

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Opinions

Scientific Conclusions:

I consider my most important result, (though you may think this strange), the *Naturalist* one: i.e. that "mind" is the (reduced) "concept" of the brain!¹ I hold that it is both legitimate and important within the (reinterpreted) Naturalist framework and leads to definite and practical empiric lines of research. That Naturalism is itself thereby relativized detracts neither from its utility nor from its importance -no more than did the introduction of relativity or indeterminacy into modern physics lessen *its* viability or importance. Rather, it produced profound and immediate practical results. Naive realism is a biological and behavioral algorithm superb for normal life, and Naturalism, its natural extrapolation, is valuable beyond measure - as well it should be under my hypotheses. It is to the ultimate empirical results, (or not), of my thesis, however and finally, that I will equate its ultimate value.

Devil's Advocate:

Though I have argued against our knowledge of externality, and for a schematic organization of process, *could* not our external, metaphysical world *still* be like the objects of our cognition. Of course it could! The possibility is suggested in my conception of interface. Since it implicitly defines *our* objects within, conceivably it might, as well, define the "objects" of external reality without! But this is a profession of extreme faith, and not of science.²

"If anyone adopts such a belief, he or she does it as a leap of faith. To make such a leap does not make us *ipso facto* irrational; but we should be

¹ Alternatively, it is the brain's rule of ontogenic coupling

² It is a question of bounds and limits again. Or, more simply, of the distinction between an upper bound and a *least* upper bound. Reality clearly sets definite upper bounds to (evolutionary) development, but does it convey to the organism a *least* upper bound, (which would be defining)? The former encompasses (raw) "structural coupling", but the latter would be necessary for "*congruent* structural coupling". It is an assumption equivalent to the "parallel postulate", you see!

able to live in the light of day, where our decisions are acknowledged and avowed as our own, and not disguised as the compulsion of reason."¹

I, however, do not choose to, (nor do I have to), make such a leap of faith. I propose that what we have is a viable, (and truly real!), working model that simply "does the job", i.e. it is at least compatible, and probably beneficial² vis a vis absolute externality.

Come, isn't it the height of arrogance to presume, (under the Naturalist presumption), that this race of apes, barely able to scribble for a mere few thousand years, has been able to divine the nature of absolute reality? How much more probable is it not, (changing the metaphor), that we are merely constructing "*a hive*"?³

So Why Bother?

But if this is the ultimate answer, if this "ontic indeterminism" is the conclusion we must reach, what is the point of it all? Near the conclusion of Chapter 2, I admitted the (intuitive) difficulties of my thesis. But modern physics has much the same difficulty -its picture of reality, though intensely beautiful and

¹ Bas Van Fraassen, Quantum Mechanics, p.17

² "beneficial" is itself a synthetic a priori perspective

³ Why do we think we know even the *boundaries* of all the possible solutions to all of the problems of reality? Whence comes our arrogance that we feel we have solved the ultimate problems of the universe and of our existence in it?

Is it not more believable, (under the very Naturalist assumption), that we have merely expressed our own particular mode of existence, -that human civilization, like a swarm of bees, has simply built a hive? What is this logic we are so sure of? Ultimately, biologically, it is an expression of the "structural coupling" of the race with its environment. But the invariants of that coupling are derived from the structure of the uniquely human brain. Other brains, other modes of coupling almost certainly would embody another protologic. Ordinary logic, (i.e. "associationist" logic -after Dreyfus' term), denies its biological roots. It believes it has touched eternity and verity. How? Why? What teleological mystery does it hide? When we thought that man was created by God in his image and that God gave us this open channel to truth, then there was a meaningful rationale for such a view. But when man became, purely and simply, a material animal, derived mechanistically and randomly by material combination, then this mechanistic process lost all justification as correlating with anything other than its own mechanical necessities. But it works! How and why? Perhaps that is itself the answer. It is an operative process that works in the world in which it lives! This provides no guarantee of its ontological posits at all however -it is an operative process that works -and that's all!

exotic, offends those same normal sensibilities. The (why bother) answer for physics is that that very picture produces desirable, powerful, and practical results right at the human, (naive), scale, and which we cannot deny. The transistor, nuclear power, working telephones and radios, ... are necessary and practical consequences of that *very* theory -and they would be impossible without it. I propose that this will be very much the case for my conception. Though admittedly offensive to our (naive) realist sensibilities, *if it is correct*¹ it will lay the theoretical ground necessary for the quantum advances in neuroscience, for instance, which will finally and specifically, (rather than generally and destructively), cure the terrible aberrations of mental illness. But the mind-brain puzzle has far larger implications than that. It deals with the *problem of man* in all its aspects. It deals with all his social, ethical and artistic parts.² The final implications must not be underestimated.

This is the "why bother". Even offensive theories can yield useful and powerful results, necessary to man! The final test, the final judgement therefore, must be made on results. But, before results can be obtained, it is necessary, first, to entertain *the possibility*.

My reconception of fundamentals, though radical, is absolutely consistent with the historical progress of science -of physics, biology, mathematics and logic. It solves the biological and the philosophical problems inherent in the mind-body problem, and exorcises the "homunculus" once and for all. It provides an Archimedean fulcrum to overturn our naive realistic presuppositions, (inherited by "scientific realism"), and let us get on to the serious business of creating a science of mind and brain. It provides a viable context in which I believe workable theories are now, finally, possible.

No substantial progress will ever be made in dealing with "mind", or in the treatment of its terrible, destructive aberrations, (both individual and societal), -until the mind-body problem itself is solved and *workable tools* are developed. To deal with the mind, we must deal with its "objects" and the relations between them. To deal with the brain, we must deal with its process. To constructively and *specifically*³ affect the processes of mind⁴ *via* the brain, the relationship between the two *must* be understood!

¹ and I do not *dogmatically* assert that it is. The future of science must answer this question.

² I think it would be a real mistake to discount the possibility of real, *purely physical* implications from my thesis. In the transition beyond "objects", wholly new degrees of freedom may be possible for physics itself.

³ i.e. at the "fine-grained" level of mind

⁴ or to gain reflective insights on them

The simplistic orientations of naive realism, ("though grown up and sporting a beard" -to steal a phrase), just will not stand any longer. Great issues, to include the most profound social, ethical and spiritual aspirations of the race, depend upon the resolution of this problem -and upon its consequent, the establishment of a mature and viable neuroscience. There is too much pain in our world, and too much *need*, - dependant upon real solutions to these problems, to cling to the playgrounds of our intellectual youth.

How do we live?

So, (given my thesis), *what is the point?* Do we exist, therefore merely contemplating our navels, lost in the "ontic indeterminism" of metaphysics? No. I, for one, rarely even *think* about metaphysics, but love and feel pain, pay attention to passing cars, and generally live my life as you, (or any dogmatic Naturalist), would. I practice Descartes' interim life strategy of normalcy, (by necessity), and pretty much live my life as I always have.¹ I speak the language of Naturalism because it is good language and because it is, well ..."natural"!

When I *choose* to consider the connection however, I know that by following my inbuilt model, (and extending it), I am in harmony with that nameless externality. I do not *use* my model, you see, I *live in* it!

My "Act of Faith":

But what do *I*, personally and as *my* act of faith, believe? (I, after all, get to have beliefs as well!) Though I do not believe in the necessity of spatially and temporally separate *metaphysical* objects, (consistent, certainly, with the views of modern physics), nor in the metaphysical "aether" in which they are *still* conceived(!), I, (personally), believe in the metaphysical existence of *other minds!*¹ (That there is *still* more, -an absolute externality, "phaenomena substantia"- I also believe.) But those other minds, specifically *as minds*, (as per my second thesis), are all precisely products of implicit definition, variations on, (values of), a single universal function. They are, I believe therefore, *continuous variations of me*. We are all, I believe consequently, *more than brothers*, but "states" of the same being. "You" are "me" in a different "place", (state) -there is no necessary spatial or

¹ I also believe in a *continuity of sentiency*, at least with the higher animals -for reasons which should be perfectly obvious by now. Just where the "cutoff point" may be, I would not be presumptuous enough to speculate.

temporal separation between us, i.e. there is no necessary *metaphysical* "aether" between us!

But somebody already *said* all that, didn't they?

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. ... whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." (Mat. 25:40-45)