More *EPM* Passages

48. Imagine a stage in pre-history in which humans are limited to what I shall call a Rylean language, a language of which the fundamental descriptive vocabulary speaks of public properties of public objects located in Space and enduring through Time. … [I]t makes subtle use not only of the elementary logical operations of conjunction, disjunction, negation, and quantification, but especially of the the subjunctive conditional.

I am beginning my myth *in medias res* with humans who have already mastered a Rylean language, because the philosophical situation it is designed to clarify is one in which we are not puzzled by how people acquire a language for referring to public properties of public objects, but are very puzzled indeed about how we learn to speak of inner episodes and immediate experiences.

49. The questions I am, in effect, raising are "What resources would have to be added to the Rylean language of these talking animals in order that they might come to recognize each other and themselves as animals that *think, observe*, and have *feelings* and *sensations*, as we use these terms?" and "How could the addition of these resources be construed as reasonable?"… Let it be granted, then, that these mythical ancestors of ours are able to characterize each other's verbal behavior in semantical terms; that, in other words, they not only can talk about each other's predictions as causes and effects, and as indicators (with greater or less reliability) of other verbal and nonverbal states of affairs, but can also say of these verbal productions that they *mean* thus and so, that they say *that* such and such, that they are true, false, etc.

50. With the resources of semantical discourse, the language of our fictional ancestors has acquired a dimension which gives considerably more plausibility to the claim that they are in a position to talk about *thoughts* just as we are. For characteristic of thoughts is their *intentionality, reference*, or *aboutness*, and it is clear that semantical talk about the meaning or reference of verbal expressions has the same structure as mentalistic discourse concerning what thoughts are about. It is therefore all the more tempting to suppose that the intentionality of *thoughts* can be traced to the application of semantical categories to overt verbal performances, and to suggest a modified Rylean account according to which talk about so-called "thoughts" is shorthand for hypothetical and mongrel categorical-hypothetical statements about overt verbal and nonverbal behavior, *and* that talk about the *intentionality* of these "episodes" is correspondingly reducible to semantical talk about the verbal components.

My immediate problem is to see if I can reconcile the classical idea of thoughts as inner episodes which are neither overt behavior nor verbal imagery and which are properly referred to in terms of the vocabulary of intentionality, with the idea that the categories of intentionality are, at bottom, semantical categories pertaining to overt verbal performances.

52. It will not surprise my readers to learn that the second stage in the enrichment of their Rylean language is the addition of theoretical discourse. Thus we may suppose these language-using animals to elaborate, without methodological sophistication, crude, sketchy, and vague theories to explain why things which are similar in their observable properties differ in their causal properties, and things which are similar in their causal properties differ in their observable properties.

53. But we are approaching the time for the central episode in our myth. I want you to suppose that in this Neo-Rylean culture there now appears a genius—let us call him Jones—who is an unsung forerunner of the movement in psychology, once revolutionary, now commonplace, known as Behaviorism.

54. But while it is quite clear that scientific Behaviorism is not the thesis that common-sense psychological concepts are *analyzable* into concepts pertaining to overt behavior -- a thesis which has been maintained by some philosophers and which may be called 'analytical' or 'philosophical' Behaviorism -- it is often thought that Behaviorism is committed to the idea that the concepts of a behavioristic psychology must be so analyzable, or, to put things right side up, that properly introduced behavioristic concepts must be built by explicit definition -- in the broadest sense -- from a basic vocabulary pertaining to overt behavior. The Behaviorist would thus be saying "Whether or not the mentalistic concepts of everyday life are definable in terms of overt behavior, I shall ensure that this is true of the concepts that I shall employ." And it must be confessed that many behavioristically oriented psychologists have believed themselves committed to this austere program of concept formation.

Now I think it reasonable to say that, *thus conceived*, the behavioristic program would be unduly restrictive. …The behavioristic requirement that all concepts should be *introduced* in terms of a basic vocabulary pertaining to overt behavior is compatible with the idea that some behavioristic concepts are to be introduced as *theoretical* concepts.

56. We are now in a position to characterize the original Rylean language in which they described themselves and their fellows as not only a *behavioristic* language, but a behavioristic language which is restricted to the *non-theoretical* vocabulary of a behavioristic psychology. Suppose, now, that in the attempt to account for the fact that his fellow men behave intelligently not only when their conduct is threaded on a string of overt verbal episodes -- that is to say, as we would put it when they "think out loud" -- but also when no detectable verbal output is present, Jones develops a *theory* according to which overt utterances are but the culmination of a process which begins with certain inner episodes. *And let us suppose that his model for these episodes* which initiate the events which culminate in overt verbal behavior *is that of overt verbal behavior itself. In other words, using the language of the model, the theory is to the effect that overt verbal behavior is the culmination of a process which begins with "inner speech."*

(2) Let us suppose Jones to have called these discursive entities *thoughts*. We can admit at once that the framework of thoughts he has introduced is a framework of "unobserved," "nonempirical," "inner" episodes. For we can point out immediately that in these respects they are no worse off than the particles and episodes of physical theory. For these episodes are "in" language-using animals as molecular impacts are "in" gases, not as "ghosts" are in "machines." They are "nonempirical" in the simple sense that they are *theoretical* -- not definable in observational terms. Nor does the fact that they are, *as introduced*, unobserved entities imply that Jones could not have good reason for supposing them to exist. Their "purity" is not a *metaphysical* purity, but so to speak, a *methodological* purity.

Jones' theory, as I have sketched it, is perfectly compatible with the idea that the ability to have thoughts is acquired in the process of acquiring overt speech and that only after overt speech is well established, can "inner speech" occur without its overt culmination.

It cannot be emphasized too much that although these theoretical discursive episodes or *thoughts* are introduced as *inner* episodes -- which is merely to repeat that they are introduced as *theoretical* episodes -- they are *not* introduced as *immediate experiences*. Let me remind the reader that Jones, like his Neo-Rylean contemporaries, does not as yet have this concept.

59. Here, then, is the *dénouement*. I have suggested a number of times that although it would be most misleading to say that concepts pertaining to thinking are theoretical concepts, yet their status might be illuminated by means of the contrast between theoretical and non-theoretical discourse. We are now in a position to see exactly why this is so. For once our fictitious ancestor, Jones, has developed the theory that overt verbal behavior is the expression of thoughts, and taught his compatriots to make use of the theory in interpreting each other's behavior, it is but a short step to the use of this language in self-description. Thus, when Tom, watching Dick, has behavioral evidence which warrants the use of the sentence (in the language of the theory) "Dick is thinking 'p'" (or "Dick is thinking that p"), Dick, using the same behavioral evidence, can say, in the language of the theory, "I am thinking 'p' " (or "I am thinking that p.") And it now turns out -- **need it have?** -- that Dick can be trained to give reasonably reliable self-descriptions, using the language of the theory, without having to observe his overt behavior. Jones brings this about, roughly by applauding utterances by Dick of "I am thinking that p" when the behavioral evidence strongly supports the theoretical statement "Dick is thinking that p"; and by frowning on utterances of "I am thinking that p", when the evidence does not support this theoretical statement. Our ancestors begin to speak of the privileged access each of us has to his own thoughts. *What began as a language with a purely theoretical use has gained a reporting role.*

Now the model entities are entities which *do* have intrinsic properties. They are, for example, red and triangular wafers. It might therefore seem that the theory specifies the intrinsic characteristics of impressions to be the familiar perceptible qualities of physical objects and processes. If this were so, of course, the theory would be ultimately incoherent, for it would attribute to impressions -- which are clearly not physical objects -- characteristics which, if our argument to date is sound, only physical objects can have. Fortunately, this line of thought overlooks what we have called the commentary on the model, which qualifies, restricts and interprets the analogy between the familiar entities of the model and the theoretical entities which are being introduced. Thus, it would be a mistake to suppose that since the *model* for the impression of a red triangle is a red and triangular wafer, the impression itself is a red and triangular wafer. What can be said is that the impression of a red triangle is *analogous*, to an extent which is by no means neatly and tidily specified, to a red and triangular wafer. The *essential* feature of the analogy is that visual impressions stand to one another in a system of ways of resembling and differing which is structurally similar to the ways in which the colors and shapes of visible objects resemble and differ.

62. This brings me to the final chapter of my story. Let us suppose that as his final service to mankind before he vanishes without a trace, Jones teaches his theory of perception to his fellows. As before in the case of *thoughts*, they begin by using the language of impressions to draw

theoretical conclusions from appropriate premises. (Notice that the evidence for theoretical statements in the language of impressions will include such introspectible inner episodes as *its looking to one as though there were a red and triangular physical object over there*, as well as overt behavior.) Finally he succeeds in training them to make a *reporting* use of this language. He trains them, that is, to say "I have the impression of a red triangle" when, and only when, according to the theory, they are indeed having the impression of a red triangle.

   Once again the myth helps us to understand that concepts pertaining to certain inner episodes -- in this case *impressions* -- can be primarily and essentially *intersubjective*, without being resolvable into overt behavioral symptoms, and that the reporting role of these concepts, their role in introspection, the fact that each of us has a privileged access to his impressions, constitutes a dimension of these concepts which is *built on* and *presupposes* their role in intersubjective discourse. It also makes clear why the "privacy" of these episodes is not the "absolute privacy" of the traditional puzzles. For, as in the case of thoughts, the fact that overt behavior is evidence for these episodes is built into the very logic of these concepts as the fact that the observable behavior of gases is evidence for molecular episodes is built into the very logic of molecule talk.

<div align="center">"Phenomenalism" Passages</div>

1.   The trend in recent epistemology away from what I shall call classical phenomenalism ('physical objects are patterns of actual and possible sense contents') has become almost a stampede. Once again, as so often in the history of philosophy, there is a danger that a position will be abandoned before the reasons for its inadequacy are fully understood, with the twin results that: (*a*) it will not be noticed that its successor, to all appearances a direct contrary, shares some of its mistakes; (*b*) the truths contained in the old position will be cast aside with its errors. The almost inevitable result of these stampedes has been the 'swing of the pendulum' character of philosophical thought; the partial truth of the old position reasserts itself in the long run and brings the rest of the tangle with it.

2.   Perhaps the most important single outcome of the above discussion is the recognition that there are *two* radically different trains of thought which might lead one to distinguish between a 'basic' and a 'derivative' sense of 'seeing x', and, correspondingly, of 'seeing that x is ϕ'. One of them is rooted in a distinction between physical objects and their public 'surfaces'. It is, in essence, a misinterpretation of the fact that we can see a book without seeing its back cover or its insides, and amounts to a distinction between what we see without supplementation by belief or taking for granted (i.e. a public 'surface') and what we see in a sense (see$_2$) which consists of seeing in the former (see$_1$) a 'surface' and believing or taking it to belong to a physical object of a certain kind. It is worth insisting once again that this reification of surfaces into objects of perception is a mistake. It is simply not the case that we *see* 'surfaces' and *believe in* physical objects. Rather, what we see is the physical object, and if there is a sense in which 'strictly speaking' what we see *of* the physical object is that it is red on the facing part of its surface and rectangular on the facing side, nevertheless the physical object as having *some* colour all around (and all through) and *some* shape on the other side is the object seen, and not an entity called a 'surface'. This mistake, however, has been endemic in modern perception theory, and has led to

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a distinction between two senses of 'see' each with an appropriate kind of object, the 'see$_1$' and 'see$_2$' characterized above. Notice that according to the above train of thought, items which are seen (public 'surfaces') as well as items which are seen$_2$ (physical objects) can seem to be other than they are.

On the second train of thought, what is basically-seen (seen$_1$) is a sense content, sense contents being *private* and at least as numerous as the facts of the form 'there seems to S to be a physical object in a certain place', with which they are supposed to have an intimate, but variously construed, connection. Here, also, seeing$_2$ a physical object is explicated in terms of seeing$_1$ an item—in this case a sense content—and 'believing' or 'taking' it to 'belong' in an appropriate sense to a physical object. If one confuses between these two ways of distinguishing (correctly or not) between a 'basic' and a 'derivative' sense of 'see', melting them into a single contrast between what is *directly* seen and what is *seen but not directly seen,* one is bound to be puzzled (as was, for example, Moore) as to whether or not what is directly seen can be the surface of a physical object, and as to whether or not what is directly seen can look other than it is.

3.   Once it is granted that the framework of physical things is not reducible to that of actual and conditional sense contents, and, in effect, this is the burden of our argument to date, we see that the very selection of the complex patterns of actual sense contents in our past experiences which are to serve as the antecedents of the generalizations in question presuppose our common sense knowledge of ourselves as perceivers, of the specific physical environment in which we do our perceiving and of the general principles which correlate the occurrence of sensations with bodily and environmental conditions. We select those patterns which go with our being in a certain perceptual relation to a particular object of a certain quality, where we know that being in this relation to an object of that quality normally eventuates in our having the sense content referred to in the consequent.

4.   The fact that the noticing of complex uniformities within the course of one's sense history presupposes the conceptual picture of oneself as a person having a body and living in a particular environment of physical things will turn out, at a later stage of the argument, to be but a special case of the logical dependence of the framework of private sense contents on the public, inter-subjective, logical space of persons and physical things.

5.   Just as certain philosophers of science were prepared to say that
          atoms, electrons, etc. don't really exist. Frameworks of so-called scientific objects
          are pieces of conceptual machinery which enable us to derive observational
          conclusions from observational premises. Frameworks of scientific objects cannot
          be translatable into the framework of observable fact, not, however, because they
          refer to unobservable entities, but because the very idea that they refer to anything
          is an illegitimate extension to theoretical terms of semantical distinctions
          appropriate to the language of observable fact
so there is a current tendency, particularly among ex-phenomenalists of the 'classical' variety to argue that
          although the framework of physical objects is not translatable into the framework
          of sense contents, this is not because it refers to entities over and above sense
          contents. It is merely a conceptual device which enables us to find our way

around in the domain of what we directly observe in a manner analogous to the role played by scientific objects with respect to the domain of the observable in a less stringent sense of this word.

It is my purpose to argue that this won't do, not however, on the ground that 'real existence' should not be denied to theoretical entities—though, indeed, I agree that it should not—but rather on the ground that the relation of the framework of physical objects to the framework of sense contents cannot be assimilated to that of a micro-theory to its observation base.

6.   Analysis reveals a *second* way in which the sense of 'impression of a red triangle' is related to the sense of 'red and triangular physical object'. The first has already been characterized by relating 'S has an impression of a red triangle' to 'S is in that state, etc.[typically brought about by red triangular physical objects]' The second consists in the fact that visual impressions of red triangles are conceived as items which are analogous *in certain respects* to physical objects which are red and triangular on the facing side. [That only one side is relevant to the analogy accounts for the fact that the red triangle of an impression of a red triangle has no back side.]

7.   On the view I propose, the assertion that the micro-entities of physical theory really exist goes hand in hand with the assertion that *the macro-entities of the perceptible world do not really exist*. This position can be ruled out of court only by showing that the framework of perceptible physical objects in space and time has an authenticity which guarantees a parasitical status for the subtle and sophisticated framework of physical theory. I argue in *EPM* that the very conception of such absolute authenticity is a mistake. And if this contention is correct, the premise to the effect that theoretical entities really exist [i.e. that to have good reason for espousing a theory is *ipso facto* to have good reason for saying that the entities postulated by the theory really exist], which was used in explaining the status of sense impressions, requires us to go one step further, once its presuppositions are made explicit, and argue that the physical objects, the perception of which they causally (but not epistemically) mediate, are unreal. It commits us, in short, to the view that the perceptual world is phenomenal in something like the Kantian sense, the key difference being that the real or 'noumenal' world which supports the 'world of appearances' is not a *metaphysical* world of unknowable things in themselves, but simply the world as construed by scientific theory.