conscious rather than conscious and unconscious mental events. I have done this because I don't believe that unconscious mental events have anything to do with the mind/body problem. What motivates us to believe that we are something more than our bodies is the fact that we consciously experience and think. Unconscious motivations, beliefs and desires are primarily theoretical constructs psychologists have posited in order to better understand human behavior. If we found that we could not accomodate our conscious experiences within a physicalist framework and we were forced to conclude that indeed there are two ontological systems in the universe, it would then become a question as to which system unconscious belief, desires and so forth, belong to. If, however, conscious experience <u>can</u> be accomodated, there would be no reason to believe that unconscious mental events couldn't be. My having a pain or consciously believing that p both seem a certain way to

me. But an unconscious mental event doesn't seem any way at all to me. The conscious experience of pain, because it seems a certain way to us, also seems to be an event outside the physical realm of events If events that seem to us to be fundamentally non-physical can be fit into the physicalist picture it seems to me that there is no question that unconscious mental events can also be fit into the picture. Since it is the phenomenal nature of some mental events that provokes us to believe that we are something more than our bodies, in showing that this phenoenal experience can be accomodated, we no longer have any provocation to hold a dualistic view.

We are solely physical beings and we are conscious. It seems to me that neither of these claims can be denied. I have attempted in this chapter to show that we are not forced to deny one or the other of these claims; that the central objections to physicalism--properties, location and subjectivity--can be met. I have not attempted to explain or dispell the mystery of consciousness. I have instead attempted to show that there are no reasons for not taking this mystery to be a mystery about certain physical entities. The solution to the mind/body problem that I have attempted to defend is, thus, a solution that admits the mystery of consciousness, but nevertheless views it as a mystery about certain physical entities.

## Notes

1)Nagel, Thomas, "Physicalism", in The Mind/Brain Identity Theory, C.V. Borst, (ed.), St.Martin's Press, New York, 1975, p.227

2)Ibid, p.227

3)Ibid, p.216

4)The bridge example is Nagel's.

5)Nagel also makes this point

6)Kim, Jaegwon, "On the Psycho-Physical Identity Theory", American Philosophical Quarterly, III, 3, July 1966, p.231

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2) Block, N., Fodor, J., "What Psychological States Are Not", Philosophical Review, LXXXJ, 1972, pp.159-181

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13) Nagel, Thomas, "Physicalism", The Philosophical Review, LXXIV, 3, July 1965, pp.339-356

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