

# M E   V E R S U S   M Y   B R A I N

(ESSAY)

## Introduction to Philosophy of Mind 2023/24

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In this paper, I will introduce a possibility of considering dualism *within* materialistic view, as a perspective motivated by clinical experience.

In a more elaborate sentence, by this I point to the paradoxical gain of knowledge about things from detailed analysis of what is happening when things do not work, similar or identical with the royalty of using the proof by contradiction. At this point, before I begin to argument, I leave a note of admiration toward consensual understanding of truth, as somehow arguments are constructed, and some of them can be bad arguments just by nature, where a common-sense judging is a sufficient method for distinguishing between these two. This intuition about truth being same as the self-correcting feature of mathematics seems not to be only a matter of co-incidence, but another *argument* - stating that mathematics is not only the tool of humankind, but an universal language of truth.

## **O N   S C I E N C E   A N D   C E L E S T I A L**

Firstly, consider a question not only driving philosophers perplexed from inside out, but also dividing the non-agnostic not-knowers into two groups; the believers in *celestial*, and non-believers in *celestial*. By wording *celestial*, we understand any quality overreaching spacetime and energetical medium denoted as universe by the humankind of naïve, a possible source of *living*, even source of your thought or the 'dimension of fourth' transcending known three dimensions, infringing upon beings in spacetime as an aerial camera, vanishing the most fundamental sense of privacy.

I make reflections as an *animus* (lat., "the soul, thoughts, intellect, ideas, will, thoughts, courage, etc.; the breath, life") who does not percept an urge to be right about this question, just enjoys the opportunity of taking an observing position; perhaps a scientist in a philosophical meaning of the term, but possibly even setting over the purest philosophy in the meaning of literacy, as a seeker for axioms of consociate laws of nature and correct usage of logic, that does not have to necessarily be in any correspondence with my

so-far belief about what is the truth, and I dare to say maybe never will be. (But also maybe will!)

Human beings are deeply scared of not knowing, and it is full of the most obvious sense. Yet, being driven by fear provides us the strongest source of all absurdity. It is screaming with despair. Don't take me any wrong or personal, but I often find myself deliberating inside of this religionist view. I do not resonate and as long as I am conscious, I never will be, with any placebo insists on unprovable constructs, yet I understand the ramsden depth of this anxiety.

To continue on this thought, it is true that mind can be of another energetical quality compared to the hardware it works on - we even can see an analogy in the literal meaning of the term 'computational neuroscience'. (Why isn't neuroscience sufficient, nor abstracted brain computations, and cognition must be explained as *enactive* so it can make just any sense?)

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Yes, we need a software to be implemented in a hardware. But what does even this mean. Is it a recipe emerging from the machine stating what operations can be performed on that particular hardware? Or does it have something to do with the electricity being plugged into the massive machinery organism, inciting its computational ability with the injection of the life metaphor? OR is the software 'just' some abstract operations stemming from the architecture of a hardware, uniquely fine-tuned for the particular engine? This way, we can see some bit closer to it, even find more or less satisfactory answers (in the long run, it is us - humankind, not me of course - who constructed computers), similarly to the way of when an individual writes down all of his or her thoughts, so he or she is not overwhelmed by chaos - maybe, humanity as a subconscious unity also created AI systems out of fear of not knowing - what we are and who we are, how can this all seemingly contradicting stuff keep holding together in one unity (the Mind) being talked about as exclusively-tuned for attractor dynamics.

My point is however simple - I will be talking about some immaterial mind, but even though there might get to appear some esoteric terms, this is not the way where I am aiming to lead you as my reader. Take me in the terms of physics, even quantum physics or quantum mathematics, and take me not as a believer, but as just another *animus* full of despair aware of her despair, outperformed by curiosity. I know that I know nothing, and I am condemned with this fact, fearing most of all the possibility of pursuing to keep living stuck in a lie. Honestly.

## S U B - D U A L I S M

Consider a person with highly developed introspective abilities and analytical thinking suffering from an arbitrary anxiety disorder. Suppose this person (Lara) has long-term expertise with a variety of states of her anxious mind, including frequent paranoia-shaped overthinking.

Lara has had moments when she was unsure about whether her negative thoughts directed back at herself were her reaction to what other people told her indirectly (or even haven't told her at all) during her social interactions, or it is simply a result of any interaction with *her brain*. Here, in the most simple sentence, I reflect to factors where she would react similarly to every situation, without distinguishing between those where there was a reason to discredit herself and those where there was not. Or to say it even another way, *Lara would not be self-destructive in this particular sense of the word, but her brain would.*

Even though this might be intuitively making sense to a reader, experienced at least once during the lifetime I insist by everyone - *it is enough to have a thought about a woman during her period, being irritable and emotional about things she wouldn't normally be, but in this particular scenario, she puts the blame on her hormones and consensually the whole situation is understood and accepted* - it is never true that what feels obvious to us because our brains are wired by nature to be performing certain tasks with ease unconsciously, really is obvious. We do automatically, in the literal meaning of the term *automatically*, declare during interaction, 'this is not me, these are hormones, please just give me a week and I will be back', or we reflect this behavior onto somebody else.

Behind the scenes of my thought, the question is increasingly shaping its voice: assuming that there is some, where *exactly* is the difference between Lara's brain and Lara?

Note that according to the described example of everyday evidence, we already can see that there is some difference; an elementary truth that warms the soul of a philosopher; we state to know *it does exist*.

Satisfaction guaranteed so far, let's formalize this.

**Premise 1.** Without Lara's brain, there would be no conscious Lara.

I think this one is pretty obvious, although the sentence as a whole might sound a bit "mentally ill". Suppose it is simply a statement of an elementary truth.

**Premise 2.** Once Lara is conscious, she can overcome the automaton-driven Lara.

To correctly define the terms I am using, by *automaton-driven Lara* I mean an analogy to the Chinese room argument (Searle). If Lara was automaton-driven, she would generate ill output healthily (conceptually correctly) stemming from her ill brain. This leads us to consider another premise.

**Premise 3.** If Lara had a disturbed state of consciousness, as if she was in a psychosis for example, she would produce ill output without understanding that it was ill.

By this premise, we exclude the ability of Lara to distance from her brain and correct the automaton-driven behavior in the *brain* state of psychosis, coming out of the existence of at least one counterexample of a thought statement in the background of this thought that it would be universally possible. Speaking with some comprehensibility, we consider the fact that although there may be people with psychosis able to have control over their pathological behavior (ill output), there exists at least one person with psychosis who is not able to have control over his or her pathological behavior, therefore we say it is not universally true that people with psychosis are universally able to control their ill-output behavior that comes from their (momentarily) ill brain.

**Conclusion.** If Lara's consciousness is intact, Lara is not her brain.

By word intact, I refer to a state different (obtained by an operation analogous to set difference) from the state of psychosis, state of brain enabling the brain to *emerge consciousness* which is then able to observe *the brain*.

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Before I begin to interpret and discuss, let's first continue on the thought that brought us to the place of originating premises, to shape a representation of the concept also in other thinking styles compared to solely the pattern-based seeking of well-defined stationary points and relationships between them, which is my primary explaining style, stemming from the way in which the information must be represented such

that *my brain* is able to understand them in its fullest potential. *In particular*, I am going to translate the thought into particular examples, which I assume to be a most widely comprehensible thinking style, obtaining information rather directly top-down than constructing a top-down picture out of elaborate synthesis of details obtained bottom-up, which is my case, on the side of my thought reflecting neurotypes.

### **Example 1: Panic attacks**

After a discrete time series of Lara's experience with her anxiety-seeking nervous system, accompanied by both good and bad periods of this disorder together with her at least brief neuroscientific knowledge, when a 'bad' episode came, she already knew that a tiny trigger could easily send her into a severe panic attack, compared to when she is in a 'good phase' of her anxiety disorder, when it is really difficult to make her react this irrational.

She was aware of the fact that both these states were a result of the current *state* of her brain.

During such state, *she* (her mind) did not agree with being frightened to death by closing her eyes and realizing that she could feel her whole body and observe thoughts; yet, she apparently was scared to death, and *she* (her body) began to sweat, tremble and had difficulty breathing.

Yet, *she* (her mind) did not internally *feel* that *this* was scaring *her*.

Now, exactly this isolation is what eventually became her *savoir* from these states and enabled her to function. She (and this is where it starts to get interesting) made it possible to distance herself from her brain, remaining 'inside' of the panic attack realizing within the dissociation that this is only her brain overfiring on adrenaline, and even though she has to be thinking with the use of this 'damaged' brain, it is possible to keep the result of her thinking rational and to conclude that the result of this thinking is her (the person), but the uncontrolled irrational firing reaction on random trigger is not her, even though both these interactions are stemming from the same hardware.

### **Example 2: schizophrenia**

Another example that can be considered is the filmed story of Nobel Prize winner John Nash, a mathematician with schizophrenia, who is the main character in the film *A Beautiful Mind*. The film depicts John's inability to concentrate and come up with creative mathematical solutions

while he is taking antipsychotics for his severe schizophrenia, accompanied by his frustration and depression over being doomed to be unproductive in his field. At the end of the story, he decided to compromise and be taking a lower dose of his medication so that the potential psychotic episode, which was still a risk, wouldn't be too severe and his cognitive abilities would remain relatively intact.

He still had his hallucinations, but for some unstated reason, which potentially could be him still taking *some* amount of the medication, he was able to keep control of his mind, and he, by rational analysis of his long-term experience, worked out which sensations were representations of perceived reality, and which sensations were his hallucinations, which did not necessarily have to affect his life.

He, similarly to the example with Lara's panic attacks, managed to mentally distance himself from his brain and consciously emerge above it, so that the brain is allowed to produce what is a product of its momentary state, but John was still able to use this hardware for the production of controlled thoughts, including the product of the momentary state of the hardware.

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## C O N C L U S I O N

By this paper, I showcase an example from everyday life pursuing to extend the question of dualism into even broader, or perhaps deeper, term.

I suggest to utilize clinical experience for consideration of the part of mind of oneself, which is able to control the hardware which the mind is existentially dependent upon.

By these examples, I catch the question whether I am my brain in such a way that I need my brain so that any "I" can exist, but how to define this I? At this point, I reflect based on observation of the examples that it clearly has characteristics of **being able to**

- \* **control conscious thought processes**, and
- \* **observe other than conscious thought processes**.

Moreover, I conclude that this emergence is necessary stemming from the example of a variety of brain states in which pure automaton-driven behavior could easily lead to pathological behavior.

Note that purple-colored words in the paper encourage the reader to think about the thought experiments made on particular examples from everyday life where "me" and "my brain" seem to be competing, what challenges the reader to think about it on a deeper level by oneself.