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Introduction

My interest in this topic is of long standing. It goes back to the time when as a student (of Engineering, as it happens) in Melbourne I first encountered the works of Schopenhauer. In particular, I remember the impact of his profound and original observations concerning the very special epistemological relation in which a man stands to the active movements of his own body ('the philosophical thought *par excellence*', Schopenhauer called it). Since that time, profiting above all from the ideas of Wittgenstein, but also of Anscombe and Hampshire and especially of recent years Donald Davidson, I have continued to think about this question and about the will and the body more generally. What follows in this work is a statement of what might be called the natural history of philosophical thought about the will. In any case it sets out the path my own speculations have followed. And it does so roughly in the order in which they occurred.

My concern is for the most part with bodily rather than mental willing. That explains why I have been drawn into an investigation of the several constituent problems of the mind–body problem. It is I think impossible to say much of value about bodily action if one leaves these issues unexamined. And that accounts to a degree for the length of this work. For it seems that a satisfactory answer to absolutely any philosophical question requires that one provide some sort of answer to a set of related other questions. Thus, a very general account of the mind–body relation is offered in the pages that follow. But as well as this, for reasons which I shall in due course expound, I have felt the need to provide a theory of the sensation, of sense-perception, of consciousness, of the psychological, indeed of the mind itself.

A word about the mind–body problem. Contemporary materialism has accustomed us to think of this in terms of the question: Are mind and body one and the same thing? The operative domain is ontology, and the central concept identity. Yet the great importance of this problem has tended to blind us to certain other issues. For example, the question of how we make epistemological contact with our own bodies, and the character of

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that unique relation. Or the problem of 'ontological descent', of intelligibly relating such ontologically diverse and causally linked phenomena as intentions and mere bodily movements. And as well as these, what might perhaps be termed 'the body to mind problem', by which I mean the problem of providing *such* a characterisation of the mind as will show that it is intrinsically fitted to belong to what is endowed with a body – an odd and rather neglected question. Each of these three questions looms large in the text. The first or epistemological issue provides the subject matter of Part II of the work, while significant slices of Parts III and IV are given over to the remaining two problems.

These particular questions, while directly impinging on the theme of bodily action, lead inevitably into others. Thus, how could one understand the epistemological relation that holds between an animal and the material object that is its own body, if one did not know how it managed through its senses to make epistemological contact with other material objects? In short, I need a theory of sense-perception. The theory which for a variety of reason recommends itself to me is representational in type, where the representational medium is *sensation* in all cases but touch (where it is the spatial properties of active bodily movements), and in monocular visual perception (at least) is visual sensation arrayed in *two-dimensional* body-relative physical space. I say those sensations are set in two rather than three dimensions because, even though all sensations must have a last cause that is purely physical and non-psychological, two indistinguishable (monocular) visual sensuous expanses could be generating two quite different though veridical visual depth experiences, purely as a result of the causal efficacy of extra-visual mental factors like belief or previous experience. Of course, this theory depends upon a demonstration of the reality of visual sensations; yet psycho-physical causal considerations, and an examination of the concepts of sensation and the attention, coupled with the existence of visual illusions, make that not all that hard to come by. And it requires us to construe visual hallucinatory and dream visual experience as non-representational phenomena, since visual sensations do not usually represent the objects of such experience. But that, too, is no serious difficulty: for neither experience is a *visual* experience, being instead episodes in the *visual imagination* that are of such a kind that necessarily and delusorily they seem at the time to their owner indistinguishable from visual experiences. Dream and hallucinatory visual experience, in contrast with mental imagery, are precisely what happens in the visual imagination when the sense of reality is not all that it might be. Being weakened in this vital respect, we have merely to contact the imaginative realm to lose ourselves in it. Thus, whatever Descartes

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may have believed, these experiences are *different experiences* from visual experiences, veridical or otherwise. So much by way of justification for the somewhat imperialistic manner in which my topic invades the territory of its neighbours.

I LIFE

Why the topic of action? Why not consciousness or emotion? Certainly, it has been 'in the air' for some time. One has merely to reflect on the existence of movements as disparate as pragmatism, behaviourism, existentialism, to realise that there must be something special about action so far as our age is concerned. It seems that in deciding to philosophise about this phenomenon, one does something more than pick at random out of a hat. And can there be anything more dispiriting than the idea of such a 'philosophical lucky dip'? – suggesting as it does that the mind is a mere concatenation of loosely knit items, whereas we know that it is a unity that of its very nature aspires to even greater unity – and that hierarchies of importance, let alone positions of absolute pre-eminence, cannot conceivably reign in the mind – whereas it seems certain that they do. Then there are grounds for thinking, not merely that action locks tightly into the edifice of the mind, but that it is endowed with just such a pre-eminence. In short, the fashion in this topic is almost certainly more than mere fashion. This topic has I believe a particular appeal for particularly good reasons. Doubtless it is in some way close to the 'nerve of the age'.

Then how does it come about that action should matter so at this moment? In the seventeenth century it was above all consciousness and experience, aided and abetted by reason: a spiritual entity endeavouring to make perfect cognitive contact with the physical world in which its body was situated, choosing as its point of departure a state of mind. Today this interests us less. Why? Well, four centuries of triumphant advance by the rock-bottom science of physics cannot but leave some mark on philosophy. When one can predict the wavelength of a spectrum line to eight decimal places, it is rather more difficult to believe that the underlying reality of everything is spiritual, e.g. an immaterial Deity. After all, should a Deity be *so* fastidious? In any case, the Deity of the seventeenth century, reduced to apparent inaction by the law-regulated world disclosed by physics, Spectator-God doomed to almost total inertia by His seemingly autonomous creation, and somewhat as the domain of the putative magical inevitably retreats before the advance of crafts, faded somewhat. The brilliantly successful Promethean raid upon the Divine Laboratory

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laid bare the apparent self-sufficiency of nature and tended to depose the Deity (rightly or wrongly, whether by killing or humiliation, whether temporarily or permanently, in the minds of Europeans). Now metaphysics of The World and metaphysics of Man usually move in parallel (as when the Noumenon finds itself matched by the Noumenal Self). Accordingly, this shift in the metaphysics of Nature appeared at the same time as a new metaphysics of Man. If all that exists is a physical world with a nature of its own, surely man must be a similar sort of something. Thus, naturalistic aspects of human nature, as one might say, figured increasingly in theories of human nature; while in harmony with the fading away of a Mind that stood apart from Nature, the process of naturalisation spread without limit. Above all, the *mind* became naturalised.

For is it not true of the mind that it is, not merely 'ticking over' in time, not merely consuming and generating energy, but – alive? Yet what does that mean? Doubtless it is a stipulation, albeit a stipulation that is extremely natural and compelling. Then I suggest we must mean something more than that the mind plays its functional part in a living organism. That after all would be true of an artefact organ like a mechanical heart. Yet whereas artefacts are what essentially they are purely because of relational properties, it would be an error to suppose of psychological items that they are what minimally (i.e. under minimally ambitious descriptions) and essentially they are purely because of relational properties. For example, if they are experiences, and there is *something that it is like* to have them, a relational analysis is plainly out of the question. In that special sense, they are what they are because of *how* they are, or as one might say *intrinsically*. Even though pains and images possess necessary causal properties, it cannot be said they are pains and images through possessing those traits. Two artefacts that were in themselves indistinguishable might be endowed with diverse essences, but nothing could be in itself experientially indistinguishable from pain or image without being pain or image. These items wear their heart upon their sleeve: they give their 'all' in experience, have no depth, no hidden or other side. Accordingly, they cannot appear in other worlds in different guise. What we now call 'redness' could not in another world reappear as what we now call 'greenness'. What kind of identity would these properties have otherwise? In speaking of redness, we know *what* we are talking about. And not merely *which* 'what'. We know *what* 'what'. We have come to the end of that particular road.

In short, a great number of psychological phenomena are both intrinsically and essentially what minimally they are. In the most powerful degree they are what they are in and of themselves. Then wherever such items

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occur in natural objects, those natural objects are living and the psychological phenomena manifest that vital condition. More, it seems next to certain that psychological items are unique to life. And so if anything has a right to be termed a 'vital phenomenon', these phenomena have. Indeed, as the only natural material objects apart from mere chunks and rudimentary objects (rocks, planets, meteorites, crystals, etc.) are living objects – which suggests the possibility of an *a priori* definition of Life as the most general type of all natural material objects that are that and significantly more: that is, that Life is necessarily *the* first ontological development amidst natural material objects – so it may be that the only necessarily vital phenomena apart from coming-to-life (and departing-from-life?) are psychological phenomena. After all, psychologicality is the next great ontological shift after, and on the necessary basis of, the very first ontological development, viz. Life.

Then what do we mean in saying of the mind that it is alive? But what sort of a thing *is* the mind? The mind *consists* and *exclusively* of the systematically and causally interrelated phenomena of type psychological that occur in some object. These phenomena populate the one enduring and mutating mind as the elements of a particular system people that system. Accordingly, if the mind is an entity, it is of the type *particular system*, rather as a book or painting are particular systems. Then is it an entity? It would seem that it is. But hardly a substantival entity, seeing it is constituted exclusively out of items that are of necessity dependent upon the existence of its owner. This non-substantival system-entity is necessarily possessed by some (substantival) being that is in turn necessarily possessed of a (substantival) body-object with which it is non-identical and from which it is non-distinct. Yet surely only substantival entities like animals or cells can be alive? Indeed, surely only material objects can be alive? This is, I think, true. It must be admitted that the mind is not the sort of thing that can, literally speaking, be alive or dead. But it would be a mistake to leave matters at that. For there is an extremely natural and illuminating stipulative sense in which the mind can be said to be alive: namely, in that it is exclusively constituted out of items that are, in the sense explained, *vital phenomena*, and in all probability essentially vital phenomena. An entity that is a system exclusively built out of phenomena that essentially manifest the life of their living owner, has one would suppose some sort of a right to be designated 'alive'. This is the justification of the stipulation.

Indeed, there are reasons for thinking that the relation between mind and life is even more intimate than the above would suggest, and that in consequence an even stronger stipulation is possible. I will try to explain

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this by delimiting some of the fundamental relations holding between a man – and his mind – and his body – and that particular state of the organism that is its being *alive.* Thus, just as the matter of a man is the matter of his body, so the life of a man is the life of his body; for the death of one *is* the death of the other. Then while the place of the death of the body is that of the body, it necessarily encompasses the place of the organ of the mind, so that the brain must be the place of the events essential to the man's death. Therefore while the place of the life of the body is that of the body, the brain must be the place of the states essential to the life of the man. Thus, the brain's life must be the essential part of the life of the man. Then since the life of the mind must be that of the brain, the mind's life must be the essential part of the life of the man – though not of course in opposition to that of brain or body. The life of the mind, which is that of the organ whose function it is to support a mind, is the essential part of the life of man and indeed of body too. That is, the state that ensures the possibility of psychological items in some man is the essential part of the state of being alive, both in that being and in its body. Now such a structural situation is unique to animality. In no other form of life is there such a 'life centre' or 'spirit'. Thus, the death of a plant is a phenomenon that is no more localisable than the plant itself, and this doubtless reflects the fact that, whereas some existent plants are dead, no existent animal is anything but alive. Death for a plant consists in the departure of a specific state from a particular entity; and the same holds of the death of animal bodies; yet this last event, which is also the death of the animal, consists in the animal's transition from existence to non-existence. This may appear a trifle paradoxical. For an event that is the change in one entity from one state to its absence, is the event that is the change from existence to non-existence of another entity. What is change *in* one thing, is the movement *out of existence* of another.

But if the mind is alive, it must be able to die. Yet we know that, sick as a mind can get, *it cannot die of its own ailments!* Who ever heard of a man's mind dying from schizophrenia? If it could, then so too could he and his body! How could a body die of a mind's illness? Who ever heard of a man dying of schizophrenia? While melancholia can kill, it can do so only indirectly through causing physical illness or through enlisting the aid of the self-slaying hand of the melancholic. The mind so to say cannot plunge the dagger into itself. Then perhaps the mind is not alive after all? It is, I think, in the sense indicated, certainly alive. Indeed, the relations between man, mind, body, brain, life, delineated above, are such that we can now give an even stronger and more compelling sense to 'the mind's life'.

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Thus, 'the mind's life' must mean the state which ensures the possibility of psychological vital items in the animal. So that 'the death of the mind' must be, the event that is the loss of 'the mind's life', and therefore the event that is the necessarily irreversible loss of the possibility of psychological vital items in the animal. Whereupon 'the mind cannot die of its own ailments' must mean that necessarily the explanation of the fact that no psychological vital item necessarily can ever occur again in some animal, must be physical non-psychological. The reason for this last being, that the death of the mind encompasses all events essential to the death of the body, and the mind depends for its existence upon the body as the body does not on the mind. After all, the one outsurvives the other. Then these facts should act as a curb to certain varieties of Idealism. And they prompt me to ask the following question of those who accept the logical possibility of disembodied existence: Are the hypothetical disembodied mental processes to be thought of as occurring in a dead mind? (A grim place! Presumably for terrible events!) For has not the mind of necessity died along with the man and body? But how can a dead mind think? Indeed, how can one whose mind has died so much as exist in any form whatever, to engage in thinking? Then does not the fact that some philosophers have entertained the logical possibility of a person and mind surviving bodily (*sic*) death, show that the bad old ideas linger, whereby the life of the mind, though not that of the body, and in despite of hollow expressions like 'eternal life', is not really to be taken seriously; indeed, where the human mind is thought of as akin to the mind of an angel or Deity, as the scene of rational events that in themselves give no sign of occurring in something that is alive: sheer instantiations in time of rational relations! As if bodily phenomena were part of a life process, but mental phenomena something altogether else. Here we have a sort of vitalist dualism. While the psychologisation of logic is a grave error, the logicisation of psychology is no less.

II NINETEENTH-CENTURY 'WILL'

The prevailing metaphysical conceptions of human nature in nineteenth-century European thought tended on the whole to involve the assumption that the mind, no less than the body, is a living phenomenon. This was for example an unquestioned tenet for Freud, who charted the development of the mind of the entire human species as one might the growth of a plant, delineating 'phases' in which basic mental functions (like internalisation) were modelled upon rudimentary bodily functions (like feeding), that were simultaneously stages in the development of non-'narcissist'

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or properly realistic 'object relations'. Then the process of naturalisation, which is not as such one of reduction and might instead be an enlargement or complexification, leads to a highlighting of the phenomenon of *desire*. For naturalisation inevitably leads one's theory back into the past of the mind, and desire runs deep in the human mind (and deeper far than that relatively late development, *reason*). Consonant with the vastly enlarged powers over nature that developed with the application of physics to the world, it seemed to many in the nineteenth century that the human mind harboured deep and natural desire-like forces ('Will', so called) comparable to the forces that were being tapped in the environment 'without'. Now 'Will' is often construed either as 'impulsive act urge' or else as 'striving' – the latter phenomenon being uniquely the expression-effect of the former: a kinship that explains the fluctuation in the sense of the word. And my concern is mostly with 'striving' will. Yet precisely because of that kinship I shall not always press the distinction. For it is natural to think of 'the will' less differentially as the phenomenon of *action force* in the mind: a mental force that is exerted *on* (as impulsive act-urge) and *by* (as striving) its owner. After all, since the force in striving derives *in toto* from the impulsive urge that finds expression therein, it is perhaps the one quota of mental energy in different forms. Now 'the will' is in either of these senses generally speaking an ego-affirmative phenomenon: that is, it is manifestative of the distinctive individual personality with its distinctive systems of beliefs, desires, and values. Meanwhile there is a third and broader sense of 'will' which, while retaining the link with mental force, sheds that with individuality; and here I mean, a natural and instinctive force towards life, whether of individual identity or individual life or even species. This is the broad variety of 'will' already noted above. Then I think it is in some such sense that 'will' came to assume a position of increasing importance in the increasingly naturalistic conception of the mind that developed alongside man's gathering power over nature. For these latter condition one another. As a new country can put one in touch with unsuspected sides of one's nature – (say) one's 'Russia of the soul' – so with this new relation to the environment. A door opened, as one might say. A fundamental truth about human nature came to light that could be revealed only when man's concrete relations with the world had altered in a certain fundamental respect.

Thus, at this particular point in history scientific advance released an additional human potential: the power to transform the natural scene and thereby create a sort of world of one's own – apparently without limit. And so the native forces disclosed within the mind, aided by the guiding light of reason, seemed to promise to elevate mankind into a position from which

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it might preside from a height over the rest of nature. While recognising a kinship between self and nature, nineteenth-century (European, middle-class, etc.) man tended to see himself as rising above the natural domain: one foot in both worlds, so to say; and with the secret aspiration of elevating himself altogether out of the native animal condition. Rather as in the seventeenth century the Deity presided over the World and Mind over Body, so in many ways did these nineteenth-century men appear in their own eyes to relate to nature. Thus, the inegalities of the old order, which dies hard, and tends unconsciously to be repeated by its 'liberating' successors, were it seems projected in novel form, and the love affair with nature, so blissful in the early nineteenth century, because increasingly contaminated with power concerns. Now such an exploitative relation to nature paradoxically tended to *de-naturalise* as never before. Standing over the nature that he had once idealised, and over the most native stratum in his own natural nature that had come to the fore in that relation, self-deceptively conceiving of himself as 'part of nature – and yet not', the Victorians grew 'out of touch' with the primitive and ancient part of the mind as never before. A certain unreality, which finds its philosophy in the Absolute Idealism of Bradley, and is audible in Wagner's swan-song 'Parsifal', that great hymn to sickness, as well as in the music of Bruckner and others, followed in the wake of this development. In this way there was effected a serious polarisation of human nature, in which intellect and fine feeling were impotent for loss of instinct (think of the suffering Hamlets of that day, J. Alfred Prufrock and Petroushka) and instinct brutish and coarse for loss of fine feeling (Apeneck Sweeney, The Moor). One has merely to remember the dramatic switch in the career of Picasso, from the etiolated decadence of the Blue and Rose periods to the first harsh works under the influence of African Art, or the strange opposition at the same time between the rarefied aestheticism of much of the literature (early Yeats, Huysmans, etc.) and the raw vitality of the painting of the Fauves (early Matisse, Vlaminck, etc.) to see that the natural unity between 'higher' and 'lower' parts of the human mind was at this historical juncture seriously disrupted. This was after all the social scene that threw up those extremely florid hysterical phenomena from which Freud managed to fashion a concept that was peculiarly appropriate to the age, viz. Repression.

In short, as the nineteenth century moved towards its close, the driving motives behind the creation of a limitlessly proliferating world of artefacts emerged as increasingly unwholesome. The earlier simple idealisation of the natural human psyche seemed decidely untenable, and so did the related idea that social misery stemmed exclusively from tyrannical and unnatural

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forces. All this signalled the demise of romanticism. An even broader sense of 'Will' seemed called for that would accommodate, not merely deep and native life-promoting mental drives, but equally deep and natural destructive and self-destructive forces. 'The will' as such could therefore hardly any longer be idealised, and natural illness and even natural evil tended to appear in naturalised conceptions of the human mind. Precisely this need for a further enlargement in the sense of 'Will', this unmistakable clouding over of once azure skies, is I suggest the movement out of and beyond romanticism. 'We are all ill', said Freud, somewhat as other ages have said that 'we are all sinners', at a time when the phenomenon of disease seemed to be of particular interest to Europeans. And it is worth remembering that Freudian theory set out in the 1890s from the recognition of psychic disease entities that Freud had learned from Charcot in Paris in 1885. Indeed, after a brief flirtation with the idealisation of the psychic natural, in which he supposed that neurotic misery derived entirely from civilisation and repression (the neurotic in himself being at worst merely 'avid'), Freud soon encountered 'original cruelty' (in obsessionals) and in thereapeutic recalcitrance, and this movement in theory culminated in 1920 with the postulation of the Death Instinct and in 1925 with the centralisation of the phenomenon of *anxiety*. The contradictory forces in the mind, the 'variance of the will with itself' (Schopenhauer), denied idealistically by the early romantics and self-deceptively by the Victorians, returned with a vengeance. In a much more serious sense it became evident that human beings are, in entirety and with entirely fallible character, things of nature through and through. Such is the history of 'The Will' as conceived in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

(As an aside I would point out that, concerning the nature of evil, Beethoven was in a sense in advance of his time; he had no illusions on the matter; his intelligence and depth of nature shielded him from a mythology that was taking wing. Thus, the Satan of the early romantics was frequently conceived as a sort of misanthropic Byronic rebel, with the ruins of nobility within. For example, Puccini gave to Scarpia 'a song to sing', and Scarpia expressed his sentiments in music of great style and some beauty. By contrast, the only song Beethoven was prepared to grant Don Pizarro was a raging chaos, a wind-tunnel of hatred, a sort of 'form of the bad'. In 1930 Freud marvelled, looking back at his earlier work, that he could at one time have disbelieved in the existence of a 'non-libidinal cruelty'. What libidinality went into the creation of the Holocaust or Gulag?)

In sum. Since the development and application of physics, mankind tended to see itself not merely as a reasoning spiritual entity akin to the

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