

THE VIEW
FROM NOW

THOMAS NAG

OXFORD UNIVERSITY
New York Oxford

Oxford University Press
Oxford New York Toronto
Bombay Calcutta Madras Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Singapore Hong Kong Tokyo
Nairobi Dar es Salaam Cape Town
Wellington Auckland

and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

Copyright © 1986 by Thomas Nagel

First published in 1986 by Oxford University Press, Inc.,
955 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017-6324

Also issued as an Oxford University Press paperback, 1989

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging in-Publication Data

Nagel, Thomas
The view from nowhere.

Bibliography: p. Includes index.

1. Epistemology—Addresses, essays, lectures.
2. Mind and body—Addresses, essays, lectures.
3. Ethics—Addresses, essays, lectures.
4. Logic—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Title.

BF1220.N34 1986 121'.4 85-51002

ISBN 0-19-509068-9

(ISBN 0-19-509064-2 (Pbk))

Cover painting, "The Large Enclosure Near Dresden"
by Caspar David Friedrich, 1832. Courtesy
of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

Printed in the United States of America

To A.L.H.

ACKNOWLEDG

This book was begun in 1978–79 during my sabbatical at the University of Toronto and completed in 1984–85 during my sabbatical at York University—with the support in each case of a National Endowment for the Humanities.

Chapters 2, 8, and 9 are descended from a paper I gave in May 1970 at Brasenose College, Oxford, entitled "The Limits of Objectivity" in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*. Chapter 4 derives from my contribution to a volume honoring Norman Malcolm. An earlier version was presented in August 1981 to an International Conference in Oaxaca sponsored by the Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas.

Many friends, colleagues, and students have read and commented on my thoughts. Apart from references in the text to Albritton, Thompson Clarke, Ronald Dworkin, Robert Kagan, Frances Myron Kamm, John Rawls, Robert Scheffler, Barry Stroud, Peter Unger, and others, I am grateful to Simon Blackburn and Derek Parfit for their valuable comments on the entire manuscript.

New York
February 1985

CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION 5

II. MIND 13

1. *Physical Objectivity* 13
2. *Mental Objectivity* 17
3. *Other Minds* 19
4. *Consciousness in General* 22
5. *The Incompleteness of Objective Facts*

III. MIND AND BODY 28

1. *Dual Aspect Theory* 28
2. *The Self as Private Object* 32
3. *Personal Identity and Reference*
4. *Purfit* 43
5. *Kripke* 46
6. *Panpsychism and Mental Unity*
7. *The Possibility of Progress* 51

IV. THE OBJECTIVE SELF	54	IX. ETHICS	164
1. <i>Being Someone</i>	54	1. <i>Three Kinds of Agent-relativity</i>	
2. <i>A Semantic Diagnosis</i>	57	2. <i>Reasons of Autonomy</i>	166
3. <i>The Centerless View</i>	60	3. <i>Personal Values and Impartiality</i>	
V. KNOWLEDGE	67	4. <i>Deontology</i>	175
1. <i>Skepticism</i>	67	5. <i>Agents and Victims</i>	180
2. <i>Antiscepticism</i>	71	6. <i>Moral Progress</i>	185
3. <i>Self-transcendence</i>	74	X. LIVING RIGHT AND LIVING WELL	
4. <i>Evolutionary Epistemology</i>	78	1. <i>Williams's Question</i>	189
5. <i>Rationalism</i>	82	2. <i>Antecedents</i>	193
6. <i>Double Vision</i>	86	3. <i>Five Alternatives</i>	195
VI. THOUGHT AND REALITY	90	4. <i>The Moral, the Rational, and the Social</i>	
1. <i>Realism</i>	90	5. <i>Politics and Conversion</i>	204
2. <i>Idealism</i>	93	XI. BIRTH, DEATH, AND THE MEANING OF LIFE	
3. <i>Kant and Strawson</i>	99	1. <i>Life</i>	208
4. <i>Wittgenstein</i>	105	2. <i>Meaning</i>	214
VII. FREEDOM	110	3. <i>Death</i>	223
1. <i>Two Problems</i>	110	Bibliography	233
2. <i>Autonomy</i>	113	Index	239
3. <i>Responsibility</i>	120		
4. <i>Strawson on Freedom</i>	124		
5. <i>The Blind Spot</i>	126		
6. <i>Objective Engagement</i>	130		
7. <i>Morality as Freedom</i>	134		
VIII. VALUE	138		
1. <i>Realism and Objectivity</i>	138		
2. <i>Anti-realism</i>	143		
3. <i>Desires and Reasons</i>	149		
4. <i>Types of Generality</i>	153		
5. <i>Pleasure and Pain</i>	156		
6. <i>Overobjectification</i>	162		

INTRODU

This book is about a single problem: how a particular person inside the world with a particular viewpoint inside the world, the person and his viewpoint inside every creature with the impulse and the particular point of view and to conceive of the

Though it is a single problem, it has reconciling the two standpoints arises in thought. It is the most fundamental is freedom, the self, and the relation of response or lack of response to it will a conception of the world and of ourselves, and our actions, and our relations with others through a number of philosophical problems seeing them that others may also find

If one could say how the internal and how each of them can be developed and other into account, and how in conjunction thought and action of each person, it What I have to say about these questions deserve that title; one of my claims will highly unified conception of life and the mistakes—to false reductions or to the real.

Still, I want to describe a way of looking at the world and living in it that is suitable for complex beings without a naturally unified standpoint. It is based on a deliberate effort to juxtapose the internal and external, or subjective and objective views at full strength, in order to achieve unification when it is possible and to recognize clearly when it is not. Instead of a unified world view, we get the interplay of these two uneasily related types of conception, and the essentially incomplete effort to reconcile them. The transcendent impulse is both a creative and a destructive force.

I find it natural to regard life and the world in this way—and that includes the conflicts between the standpoints and the discomfort caused by obstacles to their integration. Certain forms of perplexity—for example, about freedom, knowledge, and the meaning of life—seem to me to embody more insight than any of the supposed solutions to those problems. The perplexities do not result from mistakes about the operation of language or thought, and there is no hope of a Kantian or Wittgensteinian purity, to be attained if we avoid certain tempting missteps in the employment of reason or language.

Objectivity is a method of understanding. It is beliefs and attitudes that are objective in the primary sense. Only derivatively do we call objective the truths that can be arrived at in this way. To acquire a more objective understanding of some aspect of life or the world, we step back from our initial view of it and form a new conception which has that view and its relation to the world as its object. In other words, we place ourselves in the world that is to be understood. The old view then comes to be regarded as an appearance, more subjective than the new view, and correctable or confirmable by reference to it. The process can be repeated, yielding a still more objective conception.

It will not always yield a result, and sometimes it will be thought to yield a result when it really doesn't: then, as Nietzsche warned, one will get a false objectification of an aspect of reality that cannot be better understood from a more objective standpoint. Although there is a connection between objectivity and reality—only the supposition that we and our appearances are parts of a larger reality makes it reasonable to seek understanding by stepping back from the appearances in this way—still not all reality is better understood the more objectively it is viewed. Appearance and perspective are essential parts of what there is, and in some respects they are best understood from a less detached standpoint. Realism underlies the claim of objectivity and detachment, but it supports them only up to a point.

Though I shall for convenience often speak of two standpoints, the subjective and the objective, and though the various places in which this

opposition is found have much in common, more subjective and more objective views and it covers a wide spectrum. A view or belief is more subjective than another if it relies less on the makeup and position in the world, or on the type of creature he is. The wider the range of a form of understanding is accessible—the more subjective capacities—the more objective it is, by comparison with the personal and the subjective by comparison with a theoretical. The standpoint of morality is more objective than the standpoint of physics, and the standpoint of physics is more objective than the standpoint of psychology. The spheres, progressively more detached from the contingencies of the self. This book discusses the interpretation of objectivity in life and understanding.

I shall offer a defense and also a critique of objectivity in the present intellectual climate, and I shall be criticized, sometimes by the same people who do not regard it as a method of understanding in itself. It is overrated by those who believe in a view of the world on its own, replacing what it has developed. These errors are counterbalanced by an insufficiently robust sense of reality and a particular form of human understanding.

The fundamental idea behind both the subjective and the objective is that we are small creatures in a very partial understanding, and that how we understand the world and on our constitution. We can understand the world by accumulating information from one standpoint. But we can reach a new level only if we examine that relationship which is responsible for our present conception that includes a more detached view of the world, and of the interaction between the world and ourselves. This expanded consciousness that takes in the world as a whole applies to values and attitudes as well as to facts.

Every objective advance creates a new subjective view, and one's former conception inevitably poses the problem of what to do with the new objective view, and how to combine it with the

tive advances may take us to a new conception of reality that leaves the personal or merely human perspective further and further behind. But if what we want is to understand the whole world, we can't forget about those subjective starting points indefinitely; we and our personal perspectives belong to the world. One limit encountered by the pursuit of objectivity appears when it turns back on the self and tries to encompass subjectivity in its conception of the real. The recalcitrance of this material to objective understanding requires both a modification of the form of objectivity and a recognition that it cannot by itself provide a complete picture of the world, or a complete stance toward it.

Both the content of an objective view and its claims to completeness are inevitably affected by the attempt to combine it with the view from where we are. The reverse is also true; that is, the subjective standpoint and its claims are modified in the attempt to coexist with the objective. Much of what I have to say will concern the possibilities of integration; I shall discuss the proper form, and the limits, of objectivity with respect to a range of issues. But I shall also point out ways in which the two standpoints cannot be satisfactorily integrated, and in these cases I believe the correct course is not to assign victory to either standpoint but to hold the opposition clearly in one's mind without suppressing either element. Apart from the chance that this kind of tension will generate something new, it is best to be aware of the ways in which life and thought are split, if that is how things are.

The internal-external tension pervades human life, but it is particularly prominent in the generation of philosophical problems. I shall concentrate on four topics: the metaphysics of mind, the theory of knowledge, free will, and ethics. But the problem has equally important manifestations with respect to the metaphysics of space and time, the philosophy of language, and aesthetics. In fact there is probably no area of philosophy in which it doesn't play a significant role.

The ambition to get outside of ourselves has obvious limits, but it is not always easy to know where they are or when they have been transgressed. We rightly think that the pursuit of detachment from our initial standpoint is an indispensable method of advancing our understanding of the world and of ourselves, increasing our freedom in thought and action, and learning better. But since we are who we are, we can't get outside of ourselves completely. Whatever we do, we remain subparts of the world with limited access to the real nature of the rest of it and of ourselves. There is no way of telling how much of reality lies beyond the reach of present or future objectivity or any other conceivable form of human understanding.

Objectivity itself leads to the recognition that its own capacities are

probably limited, since in us it is a humanly finite being. The radical form of ideal skepticism, in which the objective stands for the same procedures it uses to call into question the point of ordinary life in perception, desires, or ethical truth, given our condition, or ethical truth, given our condition, is impossible of creating ourselves from

One of my concerns will be to consider these different forms of skepticism, given as nonsensical without adopting spurious freedom, or value. In general, I believe that it does not vitiate worth trying to bring one's beliefs, one's understanding, under the influence of an impersonal stance that this could not be revealed from as an illusion. In any case, we seem to be attempting.

The limit of objectivity with which I am concerned follows directly from the process of objectivity is achieved. An objective stance is more subjective, individual, or even just there are things about the world and life that are not adequately understood from a maximal point of view. As much it may extend our understanding beyond what is started. A great deal is essentially connected with the type of point of view, and the attempt to understand the world in objective terms detached from the world leads to false reductions or to outright denials of phenomena exist at all.

This form of objective blindness is manifest in the sciences of mind, where one or another externalist reductionism to functionalism is widely held. The assumption that what there really is not what we think it is—what there really is not what we think it is—way—that reality is in a narrow sense objective, that the exemplary case of reality is the science in which we have achieved objectivity, specifically human perspective on the world, is bound to leave undescribed the character of conscious mental processes in relation to the physical operation of the brain. Consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality.

do physics or anything else—and it must occupy as fundamental a place in any credible world view as matter, energy, space, time, and numbers.

The ways in which mental phenomena are related to the brain, and personal identity to the biological persistence of the organism, are matters that cannot now be settled, but the possibilities are appropriate subjects for philosophical speculation. I believe it is already clear that any correct theory of the relation between mind and body would radically transform our overall conception of the world and would require a new understanding of the phenomena now thought of as physical. Even though the manifestations of mind evident to us are local—they depend on our brains and similar organic structures—the general basis of this aspect of reality is not local, but must be presumed to inhere in the general constituents of the universe and the laws that govern them.

There is a problem of excess objectivity also in ethics. Objectivity is the driving force of ethics as it is of science: it enables us to develop new motives when we occupy a standpoint detached from that of our purely personal desires and interests, just as in the realm of thought it enables us to develop new beliefs. Morality gives systematic form to the objective will. But escaping from oneself is as delicate a matter with respect to motives as it is with respect to belief. By going too far one may arrive at skepticism or nihilism: short of this there is also a temptation to deprive the subjective standpoint of any independent role in the justification of action.

Some impersonal moral theories embrace this conclusion, holding that we should try so far as possible to transform ourselves into instruments for the pursuit of the general good, objectively conceived (though our own interests play their part along with everyone else's in defining that good). But while transcendence of one's own point of view in action is the most important creative force in ethics, I believe that its results cannot completely subordinate the personal standpoint and its pre-reflective motives. The good, like the true, includes irreducibly subjective elements.

The question is how to combine objective and subjective values in the control of a single life. They cannot simply exist side by side without interference, and it seems impossible to give the authority to either in deciding conflicts between them. This problem is the analogue in ethics to the problem in metaphysics of combining into some conception of a single world those features of reality that are revealed to different perspectives at different levels of subjectivity or objectivity. A realist, anti-reductionist theory of anything is bound to be faced with a problem of this form. The mind-body problem is one example and the problem of how to design ethics for individual human life is another. A third is the problem of the meaning of life, which arises because we are capable of

occupying a standpoint from which our concerns appear insignificant.

What really happens in the pursuit of self-knowledge, the impersonal or objective, is the specific contingencies of one's creaturely nature predominate. Withdrawing into this element and developing an impersonal conception of self, of the elements of self from which the new problem of reintegration, the problem of integrating these results into the life and self-knowledge, arises. One has to be the creature whom one has created, and one has in one's entirety to be revealed to an extremely distilled fraction of oneself.

It is necessary to maintain the recognition of the limits of one's knowledge, and our containment in the world, however limited may be our success in philosophy is to accept that and imperfectly, and cannot be sure of it means in particular not abandoning the pursuit of the truth rather than merely a good deal less to say. Pursuit of the truth requires the generation and development of possibilities until, ideally, only one remains ready to attack one's own convictions can be arrived at.

This is in some respects a deliberate strain of idealism in contemplation of which what there is and how things are in principle think about. This view is a positivism even though that particular view of philosophy seems regularly to generate philosophers were trying to do was in a proper appreciation of the conditions that all those deep questions about its reality.

Philosophy is also infected by a bias toward intellectual life: scientism. Scientism is a bias, for it puts one type of human understanding and what can be said about it. At everything there is must be understood in scientific theories like those we have developed in elementary biology are the current paradigm, not just another in the series.

Precisely because of their dominant

ceivable not from a specifically human point of view, and that we can do this without reducing the mental to the physical. But I also believe that any such conception will necessarily be incomplete. And this means that the pursuit of an objective conception of reality comes up against limits that are not merely practical, limits that could not be overcome by any merely objective intelligence, however powerful. Finally, I shall claim that this is no cause for philosophical alarm, because there is no reason to assume that the world as it is in itself must be objectively comprehensible, even in an extended sense. Some things can only be understood from the inside, and access to them will depend on how far our subjective imagination can travel. It is natural to want to bring our capacity for detached, objective understanding as much into alignment with reality as we can, but it should not surprise us if objectivity is essentially incomplete.

The aim of such understanding, the deeper aim it shares with the reductionist views which I reject, is to go beyond the distinction between appearance and reality by including the existence of appearances in an elaborated reality. Nothing will then be left outside. But this expanded reality, like physical reality, is centerless. Though the subjective features of our own minds are at the center of our world, we must try to conceive of them as just one manifestation of the mental in a world that is not given especially to the human point of view. This is, I recognize, a paradoxical enterprise, but the attempt seems to me worth making.

The first requirement is to think of our own minds as mere instances of something general—as we are accustomed to thinking of particular things and events in the physical world as instances and manifestations of something general. We must think of mind as a phenomenon to which the human case is not necessarily central, even though our minds are at the center of our world. The fundamental idea behind the objective impulse is that the world is not our world. This idea can be betrayed if we turn objective comprehensibility into a new standard of reality. That is an error because the fact that reality extends beyond what is available to our original perspective does not mean that all of it is available to some transcendent perspective that we can reach from here. But so long as we avoid this error, it is proper to be motivated by the hope of extending our objective understanding to as much of life and the world as we can.

By a general concept of mind I don't mean an anthropocentric concept which conceives all minds on analogy with our own. I mean a concept under which we ourselves fall as instances—without any implication that we are the central instances. My opposition to psychophysical reduction is therefore fundamentally different from that of the idealist or phe-

nomenological tradition. I want to think of the mental as a general feature of the world. In each case we have to look for instances in our small spatiotemporal neighborhood of matter, not only with those instances). We must ask as to how far beyond the initial access to the world we can go, by processes of abstraction, generalization, and so on. The necessary incompleteness of an objective conception of reality is clear. But there is also no reason to assume that the physical world can be understood by some detached, objective operation of our minds, and we have to be realistic about our capacities in these respects, remarkable as they are.

In both cases an expanded understanding of reality, if we can achieve it, not only gives us access to things and events that we have not hitherto known, but should also add to our knowledge of things we are already acquainted and from which we have learned with respect to familiar physical objects, the laws of physics and chemistry and not just the laws of psychology. With respect to mental phenomena, however, the world is undeveloped, and it may never develop beyond its present state. An objective view, coming through the pursuit of truth, is to provide us with a way of thinking that is not just back home and apply to ourselves.

3. Other Minds

A simpler version of the problem of placing ourselves in the world we are not the center appears in philosophy under the name of the problem to form a general nonidealistic concept of mind. At the individual level as the problem of other minds, and at the wider problem of mental objectivity. The problem of other minds is to place mental types to the problem of other minds. How can I conceive of minds other than my own? How can I conceive of minds subjectively incommensurable with my own? How must I conceive of ourselves as instances of something general in order to place ourselves in a centerless world?

The interesting problem of other minds is not just the problem, how I can know that other people have minds. It is a conceptual problem, how I can understand the world as it is to others. And this in turn is really

ceive of my own mind as merely one of many examples of mental phenomena contained in the world.

Each of us is the subject of various experiences, and to understand that there are other people in the world as well, one must be able to conceive of experiences of which one is not the subject: experiences that are not present to oneself. To do this it is necessary to have a general conception of subjects of experience and to place oneself under it as an instance. It cannot be done by extending the idea of what is immediately felt into other people's bodies, for as Wittgenstein observed, that will only give you an idea of having feelings in their bodies, not of their having feelings.

Though we all grow up with the required general conception that allows us to believe in genuinely other minds, it is philosophically problematic, and there has been much difference of opinion over how it works. The problem is that other people seem to be part of the external world, and empiricist assumptions about meaning have led various philosophers to the view that our attribution of mental states to others must be analyzed in terms of the behavioral evidence, or as parts of some explanatory theory of what produces observable behavior. Unfortunately, this seems to imply that mental attributions do not have the same sense to the first person as to the third.

Clearly, there must be some alternative to the assumption that anything said about other persons has to be given a reading which places it firmly in the familiar external world, comprehensible by means of the physical conception of objectivity. That leads straight to solipsism: the inability to make sense of the idea of real minds other than one's own.

In fact, the ordinary concept of mind contains the beginnings of an entirely different way of conceiving objective reality. We cannot make sense of the idea of other minds by construing it in a way which becomes unintelligible when we try to apply it to ourselves. When we conceive of the minds of others, we cannot abandon the essential factor of a point of view; instead we must generalize it and think of ourselves as one point of view among others. The first stage of objectification of the mental is for each of us to be able to grasp the idea of all human perspectives, including his own, without depriving them of their character as perspectives. It is the analogue for minds of a Cartesian conception of space for physical objects, in which no point has a privileged position.

The beginning of an objective concept of mind is the ability to view one's own experiences from outside, as events in the world. If this is possible, then others can also conceive of those events and one can conceive of the experiences of others, also from outside. To think in this way we use not a faculty of external representation, but a general idea

of subjective points of view, of which we and a particular form. So far the process runs from the general forms of our experience in terms of the familiar point of view. All that is involved in the external conception of this point of view—a use that is part of our expectation of our own experiences.

But we can go further than this, for the ability to think of experiences that we can't imagine from outside by imagining it subjectively as an objective spatial configuration uses ordinary appearance as a medium. We can represent the representation in all respects in terms of certain general features of subjective experience—some instances of which one is experiencing. But the capacity to form such a representation enables one not only to represent the present but also to think about other possibilities which one may never will experience directly. So to think of other minds involves a kind of objectivity which goes beyond our own experiences and those of others.

The idea is that the concept of mind, though restricted to what can be understood in terms of what we can translate into the terms of our own experience, is not the subjectively unimaginable mental lives of others in our conception of the real world without means of a behaviorist, functionalist, or other kind of knowledge. We know there's something there, something we know what it is or even how to think about it. This acknowledgment will allow us to develop a concept of mind that is not solipsistic.

Of course one possibility is that this path leads to solipsism and ethnocentrism, but the general forms of human experience as a whole, as a viewpoint permits us to conceive of other minds because of the flexibility of the human mind. We can detach the concept of mind from a human form.

The issue is whether there can be a general concept of mind that extends far beyond our own or anything we can understand. It may be unable to grasp it except in the abstract, but it is unable to grasp now concepts of objective reality that have developed five continents hence. But the p

concept would be sufficient motive for trying to force it. It is only if we are convinced in advance that the thing makes no sense that we can be justified in setting the limits of objectivity with regard to the mind so close to our own ordinary viewpoint.

4. *Consciousness in General*

So far as I can see the only reason for accepting such limits would be a Wittgensteinian one—namely, that such an extension or attempted generalization of the concept of mind takes us away from the conditions that make the concept meaningful. I don't know whether Wittgenstein would actually have made this objection, but it seems a natural development of his views. He observed that while experiential concepts are applied in the first person from within, not on the basis of behavioral, circumstantial, or any other kind of evidence, they also require outward criteria. To mean anything in application to oneself in the first person they must also be applicable to others on circumstantial and behavioral grounds that are not just privately available. This he took to be a consequence of a general condition of publicity that must be met by all concepts, which in turn derives from a condition that must be met by any rule of whatever kind: that there must be an objective distinction between following it and breaking it, which can be made only if it is possible to compare one's own practice with that of one's community.

I am doubtful about the final "only", and though I have no alternative theory to offer, it seems to me dangerous to draw conclusions from the argument "How else could it be?" But I don't wish to deny that the experiential concepts we use to talk about our own minds and those of other human beings more or less fit the pattern Wittgenstein describes. Provided Wittgenstein is not understood, as I think he should not be, as saying that behavior and so forth is what there really is and mental processes are linguistic fictions, his view that the conditions of first- and third-person ascription of an experience are inextricably bound together in a single public concept seems to me correct, with regard to the ordinary case.³

The question is whether the concept of experience can be extended beyond these conditions without losing all content. A negative answer would limit our thought about experience to what we can ascribe to ourselves and to others in the specified ways. The objection is that beyond these limits the distinction between correct and incorrect application of

the concept is not defined, and therefore is not met.

In a well known passage (sec. 930) Wittgenstein's application of mental concepts from my own case to others have the same as I have so often had. "I surely know what "It is 5 o'clock here" means. "It is 5 o'clock on the sun" means. It means: it is 5 o'clock there as it is here when it is 5 o'clock." one who is trying to explain what he means pain. But could it be used to argue against pain beyond the range of cases where we know a general concept of experience really lose its content. made to use it to think about cases in which even never could apply it more specifically. cases are like that of the time of day on the more radical, for it introduces a direct connection that determine the time of day—namely, position on earth relative to the sun. But the generalization of experience beyond our capacity to apply it does not mean an application that it tries to transcend. even the ascription of pain to a stove, do pass the limit.

Admittedly, if someone has the concept of pain and also has that mental state with a capacity to apply it from within and without, in the ordinary case. If he couldn't, it would be evidence that he is not in pain. If we don't ascribe such states only to creatures with whom we ascribe them to children and animals, we would have experiences even if we didn't believe that the existence of many of the concepts doesn't depend on the existence of these concepts. cease at one remove of the existence of types. don't have and perhaps could never have a capacity for first- and third-person ascription.

Consider first, cases where we have strict conditions present, without either knowing what its conditions are or hoping even to reach an understanding of them. include the capacity for self-ascription. If we have the experiences of all animals not very close to us. In each case there is rich external evidence but only limited application of our own mental concepts to describe it.⁴

4. Skeptics should read Jennings.

3. Wittgenstein (2), secs. 201 ff. On the status of criteria in Wittgenstein and why they aren't offered as analyses of meaning see Kripke (2).

concept would be sufficient motive for trying to form it. It is only if we are convinced in advance that the thing makes no sense that we can be justified in setting the limits of objectivity with regard to the mind so close to our own ordinary viewpoint.

4. *Consciousness in General*

So far as I can see the only reason for accepting such limits would be a Wittgensteinian one—namely, that such an extension or attempted generalization of the concept of mind takes us away from the conditions that make the concept meaningful. I don't know whether Wittgenstein would actually have made this objection, but it seems a natural development of his view. He observed that while experiential concepts are applied in the first person from within, not on the basis of behavioral, circumstantial, or any other kind of evidence, they also require outward criteria. To mean anything in application to oneself in the first person they must also be applicable to oneself and others on circumstantial and behavioral grounds that are not just privately available. This he took to be a consequence of a general condition of publicity that must be met by all concepts, which in turn derives from a condition that must be met by any rule of whatever kind: that there must be an objective distinction between following it and breaking it, which can be made only if it is possible to compare one's own practice with that of one's community.

I am doubtful about the final "only", and though I have no alternative theory to offer, it seems to me dangerous to draw conclusions from the argument "How else could it be?" But I don't wish to deny that the experiential concepts we use to talk about our own minds and those of other human beings more or less fit the pattern Wittgenstein describes. Provided Wittgenstein is not understood, as I think he should not be, as saying that behavior and so forth is what there really is and mental processes are linguistic fictions, his view that the conditions of first- and third-person ascription of an experiential state inextricably bound together in a single public concept seems to me correct, with regard to the ordinary case.⁹

The question is whether the concept of experience can be extended beyond these conditions without losing all content. A negative answer would limit our thought about experience to what we can ascribe to ourselves and to others in the specified ways. The objection is that beyond these limits the distinction between correct and incorrect application of

the concept is not defined, and therefore is not real.

In a well known passage (sec. 350) Wittgenstein's application of mental concepts from any cases have the same as I have so often had. 'I surely know what "It is 5 o'clock here" means. "It's 5 o'clock on the sun" means. It means the same time there as it is here when it is 5 o'clock.' one who is trying to explain what he means pain. But could it be used to argue against beyond the range of cases where we know general concept of experience really how made to use it to think about cases in which even never could apply it more specific cases are like that of the time of day on the more radical, for it introduces a direct condition that determine the time of day—namely, position of earth relative to the sun. But the generalization beyond our capacity to apply it does application that it tries to transcend, even ascription of pain to a dove, do pass the limit.

Admittedly, if someone has the concept state and also has that mental state with a to apply it from within and without, in the If he couldn't, it would be evidence that he we don't ascribe such states only to creatures we ascribe them to children and animals, would have experiences even if we didn't believe that the existence of many of the doesn't depend on the existence of these conceive at one remove of the existence of things don't have and perhaps could never have a capacity for first- and third-person ascription.

Consider first, cases where we have strict present, without either knowing what its condition to hope even to reach an understanding include the capacity for self-ascription. Of the experiences of all animals not very clear. In each case there is rich external evidence but only limited application of our own mental ones to describe it.⁴

4. Skeptics should read Jennings.

9. Wittgenstein (2), secs. 201 ff. On the status of criteria in Wittgenstein and why they aren't offered as analysis of meaning see Kripke (7).

It is the ordinary prephilosophical concept of experience that leads to this result. We have not simply left it behind and taken off with the word. And the extension is not part of a private language but a natural idea shared by most human beings about what sorts of things occupy the world around them. We are forced, I think, to conclude that all these creatures have specific experiences which cannot be represented by any mental concepts of which we could have first-person understanding. This doesn't mean that we can't think about them in that general way, or perhaps in more detail but without first-person understanding—provided that we continue to regard them as subjective experiences rather than mere behavioural dispositions or functional states.

But it seems to me that we can in principle go further. We can use the general concepts of experience and mind to speculate about forms of conscious life whose external signs we cannot confidently identify. There is probably a great deal of life in the universe, and we may be in a position to identify only some of its forms, because we would simply be unable to read as behavior the manifestations of creatures sufficiently unlike us. It certainly means something to speculate that there are such creatures, and that they have minds.

These uses of the general concept of mind exemplify a theoretical step that is commonplace elsewhere. We can form the idea of phenomena that we do not know how to detect. Once the conception of a new physical particle is formed, defined in terms of a set of properties, those properties may then allow experiments to be devised which will permit its detection. In this way the progress of physical discovery has long since passed to the formation of physical concepts that can be applied only with sophisticated techniques of observation, and not by means of unaided perception or simple mechanical measurement.

Only a dogmatic verificationist would deny the possibility of forming objective concepts that reach beyond our current capacity to apply them. The aim of reaching a conception of the world which does not put us at the center in any way requires the formation of such concepts. We are supported in this aim by a kind of intellectual optimism: the belief that we possess an open-ended capacity for understanding what we have not yet conceived, and that it can be called into operation by detaching from our present understanding and trying to reach a higher-order view which explains it as part of the world. But we must also admit that the world probably reaches beyond our capacity to understand it, no matter how far we travel, and this admission, which is stronger than the mere denial of verificationism, can be expressed only in general concepts whose extension is not limited to what we could in principle know about.

It is the same with the mind. To accept the general idea of a percep-

tive without limiting it to the forms with which we are familiar, actively or otherwise, is the precondition of particular types of experience that do not require us to have those experiences or to imagine them. It is not possible to investigate in this way the qualities that we do not have, for example, by observing creatures through the understanding we can reach in this way.

But if we could do that, we should also have a general idea to ourselves, and thus to analyze it. It can be understood without having had it, and thus constitute a kind of objective standpoint to which, to the extent that it could be achieved, we would not merely part of the human world, some part of it, regard to our bodies. And this would serve to make it natural to seek a general understanding of the world which does not depend on the fact that we

5. *The Incompleteness of Objective Reality*

In the pursuit of this goal, however, even something will inevitably be lost. If we try to understand the world from an objective viewpoint that is distinct from the subjective viewpoint, then even if we continue to credit it with the same reality, we will not be able to grasp its most specific qualities, which are known to us only subjectively. We will not know exactly what it is like to be a cockroach even if we develop a detailed understanding of the cockroach sense of taste. When it comes to the most specific aspects of life, the gulf may be even more profound.

Since this is so, no objective conception can include it all. But in that case it may be asked: what is the point of such a conception? The aim was to plan to understand the world as it is, not as it appears to us in a world seen from no particular perspective. But some aspects of those perspectives cannot be captured in an objective concept of mind. But if we cannot capture as much of it as possible? The world appears to one highly abstracted point of view, and it appears to all rational beings. And if one can't have a concept of capturing as much of reality as one can, then the concept is incomplete and unratified.

I don't think this follows. The pursuit

that doesn't put us at the center is an expression of philosophical realism, all the more so if it does not assume that everything real can be reached by such a conception. Reality is not just objective reality, and any objective conception of reality must include an acknowledgment of its own incompleteness. (This is an important qualification to the claims of objectivity in other areas as well.) Even if an objective general conception of mind were developed and added to the physical conception of objectivity, it would have to include the qualification that the exact character of each of the experiential and intentional perspectives with which it deals can be understood only from within or by subjective imagination. A being with total imaginative power could understand it all from inside, but an ordinary being using an objective concept of mind will not. In saying this we have not given up the idea of the way the world really is, independently of how it appears to us or to any particular occupant of it. We have only given up the idea that this coincides with what can be objectively understood. The way the world is includes appearances, and there is no single point of view from which they can all be fully grasped. An objective conception of mind acknowledges that the features of our own minds that cannot be objectively grasped are examples of a more general subjectivity, of which other examples lie beyond our subjective grasp as well.

This amounts to the rejection of idealism with regard to the mind. The world is not my world, or our world—not even the mental world is. This is a particularly unequivocal rejection of idealism because it affirms the reality of aspects of the world that cannot be grasped by any conception I can possess—not even an objective conception of the kind with which we transcend the domain of initial appearances. Here it can be seen that physicalism is based ultimately on a form of idealism: an idealism of restricted objectivity. Objectivity of whatever kind is not the test of reality. It is just one way of understanding reality.

Still, even if objective understanding can be only partial, it is worth trying to extend it, for a simple reason. The pursuit of an objective understanding of reality is the only way to expand our knowledge of what there is beyond the way it appears to us. Even if we have to acknowledge the reality of some things that we can't grasp objectively, as well as the ineliminable subjectivity of some aspects of our own experience which we can grasp only subjectively, the pursuit of an objective concept of mind is simply part of the general pursuit of understanding. To give it up because it cannot be complete would be like giving up axiomatization in mathematics because it cannot be complete.

In trying to explain how minds are to be included in the real world that simply exists, I have distinguished between reality and objective real-

ity, and also between objectivity and partiality. The physical conception of objectivity and our understanding of the the mind and existence is appropriate for this purpose will not give an idea of all the various incompatible mental situations in the philosophy of mind suggest that it applies in other areas as well. one should be aware that the appropriate to the subject one is trying to understand. A kind of objectivity may not exhaust the subjectivity.

The problem of bringing together subjective and objective reality: the world can be approached from either the subjective side, the problem is the traditionalism, or solipsism. How, given my personal perspective, can I form a conception of the world as it is independent of it? And how can I know that this conception is correct? This question may also be asked from the point of view of a subjective rather than from that of an individual. If one starts from the objective side, the problem is to understand a world that simply exists and has no purpose. The following things: (a) oneself; (b) one's point of view; (c) other selves, similar and dissimilar; and (d) the world. A judgment that seems to emanate from the world.

It is this second version of the problem that is the obverse of skepticism because the idea of an objective reality—and what is subjective reality. Without receiving full acknowledgment, it has been very influential in recent analytical philosophy with a bias toward physical science as a paradigm.

But if under the pressure of realism we insist that the world which cannot be understood in this way, that the truth about things must be sought. One way is to insist that the most objective of all. But to insist in every case that the most objective of a phenomenon is the correct one is like insisting that the truth depends on a mistake. It is not the given reality. Sometimes, in the philosophy of truth is not to be found by travelling as far as possible from one perspective as possible.

III

MIND AND BODY

1. Dual Aspect Theory

If we believe that a true conception of the mental world, however much objectivity it attains, must admit the mind's irreducibly subjective character, we still have to fit the mind into the same universe with that physical world which can be described in accordance with the physical conception of objectivity. Our bodies and in particular our central nervous systems belong to that physical world, as do the bodies of all other organisms capable of mental activity. We have reason to think that the connection between mental life and the body is very close, and that no mental event can occur without a physical change in the body—in vertebrates the brain—of its subject.

There is nothing unique in the physical composition of our bodies; only their chemical and physiological structure is unusual. An animal organism is composed of ordinary elements, which are in turn composed of subatomic particles found throughout the known physical universe. A living human body can therefore be constructed out of a sufficient quantity of anything—books, bricks, gold, peanut butter, a grand piano. The basic constituents just have to be suitably rearranged. The only way of actually producing such a rearrangement is by the natural biological process of nourishment and growth, beginning with conception, but this does not alter the fact that the materials can come from anywhere.

Given our objective understanding of a complex as it is, how does such an arrangement of the organism but also to a being with a range of subjective experiences and mental states which can be accommodated by the physical complex in no form of psychophysical reductionism is

One answer is that a physical organism is a mind. there is no way of constructing subatomic particles. So something may as well be called the soul, and this is the subject of mental states, processes, and if closely it interacts with the body, it is some

Dualism of this form is usually adopted, and often rejected on the grounds that it is implausible. There are better alternatives which have been thought of yet. I argued in the last chapter that physical reality. Still, the relation between the mind and the body is probably more intimate than it would be if

The main objection to dualism is that it postulates a physical substance without explaining how it can be the subject of mental states whereas the brain can't. Even if we believe that mental events are not simply physical events, it is difficult to explain their place in the universe by something whose sole function is to provide them with a physical substrate. First, postulating such a substance as the subject of mental states. If it is mass, energy, and spatial dimensions, we can understand how there could be something it was difficult to make sense of the assignment of mental states to something which belongs to the physical world. The reason has been given to think that if we could not equally well find a place for the mental states in the world by attaching them to the physical properties.

The fact that mental states are not physically reducible is not the reason why they cannot be objectively described in the way that physical states can. The fact that they must be states of something different from the physical does not require nonphysical substances. The fact that mental states are not physically reducible is not the reason why they cannot be objectively described in the way that physical states can. The fact that they must be states of something different from the physical does not require nonphysical substances. The fact that mental states are not physically reducible is not the reason why they cannot be objectively described in the way that physical states can. The fact that they must be states of something different from the physical does not require nonphysical substances.

ical properties by the body not be compatible with its possession of mental properties—through some very close interdependence of the two? (Perhaps, as Spinoza believed, the properties are ultimately the same, but that would have to be at a level deeper than either the mental or the physical.)

I suppose I should also consider the "no-ownership" view according to which mental events are not properties or modifications of anything, but simply occur, neither in a soul nor in the body—though they are causally related to what happens in the body. But I don't really find this view intelligible. *Something* must be there in advance, with the potential of being affected with mental manifestations, if lighting a match is to produce a visual experience in a perceiver. This potential must have a preexisting basis: experiences can't be created out of nothing any more than flames can. Of course this "medium" might be of any kind; it might even be an all-pervading world soul, the mental equivalent of space-time, activated by certain kinds of physical activity wherever they occur. No doubt the correct model has never been thought of.

Nevertheless, I want to proceed on a less adventurous track. Because of the apparent intimacy of the relation between the mental and its physical conditions, and because of a continued attachment to the metaphysics of substance and attribute, I am drawn to some kind of dual aspect theory. This is probably due to lack of imagination, but I still want to explore the possibilities and problems of a theory of this type. Though it is probably nothing more than pre-Socratic flailing about, I believe it will be useful to see what happens if we try to think about the mind in these terms.¹

To talk about a dual aspect theory is largely hand waving. It is only to say roughly where the truth might be located, not what it is. If points of view are irreducible features of reality, there is no evident reason why they shouldn't belong to things that also have weight, take up space, and are composed of cells and ultimately of atoms. One can formulate the view by saying that the brain has nonphysical properties, but that is just a label for the position and one must be careful to recognize that it doesn't by itself increase our understanding any more than the postulation of a nonphysical substance does. The main question, how anything in the world can have a subjective point of view, remains unanswered.

I want to talk about certain problems that face a dual aspect theory. Behind them all is one that I don't really know how to formulate. Despite

my defense of mental ontology in the last long, that Wittgenstein may have been trying the derivative move in the conjuring trick of mental states and processes and leave the will learn more about them (Wittgenstein's complete mistake to think that we can learn more of thoughts and sensations, as we can about color or light. There is something deeply suspicious of firing subjective points of view smooth of things and processes, and any dual aspect and that picture—the picture of appearance.)

But I can't say what might be wrong with biological product. When the cat hears the thing going on, literally, in its head, not, in any way, I won't directly attack this unfortunate problem for dualism or physicalism as such, for they, too, are motivated by the desire of a single reality in which the mental and clear relation to one another.

Instead I'll discuss some problems that dual aspect theory—problems about the one thing can have two sets of mutually irreducible mental and physical. The theory says that but this naturally gives rise to certain dual physical object? How can my subjective identity by the objective identity of an organism? something with physical parts? How can entities? Given the identifying characteristics of unity both at a time and over time, and it is not clear how there is room for the fact that dual aspect theory says it also has.

The irreducible subjectivity of the mental, independent of everything else, so that reductionism one is committed to the decision between the mental and the physical. But if connection, and some of the things the mental is independent from everything else.

There are two types of problems here, the irreducibility of the mental. One has to do with the and events of properties not entailed by the other, to do with properties that seem incommensurable. Obviously the first type of problem is easier

1. Though it isn't always clear what should count as a dual aspect theory, versions of the view have been held by several contemporary philosophers: Strawson (1); Hampshire (2); Davidson (3); O'Shaughnessy.

since there is no reason why a concept need include all the essential properties of the thing to which it applies. So in dealing with problems apparently of the second type, it is worth asking whether they may not really be of the first type. In some cases, though not in all, I believe it turns out that apparent incompatibilities between the subjective and the physical can be resolved, and that our mental concepts leave room for this possibility.

Like all other concepts, mental concepts have their own form of objectivity which permits them to be applied in the same sense by different persons, in different situations, to different subjects. Mental phenomena belong to the world, and a given mental subject or mental state can be identified from different positions in the world. They are located, despite their subjectivity, in the objective order. Indeed, some mental concepts describe the subjective aspect of objectively observable states of affairs in a very direct way—such as the concepts of action, perception, and orientation. Garrett Evans (ch. 7) points out that we can be aware of these things in our own case without having to identify their subject, just as we can with more “inner” phenomena. Clearly, action has both mental and physical aspects.

However, this kind of objectivity does not settle the question of whether a dual aspect theory of the kind I have described might be correct—that is, whether the brain could be the subject of mental states. We have to consider whether the objectivity that attaches to mental subjects and subjective mental phenomena as such leaves open the possibility that they might also be characterized by physically objective properties of the kind the brain has. Certainly it doesn't entail anything of the kind. Having drawn a fundamental distinction in the last chapter between physical and mental objectivity, we must regard this as a serious problem.

I propose to approach it by considering first a particularly difficult mental concept, that of personal identity over time. I shall come to the traditional mind-body problem eventually—the problem of the relation between mental processes and brain processes. But the case of personal identity is a good place to begin, because of the vividness with which the self can appear to be quite independent of everything else: perfectly simple and purely subjective. It will allow us to present and criticize conceivability arguments for the independence of the mental, which also appear elsewhere.

2. *The Self as Private Object*

The concept of the self seems suspiciously pure—too pure—when we look at it from inside. The self is the ultimate private object, apparently

lacking logical connexions to anything else. I consider my own individual life from inside in the future or the past—the existence depends on nothing but itself. It is captured enough to use the word “I”, whose meaning on occasion of its use. “I know what I mean” might think that the concept of a phenomenon is fully captured in the thought “the self”.

My nature then appears to be at least partly of bodily continuity but also of all directions, such as memory and psychological frame of mind, that whether a past or future is a fact not analyzable in terms of any relation, logical or physical, between that state and some kind of the self from one body to another is not in fact possible. So does the personal break in psychological continuity—as a without memory. If all these things really be an organism: I must be a pure, featureless.

The apparently strict, perfect, and untempted some to objectify its existence by needed soul designed expressly for the personalized negatively. But such a thing seems of personal identity, which seems to escape. I can see this in the classical debates about Locke on the one hand and Reid and Butler on the other. Reid and Butler seem to be right in their rejection of the positive theories.

Locke (ch. 27) seems right in asserting that from either same soul or same body is lost that the self cannot be defined as a kind of physical, but must be understood as a simple. What Locke claimed was that if a soul were that gave identity to the self, it would drop out of operation of the idea. Kant makes a similar claim (Kant (1), pp. 362-6).

On the other hand, Butler² and Reid³'s notion of self cannot be adequately defined. And even more sophisticated analyses in

2. See Wachsbarg, ch. 1.

3. Appendix I, “Of Personal Identity.”

4. “Of Memory,” ch. 4.

ical continuity seem not to capture the essence of the idea of same consciousness, which seems to be something additional and not complex at all. Discontinuity in the self seems compatible with any amount of continuity in psychological content, and vice versa. But Reid and Butler are wrong in thinking that a nonphysical substance is therefore what the self must be. That after all is just another occupant of the objective order. An individual consciousness may depend for its existence on either a body or a soul, but its identity is essentially that of a psychological subject, and not equivalent to anything else—but even anything else psychological.

At the same time it seems to be something determinate and nonconventional. That is, the question with regard to any future experience, "Will it be mine or not?" seems to require a definite yes or no answer (see Williams (2)). And the answer must be determined by the facts, and not by an externally motivated and optional decision about how a word is to be used or how it is convenient to cut up the world into pieces (as might be possible with 'same nation', 'same restaurant', or 'same automobile').

This seems to leave us with the conclusion that being mine is an irreducible, unanalyzable characteristic of all my mental states, and that it has no essential connection with anything in the objective order or any connection among these states over time.⁸ Even if it is causally dependent on something else, such as the continued existence of my brain, there is no way of finding this out on the basis of the idea of the self. The question of whether a future experience will be mine or not demands a definite answer without providing any way of determining what that answer is, even if all other facts are known.

There must be something wrong with this picture, but it is not easy to say what or to suggest a better one that admits essential connections between personal identity and anything else. Like other psychological concepts, the ordinary concept of the self breeds philosophical illusions that are difficult to resist without falling into errors that are at least as bad, and often shallower.

The apparent impossibility of identifying or essentially connecting the self with anything comes from the Cartesian conviction that its nature is fully revealed to introspection, and that our immediate subjective conception of the thing in our own case contains everything essential to it, if only we could extract it. But it turns out that we can extract nothing, not even a Cartesian soul. And the very bareness and apparent complete-

ness of the concept leaves no room for something that has other essential features. A richer account of what I really am, identifiably persisting thing of whatever kind are

The first step in resisting this conclusion is to insist that the concept of myself, or any other psychological concept, is subjective in the Cartesian assumption of picking up a famous point of Wittgenstein: all concepts have their appropriate objectivity. In the case of the possibility of extending the idea of mine to include the range of mental phenomena which is so familiar, but here I want to concentrate on the idea that characterizes even those ordinary uses of personal identity, which we can all apply in the first person.

Some of the more radical experiments of the last century are an apparent detachment of the self from even the most basic concepts of conceptual power. It is an error to think that a psychological concept like personal identity is through an examination of my first-person use of the more general concept of 'someone' or 'person' to be the first-person form. I would add that personal identity cannot be extracted from the concept of someone at all; they cannot be arrived at a priori.

The concept of 'someone' is not a general concept. Neither can exist without the other, and neither can possess the concept of a subject of consciousness. It is possible in certain circumstances to identify someone without external observation. But these identifications are by and large to those that can be made of someone else, both by others and by the individual himself. Like other psychological concepts, which are not their subjects can be aware without the other, others to ascribe those states to them.

As with other concepts, however, we can extract the nature of the thing referred to from the concept. Just as acetaldehyde would exist even if the concept didn't. Given the concept, we can apply them to other beings, actual and possible, and (and incoherent) question even before we can ask what is this self which I can reidentify with

8. The conclusion is accepted by Marlett. What unites all my experiences, he says, is simply that they all have the irreducible and unanalyzable property of "mineness."

- [download Moon Over Soho \(Rivers of London, Book 2\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [download **The Stories Children Tell: Making Sense Of The Narratives Of Childhood**](#)
- [Women's Health \(April 2012\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)

- <http://betsy.wesleychapelcomputerrepair.com/library/The-Conquest-of-Happiness--Routledge-Classics-.pdf>
- <http://test.markblaustein.com/library/The-Stories-Children-Tell--Making-Sense-Of-The-Narratives-Of-Childhood.pdf>
- <http://academialanguagebar.com/?ebooks/I-Smell-Esther-Williams.pdf>
- <http://www.experienceolvera.co.uk/library/HiIT-IT-.pdf>