

# Brains, Sovereign Agents and the Limits of Philosophy: A Case for Non-Scientific Rigor

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*“you experience it to be within your power to stop reading this paragraph. Apparently, you freely decided to continue. Perhaps you are curious how it will unfold. But you strongly sense you could have done otherwise; you could have stopped reading (and you still can). However, from what we know about the laws of nature, it is not clear how the brain could control a neural process that would result in different outcomes when starting from the same brain state. It is also unclear how your interest in the contents of this paragraph led to the neural process that culminated in your reading it.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Preface

This short paragraph is what you’d call a ‘heavyweight teaser’; a gleaming nutshell to some really heavy stuff. A provisory attempt to articulate if only a limited aspect of the phenomenological enigma featuring in the notion of ‘free will’, whilst also delivering a swift punch right at the soft belly of the reflective-inquisitive mind, making sure the grip of the puzzle is strong, and deep, and hardly probable to evaporate. At once a succinct formulation and sharp illustration of the high walls, if not magic mountains, that prevent philosophy, neuroscience or any other interdisciplinary endeavor from tracking the footprints of that ancient/evident notion in the human brain or in evolution as such.

It is a strong and lucid illustration of that enigma. The author is a scientist and he outlined very clearly, even in that brief passage, some major conundrums which lurk along the way.

And yet, a philosopher smells obscurity a great deal earlier than it’s caught by the naked eye, or better still – far before the question mark is placed atop the scientific challenge. The philosopher, by definition, is interested in that which others purport to pursue; in ‘*what the question is*’, wherever there is one, rather than any conceivable way to answer. And like many other cases, here too there is much to be said about the very formulation, concise and provisional as it may be, of the scientific challenge at the top of the page. Let us have a closer look, proposition by proposition.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Faculty Profile of the neuroscientist, Dr. Uri Maoz, at the Chapman University Website.

1. When the obvious looks you in the eye [there's nothing to report]

***“You experience it to be within your power to stop reading this paragraph.”***

- 1) Do you *experience* any kind of ability or positive control over the [real time] process you engage in as you read?
  - Is this *ability* or *control* an object of experience? Is it like pain, doubt or sweet flavor? Surely not.
  - How do we come to know, then (acquaint ourselves with), this fact about ourselves?
- 2) In fact, we *do* either stop or continue at our own will/decision – at what we call ‘will’ and/or ‘Decision’. But I am able to say this sentence (that “*we do either stop or continue at our own will/decision*”) only in retrospect, that is – by way of reflection (in a reflective mode of speech as it were “from without” the real-time situation).<sup>2</sup> We never “interact” with this ability/control. I cannot, as it were, *identify* it as such like I identify ‘hunger’ and even ‘being in doubt’.<sup>3</sup>
- 3) One possible account of what a human being is would contain such an assertion about ourselves. But it is far from clear what kind of narrative is employed to that effect, and in particular “where” does one “look” – what it is that one<sup>4</sup> appeals to – so as to contend thereof (as it were “dig it out”); or, in yet other words, in what kind of realm or theater such reflection proceeds.
- 4) It is, however, a kind of thing that should be *taught/learned* about oneself. Like ‘1+1’. One sooner or later *learns* it. One’s, as it were, “directed”<sup>5</sup> somewhere so as to see/grasp thereof, like one is guided to discern that the demon is not as spooky as it seems, or, for that matter, to discern the “invisible” arithmetical axioms: one “sees” that he/she is sovereign over their immediate behavior as one “sees” that two parallel lines will never meet, or like he/she “sees” that the demonic-looking creature is *not a demon* at all (actually very friendly).
- 5) Two non-trivial insights follow:

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<sup>2</sup> While ‘experience’ is, eo ipso, a real-time phenomenon.

<sup>3</sup> 1) ‘*I am in doubt*’, 2) ‘*I can’t fly like an eagle (or a seagull or a bee)*’, 3) ‘*[Whenever I read], I can stop reading whenever I want to [no matter how interesting it is or how deeply I’d plunged into the text]*’. Now, the obvious thing to say as regards these three propositions is that in each of them one is saying something about oneself, whether in the form of description or assertion. But while in the two former cases one has straightforward empirical grounds for one’s specific utterance, in the third there’s none. It is as if proposition no. 3 is not an assertion about oneself in the way the two others are. Furthermore, one never *experiences* the ability to apply one’s will, as distinct from the ability to do something at will (such as the ability to raise my hand or start fantasizing in my mind any moment I want to), although what one really asserts in proposition 3, purportedly saying the latter, ***is the former!*** And while that very experience presumably enables us to assert the latter, there is yet no conceivable modality for capturing the origin – the ‘begetting’ – thereof: **the “color” of our [presumed] essential sovereignty**. Hence, as “rightful” as we may feel in proclaiming such sovereignty to ourselves, at a very basic level we actually don’t “know” (are absolutely puzzled by) what we are saying, the way we *do* know when we say: ‘*I can’t fly*’. To fill-in the blank with ‘*because I willed so*’ is not an answer but a statement of the very mystery.

<sup>4</sup> Not ‘he’ or ‘she’. A ‘he’ or ‘she’ do not provide such descriptions (while a ‘he’ or ‘she’ *do* provide mathematical ones, for instance; see below).

<sup>5</sup> With or without outside help.

- a) The kind of “deep” apprehension in each of the other two cases from the examples above has (or at least may be construed to have) an evolutionary purpose: the human brain developed so as to grasp/apprehend the underlining principles of mathematics as part of the evolution of the homo sapiens in the habitat of planet Earth.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the ability to exclude/repudiate ‘spookiness’ is rooted in our ability, as biological creatures, to distinguish the hostile from the non-hostile. Is there an evolutionary purpose in apprehending that we are free?<sup>7</sup>
- b) None of the three “insights” is, as it were, *reportable*. We share it with our kind but cannot *communicate* it amongst ourselves: one can communicate (report) a provable mathematical theorem.<sup>8</sup> One can also explain why the German Shepherd is not intimidating. But one cannot *report* the very apprehension that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. And also not the “original” [meta-]stripping of hostility from a seemingly threatening object in a child’s mind. These, together with *the ability to apply one’s will*, cannot be reported. They are also, once developed, never, as it were, “asked of” (doubted) other than as part of possible intellectual exercise. They are not part of any kind of *Experience*.
- 6) Hence: **we do not, ever, experience what the citation above purports to report.** We “know”; but cannot report. This is the truth of the matter.

## 2. Pressing the gas pedal on Neutral [look for the motives and the form]

“*Apparently, you freely decided to continue.*”

- 7) In what relation does this sentence stand to the former one?  
And why *apparently*?
- 8) Apparently, the only interesting word in it is ‘Apparently’, since if you take it out, what remains is a tautology.
- 9) But why put it there in the first place? Was there a need for it – for stressing that sticking to the text involves a decision made out of free will? What does the voice uttering these words tell me? What is it about me that sparked his/her interest so as to *study* me in order to inform me with this insight? Or hasn’t he/she studied me at all? Why, then – and on what grounds – does he/she say so? (why should anyone wish to tell me I am free in taking an apple from the basket, when I know that as long as aunt Rachel is not at home, nothing prevents me from doing so?).

<sup>6</sup> And the homo sapiens has sure as hell exploited that development.

<sup>7</sup> This is a far more consequential question than it shows: Freedom as a [natural!] *purpose* [rather than *result*].

<sup>8</sup> Stipulate the proof on the board.

- 10) Is it a kind of conclusion? If so, what are the premises?  
 11) If it is *within your power*<sup>9</sup> to do something, you are *free* in doing so, no? So what, essentially, has been said here? Where is the deduction (where is the statement?)?

p.s.

- 12) What if we take it as a *report* (“*Apparently, you freely decided to continue*”)? On the face of it, it is addressed to the reader of the passage. The ‘you’ in this sentence is the reader thereof; or so it is construed.  
 13) Now let’s focus on our – the *readers* – intake thereof: how do we “understand” it? *What* do we grasp/process/understand<sup>10</sup> in/from what we hear?  
 14) You can save your trouble. The answer is: nothing at all.  
 15) The reason for this is not that the sentence is incoherent. It is that, while construed grammatically to address the reader (me or you), it actually addresses the world at large; the author himself; whomever that would listen.  
 16) You don’t report *to the world* (unless you are [literally] BBC World News service).

### 3. Investigating into the Void [watch your language!]

***“Perhaps you are curious how it will unfold.”***

- 17) If I read it, *I am*.  
 18) That is, if I *chose* to read.  
 19) It might be that I try to learn a text by heart or force myself to study a subject matter which bores me to death, or I even detest, due to a forthcoming exam. In such a case there [still] remains (as far as I go on reading) a sense in which the unfolding textual content is “sought after” by the reader / the mind. But this sense is the proper meaning of reading. There is no *reading* which relinquishes (as it were “cuts across”) the aim of deciphering meaning from the carved forms on the paper/screen.<sup>11</sup> No *perhaps*, therefore, applies thereto. Alas, no *perhaps* is applicable to the former – willful – sense (in which I chose to read due to the appeal of the textual content) either: if I ‘*chose to...*’, I **am** curious, no?<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> If we look attentively into this phrase ‘*within my/your/her/our power*’, we should see that it already contains absolute freedom as such. The freedom will vanish only when it ceases to be ‘*within my power*’, but as long as it is, freedom is the case; is valid; exists.

<sup>10</sup> Not when we “originally” learned that we are sovereign to our immediate behavior. *Now* (upon reading Dr. Maoz’s ‘teaser’).

<sup>11</sup> To take these carved forms *in* as lexicographic signs.

<sup>12</sup> I *choose* to read for pleasure, and also *choose* to read for any other reason, even if in the later case I would prefer to skip the reading had there been a further choice before me to that effect (as in the case of having to read the manual of a technical device made in China). On the far end of the scale, I also *choose* to snitch on my best friend or ally for fear of torture. In certain cases, I choose on an almost mechanical level, as in getting out of bed in the morning (I could have stayed in bed, even in circumstances where I have a substantial interest not to). In other cases, I make

20) So why is there a ‘perhaps’ in the sentence in the first place?

4. Getting down to business – what are we looking for? (1)

***“But you strongly sense you could have done otherwise; you could have stopped reading (and you still can).”***

21) ‘Strongly sense’? When? Why are you telling me this? Why should I be informed in *this*?<sup>13</sup>

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aesthetic choices (what to wear, for example) and in still other cases, I choose morally (whether to lie or not; whether to defend a close person who had done something terribly wrong). The *how to behave* (*What should I do?*) and *how to be* (*who am I?*) intersect; they differ from both complement each other; but they are all choices. In all those cases **I** could have done otherwise, namely excluding the possibility to trace this ‘a priori’ variability/indeterminacy in any external change in some [physical, chemical, computational etc.] state of affairs that is independent of *me*.

An interesting question arises, however: What does it mean that (as regards the first – quasi-mechanical – case) upon staying in bed long enough, I will eventually get-up out of sheer physiological-psychic necessity? And the same applies to eating (i.e., that my physiological instinct will eventually force me to seek for food however determined I should be). Does this circumscribe what I took as [free] choice in the more common state of affairs or is it that my coercion of myself to stay in bed (as it were, set-up “artificially” the conditions for the effectuation of my physiological instinct) eo ipso disqualifies the situation from being of any value for testing authentic *choices* (I can still choose to get-up later than earlier)? If my ability to choose to get-up from bed originates in instinctive conditioning (waking up; passing from the physiological state of sleep into the physiological state of wakefulness, including all the adjacent physiological-behavioral processes), how much ‘choice’ endures therein? And still more important: where/when exactly does it “sprinkle”? Maybe it’s no more than an advanced form/manifestation of the same strictly physiological need or instinct? But what does ‘advanced’ mean in that context? Can we trace the *advance*? Moreover: is it advanced *manifestation* or advanced *effectuation*? **Can all the advance/difference between the awakening me and an awakening tiger in the woods be no more than form?** Given the continuity of time and the biological evolutionary framework, what do I have for counter evidence? What could be considered as evidence for the claim that our sense of freedom (the fact that I can stay in bed or not; the awareness of that fact; the ‘experience of that propensity’, which, as we observed above, is absent in real-time, but can be observed “reflectively” or retrospectively) reflects a substantial difference – qualitative uniqueness, a singularity – in my mode of operation as a human creature, and not merely a difference in manifestation of the same *thing* all animals have in one way/level or other?

Furthermore, while I choose how to dress today, I *have to* get dressed, and the moral *choice* I am presented with is **forced** upon me as a situation, wherefore to ignore or deny is also to choose. Am I, by the very fact that I’m forced to choose/decide (specifically *to choose: forced to choose*; ‘forced’ on an existential level, as opposed to ‘forced to eat’, for example, which presupposes an authority), actually free? Or is it that a choice which ultimately “serves a need” – *responds* to a preconditioned situation – cannot be free? Does that ultimate element of responsiveness within the act in which we look for the manifestation of [free] **Will**, override and ultimately nullify this seeming ‘non-chaotic indeterminacy’ that appears to characterize the agent upon making a choice (the ability to go either way before I went somewhere)?

One may argue that freedom of will is a form of things rather than substance; that your lack of choice *but to choose* is the ontological reality and your freedom in doing so (‘at your disposal’ so to speak) is its form, wherefore it can only be manifested (like violence or tolerance) and not “depicted” in the world.

But this leaves us with the same bewilderment. It does not clarify the twilight zone between the *given* and the *initiated* within each of the above situations. It doesn’t explain how the [physiological] inevitable continuity of passing from sleep to wakefulness results in a kind of ‘void’ whereabouts no “linkage” persists and following which there is a genesis of sorts. This alone is the mystery. Furthermore, the output of an algorithm is no less a *Form*. Where do they differ?

<sup>13</sup> It’s not the case when a child *does not want to read*, crying: “I can’t do it”, and his/her parent responds, saying “[*but*] you can!”

- 22) If you ask me [in retrospect or even in real time, as I read] whether I could have chosen not to read a specific text I took on reading, I would certainly reply in the affirmative. But what would my reiteration amount to? What would it illuminate? Would it *answer/fill-in/dispel* the question / absent fragment / ambiguity which evoked it in the first place? Was there any ambiguity to be dispelled?
- 23) Didn't you already know the answer? And if you did, why did you ask? And if you didn't really "ask", but merely stated the obvious, why did you do so? What bothers you in that capacity which you and I obviously share? Is it the same kind of mystery that bothered Galileo in the obvious phenomena of motion and velocity or Copernicus in the motion of the heavenly bodies?
- 24) Did I conclude my affirmative response from experience? Had I ever *sensed* any such presumed *sovereignty to accept or reject the alternative* in real-time?
- 25) No.
- 26) As pointed out at the very outset,<sup>14</sup> one is apt to notice that he/she can halt whatever they're doing or even refrain from doing it in the first place. In real life this occurs spontaneously in situations of uncertainty or doubt as regards *what to do / how to behave* (essentially when one is in conflict), but it can also be recreated, as it were "artificially", via introspective concentration, namely by focusing one's mind on the fact that one can either do or refrain from doing anything specific (such as raising or not raising one's hand) at any given moment. Caeteris Paribus, a human agent is aware of his/her control over the application of basic human capacities, such as reading, swimming, daydreaming or walking, i.e. as regards anything which makes one the human *software/machine* one partially is.
- 27) We obviously control the *software/machine* we partially are! What we lack is understanding *How*. The latent hypothesis is that only upon figuring out *how this is so*, we would rest still as regards *what it really is*. Only by explicating (cracking) 'control' (the 'how'), we would find out whether we are 'free' (the 'what')! That's how science ultimately affects and contributes to philosophy: by casting light on *what is* via revealing *how it is*.<sup>15</sup> There are no exceptions to the rule, nor do we intend to create one.
- 28) But, as also already noted above,<sup>16</sup> my experiential control over the machine I partly am, far from being the answer, is the very maze. First of all, to seek for the "mechanics" of crude experience is shooting in complete darkness, at best, and a rough categorical error, at worst.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, it's not *control* which appears to be exercised by the human agent over his/her own behavior, but *free application of the latter* as such, which is something completely different.
- 29) This is the very difference between the ability to apply one's will and the ability to do something at will, referred to in footnote 3 above; namely, the difference between the "natural color" of our essential sovereignty and its place (its "grammar") in concrete human affairs.

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<sup>14</sup> Footnote 3 above.

<sup>15</sup> In other words: to understand the "mechanics" (the "dynamics" of whatever kind) is to crack the ontology.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>17</sup> See chapter 6 bellow.

- 30) It is also why the awareness of one's *control* of whether to go on reading (or raise one's hand) – **the control over the decision whether to do so or not** – brings us no closer to the application of free will, not to speak of solving its mystery.
- 31) It's not *control* over one's decisions which constitutes free will, but the very ability **to decide**. A self-sufficient (“unregimented”) ability which sparks from within, rather than an altogether incoherent notion<sup>18</sup> of ‘unitary duality’ in some occult sphere, such as one's inherent control over oneself from without.<sup>19</sup>
- 32) Hence, any “*strong sense*”, such as denoted in the citation above, is to no avail for the search and explication of human essential sovereignty; of the very ability to apply one's will.
- 33) What follows, however, from the above [logic] is that we are unable, in our experiential as well as analytical capacities, to relate to the ‘freedom’ at the core of the application of will in separation from the very fabric of our concrete lives, namely the complex set of motives and circumstances (inhibitions, incentives) in its concrete manifestation, like in stopping a certain activity one was engaged in. There is simply no such abstract “meta-freedom” around. It isn't a meta-weapon with which one arrives at his/her goal. It cannot be isolated, so to speak, neither as process nor as a concept. From a human perspective, it's only a word. Like ‘Self’.
- 34) We *know* that we could have done otherwise in all the above activities. We simply do not know *How*. Like Newton had known that the apple should head to the ground, but didn't know *How*, until he found out.
- 35) Can we find out? Is there anything else to learn about that “strong sense”, whether in its real-time or recreated forms? Hardly: the latter is as clear-cut / straightforward as an ideal triangle/diamond.<sup>20</sup> The former proceeds upon a wholly ephemeral variable. Q.E.D.
- 36) Let's push the way of analogy a bit further: do we *know* it like we know that the sun will rise and shine again tomorrow? No. We see the later every day and can back-up our impressions scientifically. Or maybe like the fact that some objects fall, when dropped from our hands, while others fly away? Also No. We are informed of the latter the same way as in the case of the rising sun. And the same applies to the knowledge that my blood is circulating in my body or that the sky is blue or that next Sunday is elections day. In all these cases, it's either straightforward empirical evidence or scientific inquiry (or a decision had been made somewhere and I was informed about it, as in the case of elections day).
- 37) In the case of discerning or conceiving of our freedom it's neither. We even don't **remember** we are free. We simply know...
- 38) It is part of our very constitution, but it cannot be isolated.
- 39) There appears to be a profound difference between that alleged sentiment (the apprehension that we are free) and all the other objects of knowledge from the examples

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<sup>18</sup> Except in speech!!

<sup>19</sup> Which introduces a vicious circle of more and more “sub-sovereignty” phases between a controlling agent and the grounds for applying control.

<sup>20</sup> I should stop exercising control over my behavior only once I cease to be human and become a machine. Otherwise, I necessarily do.

above.<sup>21</sup> There's simply no *phenomena* to draw *it* from (the fact that I can stop reading *by will*). Maybe it's<sup>22</sup> only words, namely that the apparent puzzle concerning that "color" of human essential sovereignty stems not from the fact that sometimes I stop and at others continue,<sup>23</sup> but from the fact – the mere very fact – that I *say* (am capable of saying): 'I can...'?<sup>24</sup>

- 40) The human body which we perceive, brain included, abides to Newtonian physics, is made of familiar chemicals and behaves as a biological system. In a deeper level there are elementary particles, which make-up everything else – ALL that the human organism/creature is made of – and abide, in turn, to the laws of quantum mechanics. The human Psyche – the variety of human mental dynamics – abides to a different set of rules and patterns, which are studied and formulated in the realms of Psychology, Psychiatry and other behavioral and cognitive disciplines. The latter share with the 'natural' sciences such basic categories as causality, affinity, differentiation etc., and derive a great deal of crucial insights and relevant data from the disruptive discoveries of evolutionary biology and genetics.
- 41) So far, so good. There is nothing wrong in the behavioral and cognitive sciences leaning on and drawing from Biology and Chemistry. After all, the human mind and behavior are sustained by biological and chemical processes and circumscribed by the laws of Physics. But...
- 42) But... does the human Psyche, and specifically the human *Will*, **also** have a deeper level of elementary processes, if not particles? Does the human *Will* also dwell in a parallel,

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<sup>21</sup> Or various other attributes of ourselves, such as that we are *wise, beautiful, violent, cruel, prone to self-destruction* etc. For example, one may be told by another person: 'you are/aren't wise' or 'you are/aren't pretty', and later ponder: 'am I wise/pretty?', and reach various conclusions, including that he/she cannot decide for sure (incidentally, one will never inquire into such issues unless induced/intrigued from without; by discourse with the environment). So far, so good, and the same can happen with the predicate 'freedom': After hearing the concept and/or interacting therewith, one may wonder whether one is free. But in doing so one will be exploring oneself not as an "apparatus", but essentially as a constituent of an environment. One will consider whether *he/she* is *free* as one considers whether the load in one's hands is heavy (or how much is 2+2) and not as one tries to unravel a blunder or hypothesize (why does the load fall when I let it loose?), namely bearing upon a presupposed criterion for deciding (the same way one wonders: am I smart/pretty?). More precisely, the question will be whether one does or does not *apply* freedom and not whether he/she *is* free. In yet other words, even if somewhere along the line one comes to evaluate any traits or capacities about oneself which are relevant to the inquiry (boldness, sobriety, resolve, personal benefit, timidity, fear etc.), he/she will ipso facto assume that freedom exists and is attainable on the background they set. But it will not be the freedom which the citation above contemplates, since these capacities are at all meaningful *only if freedom is part of the game*. Only we never feel or sense or experience it ("look" it in the face, as in the case of pain, to take the crudest example, or love, to take a finer one) in any other way. No one can, as it were, "point at it" with his/her finger. It is absent as a matter of discourse, which is to say (to paraphrase the insight of the great philosopher) it isn't that we *should* be silent about it; it simply isn't there to be spoken.

<sup>22</sup> This seemingly abstract sense of freedom as distinct from the perfectly tangible one which either exists in specific circumstances or not (or maybe or I'm not sure, but also know, or definitely could know, why; and if I'm mistaken, there's someone, bearing on a definite "something", such as science or common sense, to point out why, and so on and so forth in an infinite line, cycle or spiral of evolution).

<sup>23</sup> No puzzle at that level, while any discrepancy in my grip over that ability is properly dealt with by Psychiatry, namely a discipline which takes for granted everything that the citation above denotes as the core of the mystery.

<sup>24</sup> It's like searching for the meaning of 'I can' without any punctuation marks; without an adjacent/pervading *tone*. Is there any sense for such an 'I can'? perhaps this is the very basic question that must be addressed.

constant, ‘inner’ realm which is “deeper” than evolution and independent thereof,<sup>25</sup> the way the physical elementary particles and the mathematical rules they follow are independent of the ‘force of life’, chemical composition and [classical] physical properties that pertain to the objects/beings which they ultimately make-up?

43) Is there anything else [down] there [in the mental sphere] further to what we speak...? – further to the fact that ‘No’ is a ‘*No*’ because it’s a No?

## 5. Getting down to business [the puzzle is real!] (2)

***“It is not clear how the brain could control a neural process that would result in different outcomes when starting from the same brain state.”***

44) Let’s look into the seemingly flawless sequence of this sentence: at once a sequence and embodiment of two irreconcilable worlds; two irreconcilable variations of *how* we are.

45) Key terms: brain, brain state, neural process, control, various endpoints.

46) One of these terms is of special interest to us, namely ‘control’. As indicated in chapter 4, sections 26-31, above, the notion of control is a tricky one, and for our purposes here it yields two relevant meanings:

- a) A valve *controls* the flow of fluids in a certain sphere. In doing so it performs – automaton like – a predetermined function. So does a physiological instinct/reflex.<sup>26</sup>
- b) A person *controls* his/her behavior. In doing so he/she doesn’t proceed upon algorithmic eventuation. ‘Control’ in that sense amounts to indeterminate application of the valve *by will*... it is positively ascribable to an ultimate sovereign source.

47) We are interested in the latter, namely in [the application of] Freedom: not automatic ***and*** not chaotic. At once.

48) Together with the author we wonder how the brain as a complex set of “electrochemical valves” generates and sustains sovereignty at the next level; how the utterly complex-set-of-valves-dependent agent obtains a “first cause” sort of capacity; a capacity to cause “on its own”. Such that not only isn’t governed by the laws pertaining to that complex set but transcends it altogether.<sup>27</sup> Together with the author we are bewildered by this evident

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<sup>25</sup> The ‘Quantum Domain’ (the “world” of the elementary particles) as it were emerged at the birth of the universe and hadn’t changed since.

<sup>26</sup> The valve, as the reflex, is actually preconditioned rather than *controls*. To be preconditioned is not *to* control.

<sup>27</sup> A *capacity* evolving where there’s nothing remindful of the notion of ‘capacity’. One thinks of possible modal similarities in the evolvment of organ-related capacities such as that of the eye/seeing. The eye also evolved *where there was nothing remindful of the notion of ‘seeing’*.

metamorphosis: we start with predetermined functionality (the brain) and end up with indeterminate application (the will).<sup>28</sup> How?

49) Let us outline the puzzle ourselves. One cannot properly confront a puzzle without appropriation thereof. Thank God there are no titles to puzzles!

50) Here it is:

The situation:

I'm reading...

a) Option A – I *go on* reading...

b) Option B – I *stop* reading!

Both options are fully realistic, and depend on... on what?

The Puzzle:

- Premise No. I – My act of reading began with some specific mental-state / mental-act (a decision to read);
- Premise No. II – That [initial] mental state/act bears upon<sup>29</sup> / corresponds to a neural process/configuration, namely a physiological (electrochemical) phenomenon;
- Premise No. III – The entire process of reading, including the option to stop/continue thereof at every single “Micro-moment”, accordingly bears upon / corresponds to a [closed] series of neural processes/configurations. In other words, while we *read*, the brain performs as a comprehensive physiological entity<sup>30</sup> so as to generate our ability to do so.
- Premise No. IV – physiological (electrochemical) phenomena is determinate, namely tied-up and subsisting/evolving as such via strict (however complex and/or multilayered) causal ties.<sup>31</sup>

*And yet...*

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<sup>28</sup> Whereby a single unit in the world is formed – I.

<sup>29</sup> One wishes to say: ‘derives from’; but it will be highly inaccurate. ‘Bears upon’ = denoting a correlation the nature of which is a puzzle.

<sup>30</sup> not as a brain + “something”.

<sup>31</sup> Be it genetic encoding, chemical reactions or synaptic “shots” etc.

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*We – the [absolutely] brain-dependent agent – can stop [reading] at will, can't we?*

***The homo sapiens can, as it were, do something which allegedly, and on some accounts evidently, breaches/transcends the basic – causal – laws that generate/govern the series / sequence / network of neural processes/configurations on which that very act is absolutely dependent...***

*He/she can decide what to do, namely affect the reality that will follow in his/her immediate existence in a way that is not a predetermined consequence of any previous state of affairs. He/she can do so notwithstanding the uncontested fact that such an act would stem from and depend upon a process where the previous stage/moment necessarily and comprehensively determines the next.*

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In other words, while in the brain each moment/configuration is a direct effect of the previous moment/configuration, their corresponding moments/events in the person's immediate life story are consequences of an event which isn't predetermined by the past. The brain functions as machinery while the person chooses as sovereign, and although the latter – sovereignty – is directly and absolutely dependent on the former – physiology – it transcends thereof.

Wherefore:

- Premise No. V – The possibility of *stopping* to read *at will*, namely terminating the process which, for all we know, is wholly grounded in the operation of the brain, by means (in a way) independent thereof, presumes not only a disruption in the “dynamics” of the entire process, but an obvious schism in the overall ‘brain-mind’ entity (the human agent).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Another way to put it is that the brain, on which I (my whole mental realm) am fully, nay – absolutely, dependent, provides me (namely provides the same mental realm which it fully and indefinitely supports) with a capacity to be independent thereof! It is as if the light in the bulb, while still utterly dependent on electric power for its light-projecting capacities, would start to behave/function in a way that is not a straightforward necessary consequence of the electric power it receives. It is as if the very ‘projection of light’ would eventuate not strictly and exclusively

- Hence, the following question inevitably arises: how can an essentially physical, namely deterministic, process or assembly of processes result in (generate) indeterminacy? How can it “allow” a foreign body/quality of that sort to sneak into the “flow” (nay – create a whole world of its own)?
- What (assuming there are no ‘whos’ in the natural order of things, namely in the scientific sphere of inquiry) produces/enables/admits this peculiar non-chaotic indeterminacy<sup>33</sup> in/into the evolving route/sequence of an essentially deterministic process?
- How can something go either way **before** it went somewhere?

51) Hence the essential puzzle: how can a strictly physical (electrochemical in that case) phenomenon emanate such a capacity? If all my mental capacities as homo sapiens stem from my brain, and my brain is a kind of hardware/software apparatus,<sup>34</sup> how come I can *will* stuff, namely operate in an “out of the software kind of mode”??? Where does the leap occur? Is it a leap at all? What is going on here?

52) An important distinction is due at this stage, however: the question is not how something can be indeterminate:

- A future event is indeterminate when we are unable to trace in advance its specific/entire constituents and therefore unable to foresee *it* or how it should unfold/evolve. However, that *inability* does not [as such] invest any other factor/entity with any ability whatsoever.
- An application of will<sup>35</sup> is the very ability to bring about one of several possible situations/results – to bring about *Either*; the capacity [subject to no external determinant] to determine what will be the case.

53) *Unable* to know [in advance] what will be the case (emphasis on *unable*).

54) *Being able* [in advance] to determine what will be the case (emphasis on *being able*).

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because there is power in the electric network and the switch is on, but because the eventuation of the very projection abides to some “inner switch” in the bulb, which is completely different from the automatic valve that the real switch on the wall amounts to, namely a part of a broader mechanism and nothing at all as independent thereof. An “inner” switch which is nevertheless nowhere to be found in the whole comprehensive system of which the electric power and the definite construction of the bulb are integrals. An “internal-external” to the whole system...

<sup>33</sup> It is not, as it were, ‘antecedent uncertainty’. No ‘uncertainty’ whatsoever is involved. It is the capacity to “go” either of at least two ways/worlds/realities: the coherence of a possible split of a present state into several states of affairs not, as it were, retrospectively (thinking of the two possible options before me now is also, as it were, a “retrospective” contemplation; my “evaluation” of these prospective options in order to choose between them, is necessarily as something that already happened; only the *ability* (the Will!!) is prospective, which is the whole mystery), but prospectively. The coherence of “initiating”, or being responsible for or, as it were, with a “grip” on, such possible split in advance. Setting the course in a way that actually transcends everything that ever was or is in real-time; projecting oneself ahead, bearing on nothing... No doubt the ability *to imagine* has something to do with that. We can imagine (and necessarily *do* imagine) the different variants of such a split. Does imagination incorporate freedom of will? What lies at the basis of ‘imagination’ if not the notion of alternative reality / state of affairs, which is at the essence of choice as such? In both cases, the core of the matter lies at the starting point; at the very ability *to do so*. But whereas in imagination the “otherness” of the alternative is no more than an ontological mirror, in choice it is at the core of the switch from physical determinacy to mental (or “mindful”) sovereignty, namely at the core of the enigma.

<sup>34</sup> An ‘Input → Process → Output’ kind of apparatus at its basic level.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Control’ in the sense of section 46(b) above.

- 55) Brute consequence as opposed to Potency.
- 56) Succession vs. Generation (*begetting*).
- 57) Hence the question: how can *succession* result in (effectuate) a *generating* entity?
- 58) HOW CAN SOMETHING GO EITHER WAY<sup>36</sup> **BEFORE IT WENT SOMEWHERE?**
- 59) In order (so as) to be *somewhere later*, it needs to be – in a certain fundamental way – here, there and (possibly) everywhere **now**.<sup>37</sup>
- 60) What kind of “superposition” is this? Maybe we need quantum equations to model that out?<sup>38</sup>
- 61) Maybe *being able*, as opposed to ‘*such and such is the case*’, is a superposition. Maybe ‘Either’ is a superposition...!<sup>39</sup> Maybe superpositions pervade plain speech?
- 62) We start from “billions and billions of such and such and such and such... ad infinitum” and end-up (with no time gap whatsoever in between!)<sup>40</sup> with “maybe so and maybe so...”; with *either*.
- 63) We relate the *Will* element/characteristic to the control over this *maybe*; to it being not merely indeterminate (or merely “contemplatable”), but at our disposal/control. Control as Sovereignty; as pure, absolute<sup>41</sup> Freedom.
- 64) Maybe the quantum equations know better? Maybe they hold the key to the difference between the beast’s sovereignty over the jungle (and the next moment of its persistence in time) and the human one?

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<sup>36</sup> Not ‘both ways’, not ‘one and not the other’, but *either* one or the other. This ‘either’ element presupposes agency; presupposes perspective. One may argue that an algorithm also presupposes the agency which “wrote” it, but here lies the whole difference: an algorithm is a product, a result; it can be built/composed/formulated, even “invented”, by another algorithm. ‘Either’ is the “anti-result”; the ontological “pre-result” sovereignty; its “maneuver” is already finished when the algorithm only begins.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. in order to *go to* any other spherical coordinate, a [still] object doesn’t need [first] *to go* to all its coordinates. Indeed, the possibility of an object to “travel” in a sphere presupposes the sphere, namely *all* the sphere, i.e. all its spherical coordinates. But the entire set of coordinates in the sphere (the entire sphere) does not participate in the transition from point ‘a’ to point ‘b’, since such transition is a straight line ( $y = mx + b$ ). In the case of the application of will, in contrast, in order to *decide* on variant ‘a’, namely in order to reach the future coordinate of the process of deciding/choosing (as distinct from linear transition), the agent has to already “be” in both (or more) future variants pertaining to the decision/choice, namely in ‘a’ and its alternatives ‘b’, ‘c’, ‘d’ etc., before the actual “travel” is made: *to sort of “appropriate” several possible “futures” before generating “one’s own”*... [as an effect of a fully determinate process...]

<sup>38</sup> With all due diligence and reservation owing to my ignorance in physics generally and quantum mechanics specifically, I should just invoke the popular claims that in quantum mechanics “*the subsequent observation determines the initial direction*” and that “*the elementary particle is, as it were, ‘nowhere and everywhere’ at the same time*”!

<sup>39</sup> What is the difference between saying ‘either’ and saying ‘here and there (or such and such) at the same time’? We think of the later as a material (ontological) impossibility and of the former as a plausible proposition/saying. But if we look a little deeper, we’ll see that they are no different from each other. ‘Either’ *is* ‘here, there and everywhere’ without having to “split” (not “skipping” the split, but literally *without having to*). The addendum ‘at the same time’ is really a hollow fragment which makes no difference whatsoever to the core phrase (we would do much better tracing its origin). If I already said, nay – proceeded upon, *either*, why should anyone ask me: at the same time? Either *is* at the same time. Hence, if I succeeded to say so (everybody without the slightest exception understood me), I was so. No?

<sup>40</sup> The choice is sort of parallel to the state/configuration in the brain.

<sup>41</sup> In quality, not measure.

## 6. Introducing order: Two basic modes and an ‘I’

***“It is also unclear how your interest in the contents of this paragraph led to the neural process that culminated in your reading it.”***

### Debunking ‘Mental Dynamics’

- 65) An *interest* and a *neural process*. There’s a lot more than unclarity here.
- 66) Are we so sure about that sequence: Interest → Neural Process → Reading? Is the word ‘led’ (as one thing leads to another) proper?
- 67) By the same logic, that interest was also preceded/caused<sup>42</sup> by a neural process which in turn derived from another mental state that subsisted in some other process etc., ad infinitum.
- 68) Are we certain that this is the picture which needs to be explained? Is that what we “see” looking into the interaction of the mental and the physical about our head?
- 69) Before formulating what is not clear, we should delineate the sphere of our enterprise, namely the rough geography of the comprehensive terrain of mind and brain. **We must make sure that we see right that which we’re perplexed in accounting for, namely the very geography that baffles us.**<sup>43</sup>
- 70) Something appears to be missing from this sequential picture/model.
- 71) The way we speak, or better still *that which we do* when we speak in specific ways/modes, has a lot to do with our inquiry here.
- 72) As neuroscientists, we can detect, demarcate and analyze distinct brain activities and relate them to what people report they experienced while these activities were the case or to their observable effect on such people. And we also know that one of the two specifically bears upon the other (no brain activity → nothing to report).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Accompanied? See footnote 44 below.

<sup>43</sup> Can it be that the geography of Mind & Brain resembles certain mathematical problems? – that one should *see* the solution upon acquiring the right way of **looking at** that geography the way a solution to an equation or a geometrical puzzle “descends” onto oneself while looking fixedly at the equation/sketch? Alas, as explained below, the prospect of looking at that geography – a shared, single, comprehensive terrain of mind and brain – in any coherent manner is the very problem. What we need is a new geography/geometry only to address the problem, least of all to solve it.

<sup>44</sup> Of any causality in the opposite direction we are far less certain. On the one hand, as the citation at the head of this chapter suggests, **the interest** [in the contents of the paragraph at the head of this paper] **has led** to the **neural process** [that culminated in your reading it...]. Namely, it is not only that electro-chemical processes support/generate mental ones, but also vice versa. But this is only plausible if we adopt the linear-sequential model in its literal brute form: Brain [state/process] → Mental [state/process] → Brain [state/process] → Mental [state/process]... ad infinitum. But the whole point is that mental qualia are nonexistent if not for the electro-chemical activity of the brain in real-time. In other words, there is no linearity in the interaction, and if there is in the first place any plausibility in the classification ‘brain state/process’ vis-à-vis ‘mental state/process’, the interrelation between the two is anything but linear (but can our language at all “pose” them in a non-linear relation towards each other?). Indeed, for some peculiar reason we find some sense in the assertion that the ‘mental’ also “affects” (exerts influence on) the ‘electro-chemical’, but this is pure speculation, if only for the fact that we have no grip whatsoever on the actual connection between the

- 73) But we don't know that it's a sequence. We would need a far superior perspective to insist otherwise.
- 74) The origin of the conceptual blur on this point is not altogether clear, but it is safe to say that we don't know that it's a sequence. I do know that the falling of the heavy object from my hand right upon my right toe came just before the terrible pain I felt therein<sup>45</sup> and that the latter preceded the scream that came out of my mouth, but not that all the while my (or the experiment participant's) brain state/s interacted with any of those experiences (or "events")<sup>46</sup> in any kind of sequence. We don't know that. **The apparent correlation<sup>47</sup> is the very maze.**

#### Disavowing the 'Laboratory Model'

- 75) If we take a more cautious approach towards the interface between what we call subjective experience (mental qualia) and brain processes, we can explore that maze a bit further.
- 76) The first thing to do is to dispose of the classical laboratory model in our enterprise. There is no laboratory or even a familiar sense of 'empirical domain' to our research. *We* do not, and probably cannot, position ourselves vis-à-vis a single sphere accommodating both objects of our purported inquiry. Mental experience<sup>48</sup> and registered electric activity in the

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two spheres (kinds of quality), and the only substantial reason for the premise that mental qualia bears on the brain is empirical induction (you kill the brain → the mental vanishes, in every single case). Nothing else. Needless to say, the simplistic "parallel" model, whereby the physiological and the mental are two parallel processes proceeding in two parallel domains (whereby I *reach* for something with my hand due to a *decision* to that effect which derives from *contemplation* based on a *perception* of an event and so on and so forth, while each of these is sustained by, or "anchored" in, a corresponding electro-chemical brain-state/configuration, forming a parallel causal sequence of brain states/processes) is absolutely obscure and basically circumvents the problem: a) How are these two tight together?; and b) How does the brain-level causal process generates the mental-level non-causal (free) one?

<sup>45</sup> And in a certain sense also *caused* it. But causality as such is not part of our discussion here.

<sup>46</sup> 'Event' is a tricky concept in that context. An 'event' necessarily pertains to (happens in) a domain. In other words, the notion of 'event' is adjacent to that of 'domain': A nuclear reaction happens in the sub-atomic physical domain; Photosynthesis – in the physiological domain of wild nature; an NBA playoff game – in the sports center of some American city (namely, my everyday reality; the 'world', or the history of that world/reality, in the case of the NBA Finals of 1969); World war II took place in Europe, the Pacific Ocean and north Africa (same world/reality), and the Mesozoic period – on planet Earth. The solution to a mathematical equation didn't "happen", but nonetheless it is true/valid in the mathematical domain.

In other words, to speak meaningfully of an event, one should be able to relate it to a broader conceptual framework, as in all these examples. Therefore, to apply the notion 'world' as a "meta-domain" (rather than a narrative; the conceptual framework of the human habitat – the distinct and perhaps also the only "story" around, namely in a sense in which the laws of physics, chemistry or biology are not *stories* or conceptual frameworks, but "prescriptions" or codes), saying that something (an event) happened *in the world* as the ultimate "home" of the physical(s) and the mental, the actual and the perceptual, the coded and the narrated etc., is to assert/articulate the very obscurity we are trying to dissolve.

The particularization of the different "events" in the case ("meta-event") where the heavy object had fallen on my toe, namely the *falling*, the *hit*, the *physiological reaction*, the *pain*, the *scream* and all the concomitant *brain states*, into their proper domains, and formulating a coherent "geography" thereof, is our very assignment (are the *hit* and the *scream* of the same domain? The *hit* and the *physiological reaction*? The *brain state* and the *scream*?). We cannot, as it were, universalize them all as 'events' (the constituents of a quasi/hollow meta-home we called "world") before we completed that assignment.

<sup>47</sup> Not to mention the ontological aspects thereof! Namely the *contact/encounter* rather than the conceptual geography.

<sup>48</sup> One wishes to say *activity*, but it wouldn't be correct. There is no such thing as mental *activity*. The 'Mental' is, eo ipso, 'Experience'. There is no perspective from which it can be perceived or even conceived as activity. Even *calculation* or *deliberation* is experience and not "doing something": upon close scrutiny, I'm not, as it were,

brain are not two “substances” in two separate jars. Nor do they amount to two different “screens”.<sup>49</sup>

77) The difficulty in depicting the very model or method of inquiring into the interrelation we are interested in stems from the fact that no familiar concept or inquisitive perspective<sup>50</sup> is applicable to the “joint” domain of these two notions. Moreover, the coherence of the very notion of their joint domain is far from obvious: we experience our mental flow/content as it were “here and now” (as part of our world and a straightforward fact of our existence), and we also observe the brain<sup>51</sup> and the electro-chemical processes which pervade it on the computer screens right before our eyes. Therefore, or so our “logic” or basic intuition tell us, their substantial<sup>52</sup> interaction should also take place somewhere around, namely adhere to some coherent and accessible, or at least discoverable (“mundane”), categorical framework. **But what could such a framework be?** *Where* is the perspective from which both can be perceived/conceived as legitimate constituents in a single *show* as distinct from a single [complex!!] *environment* (or better still – legitimate constituents in a consistent, homogenous spectacle of the same environment)?<sup>53</sup>

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calculating but experiencing a certain mental *mode*, which in speech, and in speech alone, manifests itself as one among various kinds of activities. And the same is true of *raging / being angry*, which is, in turn, a poignant illustration thereof: does *raging* comprise any ‘activity’ that distinguishes it from *being angry*? No. Both are a matter of speech, picking on complexes of exhibitory properties. As far as their “mental substance” is concerned, both are mere experiential qualia. Furthermore, the difference between *running* and *doing one plus one in my head* is that the former is *seen* and involves the operation of muscles (physics) and other [observable and comprehensible] chemical reactions, while the latter is an absolute [ontological/processual] puzzle, an impenetrable phenomenological riddle. We merely *experience* it and cannot distance ourselves therefrom so as to apply thereupon proper scientific scrutiny! All we can “observe and study” in relation to that *experience* are its concomitant chemical and physical processes in the brain, which brings us no closer to any grip of the equivalents of muscles, cells and proteins in the mechanisms of the mental phenomenology – of that which generates any coherent sense of process/activity about the latter, be it in the human body, the inanimate physical terrain or the computational output of hardware and software in our computers.

<sup>49</sup> A metaphor applicable to ‘Sound’ and ‘Sight’, for example.

<sup>50</sup> Other than via plain speech, namely a perspective over the ‘world’ – the *story* – that is reflected in absolute lucidity therein. If anything is certain, it’s that there had never been any “discrepancy” between ‘world’ and ‘language’ – in the lion’s as well as homo-sapiens’ world. No cracks or loopholes in that combo (one wishes to say ‘duality’, but that is the aspired conclusion, or [needs to be substantiated] hypothesis, not the starting point, wherefore, at least for now, it’s no more than a combo).

<sup>51</sup> As kind of machine or computer; actually, as an altogether alien object. As someone once observed, we have learned awfully a lot about the brain and continue to do so in ever increasing pace and magnitude, and at the same time, notwithstanding or by any means disparaging all that and the truly magnificent, highly creative and inspired efforts invested therein, we haven’t learned and/or know *anything* of the “really important” stuff about it, which, not incidentally, make it what it is.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Ultimate’ (that stale and slandered concept).

<sup>53</sup> A point to consider: ‘Environment’ is essentially something that one inhabits / subsists in. Namely, if you’re part or constituent thereof, you cannot *observe* it as such; position yourself from without. Not because you are impaired, but specifically because you are immersed in a habitat and not a lab or showroom (to the extent you inhabit a pond, you’re no different from a frog. Even a very sophisticated frog in a pond which is one of a kind in the entire sphere thereof – the entire universe – is a *frog* and not a pair of eyes looking onto the pond).

For a peculiar reason, we are able *to say* that we are observing the pond/habitat/world, but the capacity we supposedly ascribe to ourselves in doing so is not merely unlike anything else we should purport to *do* applying the same concept, such as to observe a scene, a situation, a scientific experiment, an argument, a far-fetched idea or even the law or religious practice, but altogether inapplicable except as to [the word] ‘everything’ in such an absolute, all-embracing sense as to strip it from any meaning at all: trying to articulate *what* we observe, we will find ourselves flip-flopping ‘*this and this and this and...*’ with no definite ending or any order, direction or certitude in the “listing” (i.e. we will

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not be *listing* anything and arguably not doing anything else or, for that matter, **anything at all(!)** in our purported reply [positively subsist in a machine-like manner??]).

A 'Show', in contrast, is essentially something that one observes/monitors/contemplates; you are, by definition, that pair of "eyes", namely not part of the scenery (the chair is also not a part of the table, but both are parts of the room. *What*, accordingly, are the 'habitat' and the 'perspective' – together – parts of? The "World"? "Existence"? It turns out that we're looking for something there's no word for; see further bellow in the main text).

Now, it is true that one also *observes* as part of inhabiting and living in a habitat. But saying this, namely that *one also observes as part of inhabiting and living in a habitat*, is a description of a specific aspect of the habitat/environment. The biological habitat consists of objects/constituents with perspectives over each other (as opposed to stones, for instance; furthermore: over each other, not [over] "the world!") – from the basic cellular (e.g. cell signaling) to the highest intelligent levels. Saying that a biological entity – a creature – *also observes as part of inhabiting its environment*, apart from there being no question (no puzzle, no "vacancy", so to speak) which it may be taken to answer (i.e. no genuine audience thereto), is a tautology which reveals or illuminates nothing we cannot learn from studying biological creatures as such (a child that had learned what a goose is will learn nothing whatsoever about the goose from being instructed that it *also observes as part of inhabiting its environment*; nor will the adult that child will, *ceteris paribus*, turn to be). The practical application of the set of capacities pertaining to 'observe' (pay heed, follow, examine etc.) is intact, as is its equally compound lingual reflection in the layman's daily discourse. Moreover, a painstaking, relentless scrutiny of that rich and intriguing set is pursued – as part of the same biological habitat – by artists and novelists on the one hand and a whole spectrum of sciences (from molecular biology to neurophysiology) on the other.

The advanced biological, namely human, habitat accommodates, on top of *interaction*, a mode of inquiry thereto – such that employs certain capacities which evolved as part of the human development in that habitat. These are circumscribed by the sciences, from A to Z and backwards, all stemming from the same basic need and/or desire (curiosity) to get to know / explore more and more layers in one's surrounding – the world "out there". There is no question, however, about the sciences qualifying/proceeding as inquisitive methods. It is self-evident across-the-board, from the study of socioeconomic trends in post-colonial societies to quantum mechanics. There are plenty of compelling questions in the philosophy of science about the nature of specific scientific *practices*, but no one questions their standing *as* exploration-oriented methods/modes/techniques. Nobody would ever suggest that "*a scientist (or the woman next door) observes as part of inhabiting and living where he/she does*, as an insight or hypothesis, this being the very starting point rather than anything one wishes to establish; a prerequisite, not a theory or a mechanism. Hence, you don't really observe the very realm you subsist in as part of subsisting therein, if only for the fact that there is no question to which affirming that you do will answer, and all the questions that the actual subsistence in the realm invokes are already addressed by the various sciences. To sum-up, observing in the biological → human habitat is a form of [human] *being*; a prerequisite to being a human, rather than any other, biological creature; an exceptional, advanced perspective on the other – whatever other – constituents of the habitat (all the constituents that the human mind, in contrast to that of any other biological entity, discerns therein, and therefore also psychological, sociological or historical phenomena), and [on] nothing further than that. An ant appropriates its own terrain while we study ours; each to the degree its capacities admit and with no qualitative difference in the process or the incentive (the core "curiosity"): [in each of the cases] the capacities/needs prescribe the nature/limits of the curiosity, but it is an environment-oriented *curiosity* in both nonetheless.

P.S.

But isn't there, one wishes to ask, also something like 'to be immersed in observation' as distinct from 'to be immersed in the habitat' in the sense discussed above? In other and very simple words: what are the initial grounds for our contention that there is something like a habitat/environment – an existential domain (an ontological category) – in the first place? Weren't we conceiving, in order to be able to make such contention, of 'the world' of people and things and/or of 'life' "in general" or as we "generally" know it' (one is almost tempted to say: *as it is...!!*), from the smallest particle comprising life on earth to the farthest point in the universe and back [taken together in that strangest and at the same time most trivial sense of "togetherness"]? And weren't we thereby "looking" at EVERYTHING from without?

Aren't we bound to *observe* a domain from the very fact that we speak of it as a category?

What should we make of all the mental tricks we seemingly command as part thereof, specifically as regards the very abstraction and categorization (a very peculiar kind of "unification") of a certain form of existence and the notion of [its] 'domain'? Aren't we *observing something more than a constituent or a set of constituents* when we generalize various forms of wildlife into 'nature', or various concepts/processes into physics, chemistry or psychology, respectively? Isn't that **observing** [as it were from without] *per se*?

Categorical Alienation: Two Irreconcilable Modes of Being (When Research Substitutes, rather than Draws on, Perception)

78) The cerebral activity that is registered in various ways through advanced measurement devices is part of the environment, of what *there is* or *takes place*. It is true that one perceives the ongoing record of signals on the monitor with one's senses and mind. But the 'senses' are the receptive mechanisms of a physiological organism, and the mind, whatever it ultimately is, is in the very least fully dependent on strictly physical processes, and in this case on the very cerebral activity the monitor records. So although everything we can ever speak of is in some fundamental sense<sup>54</sup> a "product" of the mind, the "typecast"-projection<sup>55</sup> the latter gives us as regards that record of signals in conjunction with the

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And the questions keep on pouring: from *where?* *How?* At *what?* – which are notions altogether inappropriate and even alien to those evident tricks, these 'Categories'. One interacts with specific members of its kind (and related specific objects or situations), but *observes a/their class* – their environment, their domain. How (where) does the "shift" happen? How does 'Reality' stem from the transition from object to category in our mind-mouth apparatus? 'Abstraction'? What is it? I know what an abstract calculation or idea is only because sometime in my past I learned that word upon some specific real-time preoccupation [in the habitat], and however well this had equipped me with the skill of using this word as part of my life – my comprehensive existence in the habitat – it is of little or no help at all as regards the peculiar tonal nuance in which this question stares at me here...

AND IF WE ARE INDEED **IMMERSED IN OBSERVATION** WHEN WE DO ALL THOSE TRICKS, WHERE IS THE HABITAT? AND HOW DO WE STAND IN RELATION THERETO?

Is there a word for that apparent crux other than 'Magic', sheer magic?

<sup>54</sup> On the nature of which we are trying to cast some light.

<sup>55</sup> The conventional metaphor for language's [side-effect] reflection of the "ultimate" structure of reality – of how the world "echoed" therein really is – is 'picture'. Our natural ability to "restore"/project everything we speak or do as it were "in our mind's eye", further incites us to model that ability, whenever we have to articulate thereof for purposes of explication, on the notion of 'picture'. Applying that retrospective mental-modeling capacity, we as it were *see* [the ultimate structure of] reality in that we *see through* plain speech (e.g. '*come home!*' in real-time vs. 'home', 'imperative ordering', 'me', 'him/her', 'motion', 'physical domain' etc. in our mind's eye in retrospect, wherefore the consequent mental-modelling of all the latter "objects" as if in an inward theatre where they "appear" [*context free*] **as they are**, is no more than *saying* them – saying to oneself, but still *saying*. Hence, *seeing through* plain speech as consequence of saying in the guise of [mental] modelling).

This model, however, is based on a metaphor – an erroneous extrapolation of a unique kind. There is no 'picture' of the world in plain speech over and above the world itself. There simply isn't one to be found in the reality we consider upon philosophical contemplation other than our very denotation thereof for lack of any other means to explain what we are doing. We denote out of nowhere, plainly constructing a notion we further pretend to explore (what we purportedly denote is altogether different from, to give one of many possible examples, the 'picture' of the Atom theoretical physicists of the past proposed and upgraded over and over again as part of their attempts to explore its structure, namely 'Atom' vs. 'World'). It turns out that in philosophy we model (philosophize) in the very articulation of what we do; not in its exposition/explication, but in its very articulation, which is indeed unique if it is at all coherent!

Therefore, to say that we *see through* plain speech is to purport to do something unlike anything else we are apt to do as humans (as intelligent creatures). It employs the form of 'doing' without the substance thereof. Moreover, to *see through* speech is unlike any other sort of heed/cognizance (of the awareness →← perception →← apprehension "atom"). It lacks the distance – conceptually and phenomenologically alike – between subject and object, which is a prerequisite for any coherent cognizance as such. For example: *to sit at the bus stop, waiting for the bus* or, for that matter, to tell someone '*come home!*', *is* (eo ipso amounts to) *seeing through* each of those activities, and no consequent projection of any of them "in one's mind's eye" is bound to change that and/or project any picture whatsoever of what had been done ('imagining' is 'imagining' and there are disciplines which explore *that*). In other words, *doing* either *is* seeing through, whereby there is nothing to see that calls for explanation. Contemplating of the world around us, in sheer contrast – of nature, people, still objects and/or their composition, of the members of the flora and the fauna and all the way up to social patterns and historical processes, is not *seeing through* but merely contemplating, merely *seeing* that which further puzzles and needs to be explained!

cerebral processes in the background, as reflected in the way we *speak* thereof or treat them for all essential purposes, is a depiction of something that *exists*; we speak of that record, without exception, as record of an evolving/proceeding reality; it registers what we call ‘objective’ features, not perceptions.<sup>56</sup> **We study these objective features – that environment – in the laboratory.**<sup>57</sup>

79) Our [concomitant]<sup>58</sup> *experiences*, on the other hand, are part and parcel of a subjective ‘show’ everyone *perceives/conceives* with his/her sensual and/or mental capacities on the absolutely solipsistic band of one’s conscious experience. The essential quality of ‘experience’ is that it is ‘lived through’ as distinct from ‘recorded’ and that it’s palpably manifest as such, rather than ulterior and/or suggestive-indicative in its form.<sup>59</sup> It is true that it’s possible to speak of perceptions and experiences as something that exists, as ‘things’ in a sphere and not only fragments in a show. But this is not, as it were, their essence as phenomena. We can say ‘*it’s an interesting thought*’ or ‘*this is a beautiful scene*’, but nonetheless we will, in all such examples, be communicating our “inner” lives (our ‘private shows’),<sup>60</sup> not *reality*.<sup>61</sup> **We interact with that ‘show’ in our minds.**<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The psychologist registers perceptions! Maybe (a Big ‘?’) the mind does. The monitor and/or any other essentially mechanical (manmade) device, advanced as it may be – MRI, EEG, a magnifying glass or any other signal detector – do not. Another way of putting it is as following: a manmade signal detector [by definition] does not register perceptions. The God/Nature made (biological/evolutionary) *does!* but this is just another way of stating the same puzzle without coming anywhere nearer to a solution thereof (can the very difference *be* the solution?).

<sup>57</sup> *Study* in the Laboratory, as distinct from *Perceive* in the World. The laboratory as the lens to the objective – existent rather than perceived – aspect / basis of the world; a medium where research substitutes rather than draws on perception.

<sup>58</sup> It isn’t clear that we can isolate and as it were “pin point” *that* which we purport to measure, namely exclude the possibility that it is not *fear, gaiety, rage, speech* etc. that we depict in our electronic devices, but other “noises” or combinations of forces/causes affected by unknown and even impalpable factors. Apparently, we face a correlation, but we are very far from understanding how it works (in contrast, for example, to the correlation between ‘danger’ and ‘fear’ or, in other words, the appearance of a jaguar or a burglar with a knife, whom ages of evolution trained the likes of me to identify as ‘danger’ to my survival, nearby and the physiological processes that ensue within myself and my bodily/physical set/chain of reactions. That sense of the correlation – the, as it were, “horizontal”/linear/causal process in time – has been accounted for by biological research. The [apparent] “perpendicular” one between the physiological processes in my body and my concomitant conscious experience of ‘fear’ – the mental “content” or qualia of the experience – is a complete puzzle).

<sup>59</sup> A piece of data (of frequency or force, spread, configuration, composition, pressure, density, tension, direction, measure etc.) Vs. a perceptual unit (hot, red, pleasant, frightening); byte Vs. sound (two inches Vs. big or small). Two inches is relative to (derives its meaning from being related to) three inches and/or ten miles, namely from the features of *a domain*. Hot and pleasant are relative to (derive their meaning from being related to) cold and repulsive, which are essentially perceptual/experiential qualia.

<sup>60</sup> Arguably even in sentences such as: *This tree is higher than that one*. But this is a separate issue which is beyond our interest here.

<sup>61</sup> Indeed, one may rightly feel dissatisfied with such a distinction. One may rightfully observe that ‘An inner life is still a life, so why shouldn’t I be able to study it as I study the “natural” life forms and the physical world?’ And if we can observe and study it, how can we say that it isn’t something that *exists* as such, an environment rather than a show? The answer is simple enough: Indeed, you *can* and indeed it *is* [an aspect of the human phenomenological environment]. The mental aspects of the human condition can be studied *as such*, namely as the mental aspects of the human condition, and this is what psychologists and psychiatrists do. The enigma rather lies in the very word ‘Mental’; in the “nature” and ultimate origins of that concept: ‘What is the mental and how does it interact with the physical?’ is the really interesting question. It is the question we started from and neither psychology nor psychiatry have any clue (or pretention to find out) how to tangle with it.

<sup>62</sup> We *Undergo* rather than *Observe* the whole of ‘Mentality’.

80) In other words, the show in the mind – our conscious plateau – and the process in the lab<sup>63</sup> are alien – absolutely incongruous – to each other. They are neither two *shows*, nor two *environments*, but a show and an environment: two altogether alien existential domains.

#### A Quest [For Perspective] Without a Starting Point

- 81) Denoting those two fundamentally different operational modes about ourselves (which, however scrupulous we tried to be, is all we've done so far) is an important step, but where does it leave us? Far from being explanatory, it amounts to an overt, sober glance at the relevant phenomena: our mental sphere and the physiological entity it harbors. But to “look” and [be able to] describe what we see is one thing; to uncover *why* or *how come* this is the case – quite another. We evidently wish to pursue the latter, but we tread a very awkward ground. If we wish to tackle a problem which contains both modes as variables, we better make sure we can formulate a coherent problem to that effect. It turns out harder than we thought.
- 82) Is it at all possible to accommodate those two “spans” of our being into a single exploratory enterprise? Where would we have to “stand” in order to, as it were, “roll up the sleeves”?
- 83) We can study a person's brain in the lab. We can differentiate, record and analyze typical brain waves/states; we can identify synaptic configurations as typical of specific mental states/processes and, with the help of advanced ‘deep learning’ algorithms, even model their mental correlatives, for example by “producing” artificial speech directly from the brain.
- 84) But when we apply such sophisticated methods of research and engineering, when we analyze the data our technology allows us to draw from the brain, simultaneously resorting to its subject's voluntary or involuntary reports concerning the mental phenomenology that interplays therewith, what are we actually doing? Or better still, what are we looking for and what do we ultimately find and/or achieve?
- 85) ***Are we exploring that unique interplay or merely juggling with such bits and chunks thereof that make sense to us in the first place, inescapably evading the Enigma altogether?***

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<sup>63</sup> More precisely – our *engagement* in the lab; engagement as distinct from experience. The exploration of our environment (our key thereto) as an interface with the *show* from the perspective of our evolvment.

There is a genuine puzzle here. Our means for exploring our environment (scientific research) is a leap at the show our evolvment (the evolvment of our environment) is. A “leap”, however, is all we get to have as far as the show of our nature, as distinct from that of our being (e.g. experience) is concerned. The object of that leap – the perspective over our nature ***as a show*** (the accessibility thereto as a show) is altogether nonexistent – incoherent – to us. Insisting to explore, least of all – to crack, it amounts to turning ‘x’-wards with the aim of attaining the perspective beholding you from the opposite direction, or in other words – attempting to attain a perspective [over yourself] from infinity (from where axis ‘x’ ends backwards). And this is impossible.

P.S.

The word ‘leap’ above is of course a metaphor. It's not a step, an advance or even a move, nor is it a curve or a drift or any other mundane notion. There isn't really a word for *it*, and yet it's there. “Something” occurs upon that interface – our attempt to understand that which not we created – that we're unable to pin-point, to properly *name*. Maybe we cannot do so because we weren't introduced thereto – didn't “learn” it – the way we learn all the ‘stuff’ we do properly name (there's no category to it; it's not ‘natural’). Maybe.

86) *Are we ever in a position to observe the interaction so as to be able to say whether one had or hadn't led to the other?*<sup>64</sup>

A Correlation's "Back Door"

87) We certainly search for, and actually find, correlation. And as already noted, we also conceive and apply technologies that unfold various aspects of affinity between our cognitive capacities and the electro-chemical processes in the brain. At the far end of advanced scientific research lurks the total explication, in terms of modality, of the highly complex interconnectedness between the variety of "upper" physical processes (brain waves, configurations of synaptic networks etc.) and the equally intricate physiological processes which support the corporeal basis of the cognitive apparatus (muscles, receptors, nerve cells, voice, light and gas frequencies etc.), namely a comprehensive, systematic grip over the tremendously circuitous and abstruse way the brain and the rest of the body interact within the human organism to emanate the indefinite array of positive cognition, as in, inter alia, speech, sensation, memory and maybe even imagination and questioning (exclamation, doubt). Maybe...

88) In succeeding to harbor that remote horizon, we should attain the ability to manipulate the Psychophysical twilight zone. But will we thereby come any closer to explicating it as such? – to bringing the experiential 'show' into the same environment where we made the aforesaid [scientific] progress?<sup>65</sup>

89) Or will the 'show' remain as elusive and puzzling as ever in terms of anything other than the absolutely coherent content of our perception of / interaction with the world as its essential inhabitants? – a theme or sphere altogether eluding any possible "stepping back" so as to be able to "observe", not to say – examine, it as such,<sup>66</sup> and therefore wholly indifferent to whatever applications the progress in the explication of the brain-body synthesis at the basis of our cognition should promise, and equally impervious to any insightfulness that comes along.

The Hindrance (the reason *why not*)

90) A small Gedankenexperiment may stress the hurdle even further. Consider the situation where I am my own Guinea Pig in exploring the relation between my brain and my mental activity. *I* undergo the experiment in the lab *and* [at the same time] observe its results.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> The brain state / process to the experience and backwards; not the stimulus to the sensation or any other mental activity or the latter to any event (action of the agent) in the world.

<sup>65</sup> Had there ever emerged a sharper, nay – more poignant, distinction, a deeper tension, between manipulation and explication as such? Hardly.

<sup>66</sup> An interesting afterthought comes to mind here: much has been said about the alleged criterion for artificial intelligence, although what is really meant by people who elaborate on this issue, or at least lurks, however tacitly, at the background of their discourse and argumentation is the notion of 'artificial subjectivity' and the possibility of a coherent criterion thereto. And the question arises whether one can at all speak coherently of something like 'Artificial Subjectivity' and whether there isn't something profoundly problematic in that very notion (a contradiction in terms of sorts)?

<sup>67</sup> Are the *undergoing* and *observing* entities the same entity? (cf. Are George W. Bush (Jr.) and George H. W. Bush's son the same person?). I refer to both as 'I', but it's ostensibly something different – altogether different – that I refer to in each of the two instances – an experiencing subject [which is essentially nothing but itself] and a superintending

The electrodes are stuck into my head and I experience the stimulus<sup>68</sup> while also being positioned so as to observe the results of the brain scanning on the screen in real time. In other words, I both feel a sensation (or utter a sentence or remember something) *and*, at the same – real – time, see and can decipher its “brain-wise” manifestation on the scanner’s “face”. I am at once the scientist and his/her object of inquiry (the world). For real! **And I’m not a “deep” algorithm which needs to learn; which runs through millions and millions of scans, clinging on patterns and affinities in a sea of data “strikes” and consequently applying them in a complex but essentially determinate way;**<sup>69</sup> I

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object [which is essentially utilizable onto other entities: *it interacts*]. Indeed, also when I say: ‘I walk’ or ‘I talk, sleep, contemplate etc.’, I refer to a whole set of different things that I do (that this ‘I’ does) in each case. But..., there’s an essential ‘But’ here. Our focus is not on the variety of what that ‘I’ can do, which is an inquiry into its functionality (a mechanical kind of inquiry) even when applied to something like ‘contemplate’, ‘doubt’ or ‘rage’. We are not asking *how* it can *do* such fundamentally different things (again, we are not interested in the *functionality* of either the body, which is dealt by physics and biology, or the mind, which is dealt by psychology). Our focus in that question is rather on the very object/subject-like complexity of that which is capable thereof, which is a proper philosophical question. We are asking how we can apply the same concept ‘*I*’ as regards such different capabilities (practically in two different worlds), which in contrast to mechanical and/or biological or, for that matter, also psychological phenomena with diversified modes of operation, is an absolutely unparalleled phenomenon; a singular fact indeed. We argue that while the above ‘*Are George W. Bush (Jr.) and George H. W. Bush’s son (or that guy out there) the same person?*’ question is coherent and answerable, its seeming correlative – ‘*Are the experiencing and observing entities the same entity?*’ – is nothing of the kind; a mere look-alike. It’s not that we fail to “connect” – find the ultimate relation – between *experience* and *observation* as domains or modes of operation, which – again – would have been a quasi-scientific pursuit, but that they are not any kind of ‘two’ on any conceivable scale, or better still: we cannot speak of them as two [however different] types in a single domain. In yet other words, in order to ask coherent questions of anything at all, one should first have a grip on the general domain of the issue/object under scrutiny. And it turns out that there’s no such thing – no such common domain – for the human object and the human subject (other than the ‘World’, namely ‘everything’, namely the most obscure and unfathomable notion of them all).<sup>68</sup> which is either employed on me, e.g. sensation, or which I am asked to employ, e.g. memory, speech.

<sup>69</sup> In its ‘learning for/then application’ process, the learning algorithm appears to do something similar to what a person supposedly does upon ostensive learning of the name of an object, such as when, for example, I am shown an unfamiliar shape or color in conjunction with a vocal lingual/signifying unit, say ‘*ta*’ (or ‘*tali*’ or ‘*talimin*’), and simultaneously “instructed” (in whatever conceivable way: orally, through pantomime etc.) to the purported effect that ‘*this is the name of that*’ (the instruction to that effect may take the most basic or primitive form such as uttering the signifying unit and indicating with one’s hand or finger or eyes to the color/shape; this is best illustrated in teaching the solfège by assigning [essentially arbitrary] syllables to the different notes of the octave scale, whereby the relation between the pitch of each note and its ‘name’ is absolutely contingent). In other words, the same way that, following such a ‘tutorial’, I am able to identify the specific color/shape I “learned” and apply it as such, an algorithm, or so the story goes, learns other signs and applies *them*.

The analogy, however, is far from thoroughgoing and actually fallacious. The point is that while in my variant of these seemingly identical drills I had learned to apply the sigh ‘*ta*’ as color or shape, the AI algorithm had learned nothing more than the formal instruction: “*in case of y, do z*”, whereby ‘*y*’ is the *name* of something [and nothing more] specifically because in “its” case – when ‘*y*’ – ‘*z*’ is pursued, whereby, as far as the machine is concerned, ‘*y*’ actually amounts to ‘*so*’ from the phrase ‘*if so than such*’, whereby it is nothing more than the rubric/category ‘something’, whereby in contrast to the case where the application of ‘*cold*’, for instance, denotes [for the applying agent and any other relevant interface] a variety of responses/associations/interfaces such as ‘seek heat/shelter’, ‘winter’, ‘coat’, ‘fool for not anticipating that’ etc. etc., the case of [stumbling upon or being “catered” with] ‘*so*’ or ‘*y*’, will always denote for the machine only another ‘*so*’ or ‘*z*’; the most basic and flat formal category – an empty, colorless and dimensionless ‘*this*’, or better still – a blank, hollow ‘*I*’. The antithesis of the human ‘*I*’. In yet other words, the entire language or “lingual potential” of a machine is exhausted by the notion ‘something’; a quasi-‘*I*’ which is a blank ‘something’ and nothing else, no matter how we call it – ‘signal’, ‘byte’ or anything else. An ‘aaaaa...’, ‘bbbbbb...’ or ‘zzzzz...’, but nothing more.

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The difference, despite any seeming similarity between the two cases, is colossal, and indeed crucial and highly consequential. It so happens that a machine – whatever machine – cannot really *learn* anything **but names**, and if we wish to be absolutely precise – it cannot learn, each time and again, be it a part of a very lengthy, linear or non-linear and/or multilayer process, subject, inter alia, to extraordinary mathematical manipulation, anything more than that, whilst the learning process of the human ‘I’ is anything but learning names.

The truth of the matter is that no philosophical analysis or scientific research, notwithstanding numerous attempts and/or hypotheses, have ever succeeded in gaining any clue to the way a human creature (the unique highest form of biological intelligence) *learns a word*, and to be more precise – acquires the ability to apply a sign as an integral of perspective (as distinct not only from a computer’s quirk, but also unlike the wolf’s *howl* or a bird’s *tweet*); to apply – to “utter” – categories rather than bits; to indicate ‘*this is fruit*’ and not only ‘*this is that/here*’; to produce transformation from ‘this’ to ‘apple’ to ‘fruit’ as from ‘do’ to ‘walk’, ‘talk’ or ‘smoke’. The machine will at most indicate that ‘*this belongs here*’ or ‘*do that*’, but will not say ‘*please, run!*’. Actually – **BECAUSE IT “KNOWS” (I.E. IS CAPABLE OF “LEARNING”) NOTHING BUT NAMES** – it will never *say*, but only ‘indicate’ in the beholder’s eye. And as long as machines go on learning no more than names (*this is that*), they will remain *machines*, whatever miraculous functionality they (we!) will accomplish thereby.

Going back to the above comparison/distinction, we can proceed to say that while in my case my very ability to *learn* as I did (and therefore my further ability to apply ‘ta’ in the future as a color or a shape) is conditioned on, beyond the basic formula of ‘*this is that*’, my previous knowledge of what ‘color’ or ‘shape’ are (not as just two more names, but as distinct categories, i.e. my previously acquired proficiency to apply categories) as well as other more or less latent “environmental” world-language kind of preconditions, there is nothing of the kind in the case of the algorithm that was taught in the lab by [however smart] people like me and you and tremendous computational power. The algorithm, as it were, always learns from scratch, even where it has already learned – and is capable of – a great deal! The algorithm is “taught” task ‘A’ from scratch and then task ‘B’ from scratch and then task ‘C’ from scratch, as it were irrespectively of the fact that they are all part of a sequence and a larger (or ‘higher level’) task and/or that a previous phase therein is an antecedent necessary stage/precondition (a virtual “building block”) of proceeding to the next one.

**THE PROGRAMMER knows/sees the LARGER PICTURE – the SEQUENCE, the dynamics. The algorithm doesn’t see.** Nor does the human brain.

**AI** begins with something like an ostensive definition (a virtually endless chain of ‘if so, then so...’s, including any “corrections” thereof) and then trained to “apply” the acquired skill/s – essentially an ever-growing matrix/network of [singular] ‘symbol-function’ intersections – in certain functional environments, such as the recognition of highly complex structures or competing within very complex sets of rules. By contrast, at the point in time when the **human ‘I’** is qualified to “learn” as the machine learns, it (he/she) is already very far ahead. When I (as a seven-year-old violin novice) had *learned* that a certain pitch is ‘Do’ and another is ‘Re’, I’ve already learned and/or had been trained in so much [**that had enabled me to conduct that absolutely enigmatic learning process (essentially “synthesizing” all that previous knowledge)**], that my and the machine’s ‘ostensive’ learning are altogether different things, albeit seeming as the same kind of [basic/formal] drill.

Bearing upon such ‘[ever] from scratch’ method, AI may “learn” to identify a human face, any kind of anomaly in any kind of sequence or any object whatsoever (anything that can be reduced to pieces of data, however complex or dynamic); but it will not – or at least seemingly cannot – learn that  $1+1=2$  or that *this is a picture/red* the way a human child can. And the reason is that while in *performing* the tasks they had been trained to perform, namely *implementing* or *applying* previously acquired skills, AI algorithms bear upon, as it were, “antecedent knowledge” (what they had *learned* before), they do nothing of the kind when they learn. They bear on nothing when they learn (as part of their very *learning process*), or at least nothing other than the very algorithmic process/“vector” – another ‘if so, then so.’ micro unit.

The human ‘I’ (not human *intelligence*, but the intelligent ‘I’), by comparison, essentially bears upon something beyond mere “software” in its very **learning**-process (namely, on top of, or better still – categorically “earlier” than, the application of what had been learned). Otherwise it could never have *learned* that *this is a ‘picture’* rather than *this is ‘that’ and not ‘that’* or even merely *this → that, this → that, this → that...* in ever recurring/divergent sequences (for the algorithm, even the not that is another kind of *that*, whereby there’s really no ‘No’ in the only indicative-directive kind of language it apprehends. One may say that otherwise it would already not be a machine, but an ‘I’, since ‘No’ is not only a piece of data).

The human ‘I’ has something of the world – of accomplished REALITY (from top to bottom), rather than “elementary particle” (from the bottom up) kind of constructive qualia – embedded into its process of growth as an intelligence; as a mind. The difference is crucial, and far from simple questions follow: Can the deep-AI programmers attain/produce/mimic a “background” of that sort for their algorithms (one that is interweaved into the very process

**experience [THE SHOW IN MY MIND on the one hand] and observe [THE ONE ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN on the other].<sup>70</sup>**

- 91) Is there a “hidden bridge” between the two modes which are my lot? – a prospect for a bridge between them [in real time!!]?<sup>71</sup>
- 92) Before we proceed, the notion ‘observe’ should also be nailed to its proper sense. One can observe in the lean, simpler sense of tracing formal correlations no differently than in linking the sound of the switch [on the wall or in one’s palm] to the light emerging in the bulb.<sup>72</sup> But we humans can also observe in the broader sense which includes interpretation; which incorporates the pursuit for *meaning* in the output;<sup>73</sup> which does not stop at the formal correlation,<sup>74</sup> but seeks for the bespeaking/evincing value of the scans, of their types, their patterns, their interfaces and/or whatever is pertinent to them as such, then seeking to reveal additional, more “fundamental” correlations of the same indeterminate span, thus [however latently] hoping to [eventually] establish a bridge-head between the aggregate insight sprouting from that multilevel correlation and whatever other experiential and/or analytic sense that we’re able to make of our subjective experience and/or conception of our mental capacities. **OBSERVE** in the deep scientific sense – as ‘try to figure out’, try to understand.<sup>75</sup>

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of learning; our learning capacity is circumscribed by our origins; what are the origins – the ultimate origins – of AI? Are there those among us that really don’t see that whatever these origins are, they’re overwhelmingly different from ours?)? Is this the sort of thing you conduct/attain in a lab and/or by way of ‘code’? Can the AI program follow the footsteps – the “dynamics” – of the human brain’s gradual intake of the world (of its interconnected ‘categories’, such as, inter alia, location, subsistence, differentiation, alteration, variation, interaction, repetition, end, beginning, unclarity, uncertainty, probability etc., not to mention their interconnectedness so that, for example, ‘father’ is also a human being, an authority and/or a nuisance and fish is both an animal, food and our common ancestor) rather than a certain accomplished phase thereof at a time, such as [instances of] speech or memory? Where should it start from? What could possibly count as the building blocks of such inceptive dynamics? Furthermore, if the gradual ‘cohesion’ of the world is *in the world*, and we don’t “take it in” but inhere in the world and conform thereto – habituate therein as part of general evolution – like other animals, without absolute consonance betwixt our perception (or perceptive apparatus) and its elementary particles/processes, how could we mimic or incorporate *that* (that specific fact) in what we purport to create? And in other words, could the gap between *if ‘x’, then ‘y’* and *this is a boy* be bridged by us [who evolved to be able to apply the later but are seemingly able to forge only the former]?

<sup>70</sup> Whereby the latter sense of ‘observe’ includes ‘analyze’, ‘interpret’ etc., namely scientific study.

<sup>71</sup> Whereby chemistry & electricity are (not ‘transform into’ but **ARE**) experience at the same time.

<sup>72</sup> A cat can also *observe* in that way. However, to be alert is not the same as to observe.

<sup>73</sup> The cheetah also “interprets” the spectacle/impression of an antelope as *food*. But this is not the way we apply ‘interpretation’ here. In doing so, the cheetah does nothing different from what is “done” by the algorithm [itself, rather than by the programmer]. Our application of *interpret* here is adjunct to our unique notion of ‘inquiry’ and its singular spin-off of ‘meaning’, bearing on ‘curiosity’ rather than ‘utility/functionality’; on the aspiration to know/unravel rather than the drive to achieve/perform (this is, of course, a wholly separate and quite a ‘BIG’ philosophical subject, but one may, just for starters, consider the fine distinction between *aspiration* and *drive* within the general concept of ‘Will’. There’s a whole world of difference between the two. Specifically, it is worthy to dwell on the contrast between their respective ontological backgrounds/environments and the very fact that they differ; that there is an ontological backbone to something other than *drive* in the universe).

<sup>74</sup> The susceptibility of which is always a result of functional design.

<sup>75</sup> We could ask: what is the difference between these two senses – pick-up patterns on the one hand and interpret on the other? Are they merely different levels in a single scale (differing only in their level of complexity, like equations with different numbers of variables) or different qualities altogether? But this is, again, a separate issue. It is enough for our purposes here to stress that, seated “brain-electrolyzed” in the lab, I also observe, or at least prone to observe, in the broader, intellectually exhausting sense; that nothing is omitted or overlooked along my Gedankenexperiment. I bear on – start from making – the formal linkage but proceed to *study* and *interpret* as furthestmost as I can.

- 93) As we consider, and stumble upon and consider again, that dubious concept of “hidden bridge”, a question arises: as I perform this “two-dimensional” drill – *experience* and [concomitantly] *observe* the latter’s<sup>76</sup> measurable output; as I consciously interact, in real-time and utter sobriety, with these two aspects of myself – my mind and my brain; as I feel some pain and follow the vibrating line (or whatever other form of output/record) on the screen, or as I remember an event or utter some sentence and trace whatever decoded qualia that comes along (or any other manipulation applied thereto thereafter) – what is it that stops me from crossing the abyss between my conscious plateau and its [first manifestation on the screen and/or any possible database and then] purported study in the lab?<sup>77</sup>
- 94) What is it that sustains, nay – perpetuates, the absolute alienation between the two, notwithstanding the growing accumulation of ever subtler and intimate correlation?
- 95) The obvious, however puzzling, answer is: *I*. The ultimate obstacle is me; not *Daniel* or any other individual, but the ‘I’ within myself or anyone else.

I(ai)

- 96) The starting point of [everything pertaining to] my attempt to crack the Brain<sup>78</sup>-Mind problem is also the impediment thereto.
- 97) It so happens that ‘I’ – the ‘spoken’ I; the intelligent perspective on anything at all – is not only the means and precondition to the feasibility and actuality of all that we discuss herein – for any science or accumulative body of thought or understanding, but also the impediment – the very obstacle – to the feasibility and probability of our ultimate objective, of the possibility of any bridgehead whatsoever over the Holy Grail of all philosophical thought since forever: the explication of the dual nature – the dual phenomenology – of the human creature.
- 98) *I* experience and *I* observe. *I* speak and *I* outstretch my “inquisitive hand” (like Adam for the apple). Both originate in ‘I’, nay – both ultimately disperse in ‘I’ in practically untraceable ways.
- 99) However complex and straightforward as such, each starts from and ends in ‘I’ **in absolutely dissimilar ways**, or better still – as if the other hadn’t existed.
- 100) To remind us, we study the objective features of the brain – its environment – in the laboratory, but interact with the show of our experiences in our minds, without any clue of how to bring these two “domains” into a single environment upon which we would have an external perspective. **Only it turns out that the hindrance to that sought maneuver is nothing other than the ‘I’ which is at the root of them both – the ‘I’ which is capable of both *undergoing* and *observing*.**

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<sup>76</sup> That is: *my own* experience’s measurable output.

<sup>77</sup> This is *me* and that is *me*. There are no “other minds, agents or worlds” involved; no boundaries to cross, relations to establish or destinations to pursue, but rather explicate a deep, constitutive “entanglement” within a single “thing”: the *thing* that experiences and observes; the same homogenic unit – ‘I’ – that constitutes and encompasses both at the same – *real* – time. How could there be an absolute impossibility to *see* [to the bottom of] the union in *my* unison manifestation the way we plainly do in numerous other cases all around – the length and width of a geometric form, the man who is a parent and a child, the redeeming consequence of a tragedy etc.?

<sup>78</sup> As part of the body; therefore: The Body-Mind problem.

- 101) The conventional wisdom concerning the brain-mind problem, or the Psychophysical enigma, is that we haven't got a clue of the ultimate link between their respective phenomena: the observable sphere and my solipsistic experiential arena. We research the whole of reality, so the argument goes, but when it comes to the interface between the machine within my skull and my personal home-theater – an interface the case for [and punch of] which is second only to the puzzle it evokes – we lose all grip on where we are, what we are doing and what can be considered as direction to our contemplated end-point (namely to dispense with the puzzle).
- 102) Hence the need for a shift in our focus – from the “intuitive” and modally convenient notion of interacting ‘domains’ to the complex and extremely shady notion of the agent – the ‘I’ which both observes and experiences.
- 103) It's the common starting point of both modes of agency which is the riddle, the Grand Enigma: the transcendent nature of human agency; of the spoken ‘I’.
- 104) To put it even more bluntly: we cannot attain our purported goal because we are the ones who pursue it.
- 105) What the above Gedankenexperiment shows is that the fact of ‘*I*’ is the obstruction, the reason for the flaw in our endeavor;<sup>79</sup> that it is the abyss between those two worlds. ‘I’ as an abyss – not for us here and now, but for anybody who attempts to observe our total comprehensive “sphere”<sup>80</sup> from without; to mimic<sup>81</sup> a perspective on the way we ultimately are (or came to be).<sup>82</sup>
- 106) To speak of tracing or explicating – in evolutionary terms – the “way” that conscious-agency<sup>83</sup> emerged, is to speak of crossing that abyss within the ‘I’; the abyss within myself as the one who observes and the one who experiences – the abyss I am

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<sup>79</sup> Here again, what is meant by “‘*I* as an obstruction’ (the core of the problem) is nothing like a technical/mechanical failure (frail construction) or mathematical error (contradictory results) or any other sense of wrongdoing or untracked inadequacy. It's not really a flaw, but a fact. A truth of life (a metaphysical “constant”) which stands contrary to a basic human ambition. The ‘*I*’ stands in the way of the psychophysical interface the way death stands in the way of eternal life. Conclusively and irrevocably. Not like physiological decay/extinction stands to the thrive of nature. The latter do not stand to each other but pertain to a single process. ‘Death’ and ‘eternal life’, in contrast, are mutually exclusive concepts. If not for death, life would be eternal. If not for ‘*I*’, we would cross the psychophysical border. They exclude each other. But there is another layer to these similar bonds. Death undermines eternal life because we *wish* the latter; not because we've made any kind of mistake. And the same is true for ‘*I*’ and the body-mind problem. Both cases are an outright fact repudiating a basic human ambition. Both do not constitute (let alone – describe) a fact about the world but undermine a profound human fantasy. Except by way of fantasy there is no sense to the notion of ‘eternal life’, and yet (grossly) no one wants to die. Accordingly, except by way of fantasy there is no sense to the “interface” between the physiological hominoid and subjective experiences, and yet we strive to unravel it. ‘Death’ shatters the first. ‘*I*’ shatters the second.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Us’ not in the sense of me and you or any other number of people, but as everybody that had ever lived [and each of them in particular]. ‘Us’ as the ultimate class of ‘someone in the world’.

<sup>81</sup> Essentially mimic and not reveal or reach.

<sup>82</sup> The answer (or the closest thing to an answer) to that question probably lies in attempting to decipher the electric signals of the *evolvment* of – rather than of evolved – mental *operation* in simultaneity to the observation and study of speech-learning processes in children. But could that at all be done? Is there any meaning to the notion of ‘*evolving signals and/or brain configurations*’ as distinct from signals/configurations that are supposed to represent matured mental qualia, or to the very evolvment thereof? And how can we “glimpse” into the evolvment – the very ultimate evolvment – of the first speech acts of a human infant? What is (would be) the language/method in which we purport to collect the relevant data?

<sup>83</sup> as it were, providence's/evolution's PERSPECTIVE herein.

absolutely and most lucidly aware of<sup>84</sup> throughout the above experiment in the lab **only because *I am***; because of that ultimately, evidently and absolutely axiomatic statement<sup>85</sup> – **I am**; the statement on which there is no perspective if only because it is the mother of all perspective as such.

107) If the above Gedankenexperiment demonstrates anything, it is that there is no conceivable bridge or, for that matter, a coherent notion of interface, between those two facets of human agency – experiencing and observing: **I** trace the real/real-time operation of the purported backbone/cause of my mental sustenance, and **I** simultaneously sustain as such. This is *mine* and that is *mine*. This is accessible and that is accessible. Everything around me (in the lab, in my mind) is utterly clear (I “do” both within time and can report thereof). EXCEPT ‘I’. Except the gap. Except the grounds of each of the facets in ‘I’. Hence, even when I’m closest to the “whole” of me, I’m as [absolutely] remote from *me* (*I*).<sup>86</sup>

108) And because there is no *bridge* [between those two things that I do], there is no [shared] *home* (a common domain). And therefore, also no chance for an investigation (a science) which is aimed at both at once.

109) Wherefore the challenge in the fact that ***“It is also unclear how your interest in the contents of this paragraph led to the neural process that culminated in your reading it”*** is not the challenge of integrating or bridging two domains, but the same old challenge of ‘I’, specifically as part of the triad/triangle the other two counterparts of which are Brain and World. Brain – I – World. *I* as the ‘x’ factor of the history of the universe and existence alike.

110) Indeed, there are important and well-established theories about the emergence of ‘I’ somewhere between infancy and childhood. These theories, however, and the questions/answers they pursue, are irrelevant and of no avail to our troubles here. They are strictly “within” observation; within science.

#### The Puzzle Remains; What About the Questions?

111) We have conducted the above Gedankenexperiment, where the scientific scrutiny of the output was conducted by the very subject of the input, namely the same person that was concomitantly experiencing [purportedly correlative] mental stimuli, in order to illustrate that even in the optimal circumstances, where we pin down those two modes of human subsistence – experiencing and observing – to their most contiguous circumstances,<sup>87</sup> where they are applied by the same agent,<sup>88</sup> practically “touching” upon each other in real time, the absolute gap between them as well as the total mystery of their assumed collusion remain intact, whereby none of the tremendous effort by way of painstaking approximation of modeling ***“the highly complex interconnectedness between***

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<sup>84</sup> as it were “stare it in the eyes”.

<sup>85</sup> A statement; not [an established] fact.

<sup>86</sup> The difference is essential: *me* is from without (call me, bring me, trust me, aware of me). *I* is from within.

<sup>87</sup> With the aim of accommodating any skepticism concerning the “research” of other people’s solipsistic theatres via lingual communication and evading any category mistake or conceptual blunder associated therewith.

<sup>88</sup> Originate in the same entity, so to speak, although this is a misleading, and even fallacious, metaphor.

*the variety of “upper” physical processes (brain waves, configurations of synaptic networks etc.) and the equally intricate physiological processes which support the corporeal basis of the cognitive apparatus (muscles, receptors, nerve cells, voice, light and gas frequencies etc.), namely a comprehensive, systematic grip over the tremendously circuitous and abstruse way the brain and the rest of the body interact within the human organism to emanate the indefinite array of positive cognition, as in, inter alia, speech, sensation, memory and maybe even imagination and questioning...”,<sup>89</sup> has any chance for the least progress towards our goal. The abyss remains – ‘I’.*

- 112) Our ‘GuineaTist ScienPig’<sup>90</sup> is not a kind of Hydra, a Cerberus or a case of dicephalic parapagus twins. Nor is he/she an actor getting in and out of [different] characters. With all due respect, myths are myths, genetic flaws are genetic flaws and acting is acting.<sup>91</sup> We are rather dealing with a singular real-time phenomenon where one is not a heterogenous [but still unitary] entity, but plainly *more than one*.<sup>92</sup> More than **A** X...
- 113) Hence, considering once more the above question ‘are the *undergoing* and the *observing* entities the same entity?’, we can fine-tune the question mark (the tone of bewilderment at the tip of the curiosity) to its proper philosophical pitch.
- 114) Both are applied as ‘**I**’, but it is something altogether different that I refer to in each case: an experiencing subject [which is essentially nothing but itself] and a superintending object [which is essentially utilizable onto other entities: it *interacts*]. This isn’t heterogeneity. It is singularity.
- 115) Indeed, also when I say: ‘I walk’ or ‘I talk, sleep, contemplate etc.’, I refer to a whole set of different things that *I* do (that this ‘I’ does) in each case.

But... there’s an essential ‘But’ here:

- 116) Our focus at this advanced stage of analysis is not on the functionality of ‘**I**’. We are not asking *how* it can *do* such fundamentally different things as ‘walk’, ‘sleep’ or

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<sup>89</sup> Section 87, above.

<sup>90</sup> There is no such thing in nature; but each of us is essentially one, whereby this might be the most precise or elementary description of the homo sapiens.

<sup>91</sup> One of the most interesting and least investigated mental “states/acts” is that of ‘acting’.

<sup>92</sup> Nor is one *two* (dualism), which is an overly simplified circumvention of the crux. One is not two “ones” (two “things”, two types). One is more than one – more than anything that can be preceded by an ‘*a*’ (like ‘*a dog*’ or ‘*a soul*’). The human condition allows a state of affair which has been precluded for all the rest of nature. We dare speculate that when the cheetah tracks the antelope (performs as hunter), it does something similarly different from what the antelope experiences (as distinct from ‘undergoes’) thereupon (performs as prey). The cheetah *acts*; the antelope *knows*. Nothing on earth, except the ‘**I**’ of the homo sapiens, is capable of both – being an object and a subject – at the same time. The hunter’s and the prey’s respective modes are not, as it were, separate events in time or passive and aggressive reflexes/reactions. As *modes*, they have no conceivable/articulable interface. The one *applies*; the other *is*. Not “is... *acting*”, but *IS*. ‘Is’ as a whole world apart from ‘acts’. ‘Acts’ and ‘is’ – without the ‘**I**’ (without the abyss) there is no interface, whereby only a homo sapiens can be the focus of both. A predator who is also a prey along the food chain is a heterogenous entity in a complex domain. A human (sub/ob)ject – a GuineaTist ScienPig – is not. It is singular. Because of an (the) abyss.

‘contemplate’, if only because, as we’ve just seen, there is no coherent notion of a single “apparatus” that does them all.<sup>93</sup>

- 117) It is rather on the very object/subject-like complexity of ‘I’.<sup>94</sup> This, in turn, is a proper philosophical issue to tangle.
- 118) We are asking how we can apply the same concept ‘*I*’ as the proper focus of two different worlds, which in contrast to mechanical and/or biological or, for that matter, psychological, phenomena with diversified modes of operation, is an unparalleled phenomenon. An unparalleled fact.
- 119) Hence, we argue that while the above ‘*Are George W. Bush (Jr.) and George H. W. Bush’s son (or that guy out there) the same person?*’ question is coherent and answerable, its seeming correlative – ‘*Are the experiencing and observing entities the same entity?*’ – is nothing of the kind; a mere look-alike.
- 120) There is neither familiar nor conceivable standpoint from which one can so ask.
- 121) The right philosophical question has only to do with the diversified application of ‘*I*’.
- 122) In yet other words, it’s not that we fail to “connect” – find the ultimate relation – between *experience* and *observation* as “domains” or modes of operation, which – again – would have been a quasi-scientific pursuit, but that they are not any kind of ‘two’ on any conceivable scale; or better still: we cannot speak of them as two [however different] types in a single domain.
- 123) In contrast, we *can* speak coherently of the diversified application of ‘*I*’, wherefore we can also research it.
- 124) Applied language is a domain in a way that the psychophysical bundle is not.
- 125) In yet other words, in order to ask coherent questions of anything at all, one should first have a grip on the general domain of the issue/object under scrutiny. And it turns out that there’s no such thing – no such common domain – for the human object and the human subject other than the *story* we are part [and only part] of in that we *are*/exist.
- 126) We can no doubt affect that story. So maybe we should better concentrate on *that*, rather than doubting that which is right in front of our eyes.

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<sup>93</sup> As far as functionality goes, we do know, through physics and biology (with no need to resort to philosophy), how the heart pumps blood or how our legs are able to move, and we also know, with the aid of psychology (and, again, without evoking any philosophical means), why we laugh, cry, envy or seek vengeance. But we don’t have a functional type of “thing” – a coherent model of ‘entity’ – which both walks and dreams, both experiences and observes.

<sup>94</sup> I wished to write ‘metavariation’, ‘non-apparatus’ or even ‘meta – non-apparatus’ etc. (it isn’t difficult to let one’s imagination loose here). But I realized that there is no metaphor for ‘I’ (which is not trivial, since everything else does).

## 7. Summary

- 127) The author of the paragraph which inspired this paper tried to sketch a problem, or more precisely – point out a few puzzles which come down to a single specific problem: the problem/puzzle of free will.
- 128) The first four propositions analyzed above (‘you experience...’, ‘you freely decided...’, ‘you are curious...’, ‘you strongly sense...’, ‘you could have done otherwise...’) appear to be undisputable. They are plainly indicative and there’s a straightforward sense in which they all amount to accurate descriptions of highly familiar states (‘you are...’). So much so that the ensuing puzzle catches one by surprise, which won’t go even as one has long since rushed into the heart of the challenge.
- 129) The two last propositions, however, bespeak perplexity (‘it is not clear / unclear...’) in face of that very transparency, suggesting it runs contrary to incontrovertible scientific truths about the physiological basis of everything the former four denote.
- 130) The author evokes scientific doctrine to discern a puzzle at the root of human agency’s supposedly sovereign nature/conduct, as it is reflected in plain speech. And he purports to address and investigate that puzzle – that perplexing “scenario”<sup>95</sup> – with the best scientific tools at his disposal.
- 131) A rigorous philosophical scrutiny, however, of the linkage between that prima facie naïve starting point and the anything but naïve inquiry contemplated thereupon, reveals two critical drawbacks that, we argue, cast a shadow on the scientific tone of the looming project and call for rethinking the focus of any philosophical input thereto. They are as following:
- a) The author exceedingly underestimates, and probably altogether overlooks, the role (or “place”) of language in his project. The ‘language’ that for him [merely] separates the inquisitive mind from<sup>96</sup> the mysteries of reality and serves the former to articulate<sup>97</sup> the latter before launching an assault, is anything but a formal feature or accessory to the substantial course of events.<sup>98</sup> Far from serving as some limpid veil or window or a lens or any kind of means (a “tool”) at the disposal of the mind onto its subject matter, viz. reality as such, it is, rather, the very puzzle. Hence, the author (or anybody else) cannot properly formulate that which he purports to pursue and thence got himself trapped at the very beginning of the journey. Human language ostensibly does not exhaust the human condition; not in the sense that there are no words for ‘stuff’ that hasn’t been discovered or conceived of yet, but in that there are aspects to our cognitive evolvment – our physio-cognitive particularity – that cannot be “looked into” whatever inquisitive mode of observation/articulation we adopt. We plainly cannot depict, or for that matter – at all observe, that which we do as subjective agents (‘sense’,

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<sup>95</sup> No less perplexing than the results of the double-slit experiment. Perhaps neither is a *scenario*.

<sup>96</sup> Or rather conjoins it to.

<sup>97</sup> Sketch on the “board” of one’s mind, or better still – on that of the community of researchers’ “shared mind”.

<sup>98</sup> The scientific inquiry.

‘read’, ‘decide’... the whole of it), at least not in the way we observe our internal and external composition and operation as parts of nature.<sup>99</sup> There are aspects to the human creature’s relation to itself which language implies, but nothing whatsoever, including science (and least of all language itself) evinces,<sup>100</sup> whereby the attempt to indicate the very constituents of the problem – to sketch even the most preliminary projection of its implicit<sup>101</sup> “terrain” – bears on a fatal categorical distortion<sup>102</sup> that leaves us with no chance of making any progress. For all we know (or do or aspire), there is no such terrain in separation from the *story*<sup>103</sup> of existence (of which science as such and all its constituents are also a part). Perhaps the true (the “ultimate”) cause of certain non-scientific, but nonetheless rigorous in consequence, analysis of reality through<sup>104</sup> language<sup>105</sup> lies in affecting, rather than explicating, reality. Isn’t it at least slightly reasonable that our<sup>106</sup> unrivaled familiarity with ‘limits’ as such and our intimate acquaintance with the boundaries of ‘meaning’, endow us if not with established authority to *impose* anything, then with a genuine capacity to clarify and elucidate any realm where ought (should) and ought not (shouldn’t) kind of propositions are employed and applied? Aren’t we as indispensable as oxygen for the constituents of such realms?

- b) An inquiry into the puzzle of the psychophysical interface at the heart of cognition which evades its idiosyncratic if not altogether singular features (the way psychology, on the one hand, or neurophysiology, on the other, inevitably do), is nowhere to proceed! There is no appropriate domain to attend to it. It lacks a coherent conceptual framework. There is no such discipline. It amounts to speaking to nobody, nowhere. It is nothing. Whereby, far from failing, we cannot even begin.

132) A philosophy that evades these two primary difficulties is a pseudo-discipline. It can certainly generate tremendous noise and no less misery and “self-sustaining”

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<sup>99</sup> We can conceive of ourselves reading/dreaming/talking and we can do so for eating/walking/smoking. But this is where the similarity stops. While we can subsequently provide a complete and absolutely exhaustive account of what the three latter phenomena amount to where they are set in/by language, namely the physical-material world, we are capable of nothing of the kind (and virtually nothing at all) for the three former ones. Furthermore, the little we nevertheless do manage to provide for the former, if only by way of approximation, is once more at the level provided to the latter, namely the level of the physical interface of those former three, which is, hardly anyone would contest, not what any of them *is*.

<sup>100</sup> ‘The tree is there’ and ‘the pain is there’ bear no similarity whatsoever. Nor would affixing ‘out’ [there] and ‘in’ [there], respectively, make any difference (both, as it were, already occupy the very mode each sentence bears). The first is somewhere. The second – nowhere. And still, on the tip of our tongue and at the tip of our ear, ever reverberating the universal contract we irretrievably succumbed to when our brain met the world before *we* were... – both are *there*. Somewhere and Nowhere is at once there.

<sup>101</sup> Wherefore, the absolute impotence in facilitating any consequence to that evident “implication” is the very puzzle.

<sup>102</sup> A *distortion* and not a mistake, even if it’s done in good faith.

<sup>103</sup> A narrative, rather than actuality, of being... the story emanating from that same contract between brain and world which sprouts the seeds of infant consciousness.

<sup>104</sup> Not *with the aid of language* such as via science or art, but *as consequence of language*; via language as a transparent sphere rather than a “muscle”. Not like water; like life.

<sup>105</sup> Revealing structural errors and inherent constraints in the articulation of endeavors and aspirations, horizons and immediate maneuvers.

<sup>106</sup> The philosophers’.

blunder,<sup>107</sup> but it will never yield a single insight that is not a masked platitude, totally devoid of the unmistakable – as absolutely fresh as it is absolutely old – odor of authentic [and therefore metamorphic] knowledge. Authentic ‘knowledge’ *changes*, if only for a split of a second until ‘being’ takes over again. Even in philosophy.

133) So let us, philosophers, all the more so considering no few contemporary scientific Gurus having proclaimed the death and futility of our ancient trade, and those “celebrities” among us who for quite a while, for sheer envy of “hardcore” scientific progress and lack of authentic philosophical depth and rigor, have been catering for that unfortunate view by failing to disavow themselves from quasi-scientific discourse and insisting on philosophical reasoning as no more than commentary – as essentially parasitic – to scientific progress:

a) Keep on cutting science’s quasi-wings, whenever it purports to grow any.

But much more importantly:

b) Explore the diversified application of I (and language/speech as a world of *action* [rather than reflection] in general).

And even more so:

c) Champion [at least some of] philosophy’s profound insightfulness as the proper and most promising means to address the bleeding distortions of human reality, repudiating once and for all the blasphemy that philosophy has no practical value... Being the only thing that exalts/transfigures us humans from the “fabric” of the known universe and ultimately distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom, the inhabitants of the latter having their mathematics, their physics, their languages, games and emotions (***BUT NOT THEIR PHILOSOPHY!***), it might also and quite specifically be the best tool for addressing our particular actual human mess.

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<sup>107</sup> If there’s anything in this world that is self-sustaining, it is stupidity and blindness. He/she who *sees* or *understands* immediately (ipso facto) “loses ground” and undergoes the awe of mystery in that which has been exposed and revealed – that which is “out there...”, ever emanating the indefinite, inexhaustible quality of that notion, thereby reaffirming the innate precariousness of any perspective thereupon. Only he/she who is blind or stupid draws therefrom so as to stand, and keep on standing, on solid grounds.