

# Second Philosophy

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## INTRODUCTION

In the early 17th Century Rene Descartes one of the greatest philosophers of all time developed the concept of Substance Dualism. Substance Dualism is the idea that the mind and the body are separate substances. Mind is a mental substance, it is the substance of thought, it is immaterial and unextended in space. Body is a physical, material substance, it is extended in space; it is the substance of physical objects. The mind and the body interact of course but the fact remains that we are made of two distinct substances.

The theory of Substance Dualism had a long, admittedly not unchallenged, life. It became increasingly unpopular as empirical science and analytic philosophy developed. Mind substance was dismissed as `the Ghost in the Machine` only one substance the physical was admitted and the machine was made of that substance. However in recent years Dualism and Substance Dualism in particular has experienced something of a revival especially in the debate over the nature of consciousness.

This debate on Substance Dualism will review the arguments for and against the concept and will give you a chance to assess its merits and deficiencies. So What is the Argument for Substance Dualism?

### *The Move to Property Dualism ...*

Well it seems obvious that the mental and the physical are distinctive. Mental events do not have physical qualities such as mass and spatial dimensions. Although they can be correlated to the physical they are not reducible to it. Further mental events have a distinctive quality or feel about them. They are self presenting in the 1st person, incorrigible, with a subjective quality or qualia to them that cannot be reduced to scientific 3rd person descriptions.

This aspect of phenomenal qualia seems to be a distinctive irreducible phenomena in those entities that possess the mental. Thomas Nagel famously referred to its nature in his essay, "What is it like to be a Bat?" More recently it has features in two famous thought experiments:

### *What Mary Saw?*

In this experiment, developed by Frank Jackson, Mary is the world's greatest scientist on the physics of colour. She knows all there is to know about the physical science of colour. She has been brought up in an environment where the only colours are white and black. On seeing a red rose for the first time she learns something new ie the colour red. Since she knew all the physical facts about red before this her knowledge of the new thing is a new fact beyond the physical.

### *Philosophical Zombies ...*

Developed by David Chalmers, this thought experiment postulates the existence of a possible world physically identical to our world and inhabited by exact physical copies of ourselves. The only difference is that the Philosophical Zombies lack consciousness. Since this world is conceivable and in the real world we are creatures with consciousness, then there must be more properties than the physical in the real world.

Both of these thought experiments establish the possibility of Mental Dualism. This could of course still be property dualism ie different aspects of a single substance but it does take the argument along some of the way.

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## *The Move to Substance Dualism ...*

In the real world we experience a sense of qualia. We also have a distinct sense of the following, intentionality or the sense of the aboutness of things, a sense of the persistence of our personal identity over time despite physical changes in our bodies, a sense of human agency ie the sense that we can initiate casual action chains and a sense of free will ie that we are independent of causal determinism. All of these phenomena make sense if we now postulate the conceivability and possibility that there is an independent mind substance that accounts for these phenomenon.

On the other hand materialism, physicalism, science can offer no explanation of these very real phenomenon. 3rd Person behaviouristic descriptions and accounts merely explain the physical features of the correlated body substance. Substance Dualism is hence a more complete explanation of observed and felt phenomena.

Our problem is that we have elevated this uni third person picture of reality into a misleading all powerful claim to describe all of reality and so we miss out on or dismiss the qualitative mind driven aspects of reality that make up our conscious feel of the world.

## *The Scientists Reply...*

Of course the scientists amongst us will counter that Substance Dualism cannot give an account of the nature of the causal interaction between mind and body. They will claim it does not fit with our accepted concept of evolution. Nor does it fit with our notions of the closed and causal nature of physics. For them the mind as a substance will remain a Ghost that must be eliminated.

**NOTE:** Belief in Substance Dualism is often expressed as belief in a soul. The concept has become entangled in the debate about the immortality of the soul and ultimately in the idea of the existence of God. That is another debate. To keep this debate in bounds I will exclude discussion in religious terms and restrict discussion to issues to do with qualia, and agency.

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. If Mary did see something new and Philosophical Zombies are conceivable then does this not prove that facts beyond the physical or material are conceivable and possible?
2. If Substance dualism can offer an account of the existence of qualia, the persistence of personal identity, the experience of human agency and the experience of free will then is it not to be preferred to the standard descriptive science explanation.

## **REFERENCES:**

- 1) Two Defences of Substance Dualism: <http://www.newdualism.org/papers/J.DePoe/dualism.htm> & <http://www.newdualism.org/papers/F.Dilley/defense.htm>
- 2) Stanford Article on Dualism: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/>
- 3) Frank Jackson and Mary`s Room or What Mary Saw: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/>
- 4) Philosophical Zombies: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical\\_zombie/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical_zombie/) & <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/zombies/>

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## DISCUSSION:

**Shingles:** mental events are measurable as forces

**Deoridhe:** I think it's the dismissal of the image of a ghost in the machine which always baffles me. I find it rather ... appropriate for the experience of having thoughts and not really being able to explain where they come from.

**Oswy:** I would like to start with the thought experiments do they establish something over and above the physical?

**Simulat:** I think that substance dualism makes a fundamental error - it treats the mind and mental phenomena as things but I think they are actions

**Oswy:** Shingles what do you mean by measurable?

**Shingles:** The physical is everything, or to restate it more relevantly that which is physical, there is nothing in existence which is not

**Simulat:** the mind isn't a substance - it's a brain at work

**Renald:** hmm

**Entheogen:** Simulat, the mind may be product of an immensely complex neural network, but nonetheless it is an entity; even if it is not primarily physical like a rock is

**Shingles:** Scans upon the brain show stimulation in different areas when a person laughs or does sums, Oswy

**Oswy:** Deo you like the idea of a ghost as representing something?

**Entheogen:** it is like a program inside computer, it exists in certain sense as entity, even if you cannot touch it

**Marya:** No, the thought experiments do not establish anything over and above the physical. In Mary's case - it doesn't matter whether she learned something new or not - in the sense of if she had then developed two extra cones in her eyes, and was therefore able to see more colours than the average person - it has no bearing at all on any immaterial 'things' going on - it is a different experience based on her biological capacity to have those experiences - it doesn't mean anything more than that, in my opinion.

**Onasander:** I can touch a program

**Oswy:** Let's keep to Mary and Physical Zombies for the time being?

**Chico:** I quite do not understand the thought experiments.

**Onasander:** I didn't get the zombie one

**Entheogen:** Onasander, you cannot touch a program

**Shingles:** therefore, these mental events are measureable and we should hope that all mental events more profound than those two I mentioned may be measureable as technology advances

**Simulat:** Enth - I think that we get waylaid because our language presents the mind as a thing, and qualia as things

**Onasander:** I can too

**Entheogen:** only if you get electrocuted by exposed motherboard

**Deoridhe:** Well, a ghost representing movement of something unexplainable, yes. You could call it action or thing, but the gist is that we can measure it and see it and experience it but as soon as we try to nail it down, it seems to move.

**Marya:** yes Sim, agreed

**Oswy:** Marya, Mary knew everything that was physical then she knew something extra how do you explain that?

**Onasander:** I can floss with one on a old floppy disc too

**Shingles:** The Mind is a formulated pattern of energy flowing through the physical brain; as such the mind is a physical thing

**Onasander:** I can scratch it, break it

**Renald:** Oswy, it doesn't seem to me that experience is knowledge.

**Marya:** I don't need to explain it Oswy, any more than I need to explain why a fly doesn't experience jealousy - it is not biologically programmed to experience those things, and so it cannot

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**Onasander:** So can someone explain to me the direction of the philosophical zombie thought experiment?

**Reflection:** Oswy, the way the question is asked is incorrect, that is to say she knew everything that was physical to begin with, she didn't, her ability to appreciate color was a physical skill that she had not yet acquired

**Renald:** Or perhaps I should say sensation.

**Oswy:** Chico the thought experiments try to show that even if you can describe everything in physical terms there are some things ie consciousness that escape that description.

**Onasander:** naw- consciousness can be described easily

**Simulat:** Ummm - One answer Oswy is that she really did know everything about colour then she wouldn't learn anything new when she saw red the first time

**Marya:** I don't think consciousness escapes description though - I think the concept of what it is, is misunderstood - and I do disagree with Chalmers

**Onasander:** I've used Neuroprogrammer 2; Apha waves, Beta waves, Gamma, Delta

**Oswy:** Ren, not sure I understand that.

**Shingles:** I'll direct this to you, then, The Mind is a formulated pattern of energy flowing through the physical brain, as such the mind is a physical thing, Oswy

**Oswy:** I should say now that this is going to be a complex debate so if I don't get back to your points immediately I hope you will cut some slack.

**Shingles:** and the hormones that influence them, Ona

**Simulat:** the thought experiment is a bait and switch thing - first it says she knows everything and then it says she doesn't

**Chico:** Descartes didn't account for the fact that information can be represented by the interaction between matter units. Interactions mediated by natural forces.

**Renald:** Oswy, KNOWING everything there is to know, doesn't seem to me would automatically translate to sensation. Isn't that what "Mary" was missing till she left her room? Actual, personal sensation of color?

**Deoridhe:** And chemicals. The electrical impulses are passed from neuron to neuron using neurotransmitters, which are also physical things which can be substituted for.

**Oswy:** All The real issue is does science give us a complete description . I maintain it gives us only one description. It's a good one but it is not complete Hence Mary and PZ`s

**Shingles:** A thing becomes dubious once it's been Descarted, Ren ;)

**Onasander:** <https://www.transparentcorp.com/products/np/> where I can change my programming

**Deoridhe:** Well, I think it's a given that the experience of hte result of these complex interactions will be different form the external, measurable description.

**Oswy:** Shingles the mind interacts with the brain it is not the brain

**Chico:** People in Descartes time and after were struggling to understand the nature of interaction. Newton had quiet esoteric phantasies... but you cannot blame them given the fact that science was about to emerge

**Shingles:** No, rather the mind flows through the brain, the brain is the organ, the mind is its function, Oswy

**Onasander:** the mind body dualism has to take into account the last 40 years of research in Neuro Therapy

**Renald:** Oswy, do you postulate a complete, unified explanation is possible?

**Simulat:** Oswy - it seems to me that when we perceive things that our brain state changes - and that when we see red we are in a particular brain state and that's all - there is no need for anything over and above that brain state

**Marya:** Oswy, I think the Zombie Argument is very flawed - Chalmers is using an intuitive approach to determine that consciousness is something other than the result of physical brain activity - if those zombies were indeed identical to us physically, then they would have just as much consciousness as we do - I think Chalmers is wrong to presume that they would not

**Reflection:** Oswy, I don't see how this relates to whether science gives us a complete description. Of course it does not. Science is just one concept system through which we understand the world, but a poet is still interacting with the material universe in my opinion, even though the poet gives us different sorts of insights about it

**Oswy:** Ren No I am simply saying that the extra substance accounts for more than the physical explanation.

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**Shingles** beams at Ref

**Chico:** Isn't that mental substance an equivalent to the phlogiston theory?

**Deoridhe** nods. "I agree with Reflection. Inherent to science is that it gives one point o view which should be supplemented with others."

**Renald:** Oswy, yes, but it seems to me, in talking with them, that people for whom the physical explanation is satisfactory, don't think there's anything else to be explained.

**Oswy:** Sim Consciousness represents the mind in this debate. Science can only give us a partial description of mind.

**Simulat:** I agree Marya - the zombie idea is another bait and switch - first it says that zombies are exactly like us - and then it says they aren't

**Chico:** Heat represented by stuff and not interactions/movement....

**Marya:** yes indeed, Sim

**Oswy:** To get to a full description of mind we have to go beyond the present description of science ie to a description of the substance of mind.

**Renald:** Why?

**Simulat:** And it proposes that something could conceivably be exactly like us, but not conscious - but I don't think that is conceivable

**Oswy:** All, we are bewitched and limited by our scientific descriptions.

**Renald:** Sim, it's conceivable if we consider for a moment that we aren't conscious either...

**Deoridhe:** I'm not sure a full and complete description is possible.

**Chico:** Ref and Marya made two good points...

**Oswy:** Sim Chalmers says the PZ are physically like us but they don't have consciousness.

**Shingles:** No, surely we must needs only wait for Science to be advanced enough to describe the behaviour of the brain better. To claim that this is impossible would be a premature claim, Oswy

**Marya:** not at all Oswy - I think science helps us to eliminate the fantasy and to have the wind knocked out of us about how incredible the physical world really is ...

**Reflection:** Oswy, to get a fuller understanding of material reality we do need to go beyond science, but I'm not sure that has to do with this discussion

**Oswy:** Shingles I am prepared to say that we must advance our descriptions beyond our present scientific paradigm.

**Onasander:** that stuff I mentioned about neurotherapy just went over everyone's head

**Simulat:** And Oswy - the scientific objections to Substance dualism really are valid - substance dualism does in fact violate fundamental laws like the conservation of mass and energy and the fact that the universe is a causally closed space

**Oswy:** the new paradigm must acknowledge the separate substance of mind

**Shingles:** ok, but as a good friend of mine once told me, Science, by its very practice is fluid and changeable, Oswy

**Reflection:** the problem from my point of view Oswy, is that this substance of mind business is really a form of poetry, being interpreted in scientific terms, when it should be interpreted in poetic terms

**Simulat:** Oswy - I deny that Chalmers is saying anything conceivable with pz's

**Deoridhe:** Not really, Onesander. It's included; or i was including it.

**Chico:** Why is it so difficult for people to consider that the brain itself is the representation of consciousness?

**Oswy:** The philosophical zombie is conceivable and possible but it is not us we are more than our present physical descriptions allow.

**Onasander:** consciousness is not in the brain alone

**Oswy:** Marya have you seen the attempted eliminativist descriptions used by the Churchland's they are strained and weird.

**Onasander:** also in the spine

**Shingles:** is it Separate? Do you have the grounds to prove it is a separate substance? If not, then you are asserting that which has little ground, Oswy

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**Oswy:** Strained even

**Onasander:** instinctive reaction has elements of consciousness

**Oswy:** Shingles wait till I deal with question 2. But on the thought experiments they show there is something beyond our present physical descriptions.

**Onasander:** stegosaurus had two brains

**Shingles:** understood

**Simulat:** Oswy - it's a hard problem - and it's not fully solved - the substance dualism idea is just giving up too early to an easy intuition

**Chico:** Isn't the mental substance thing just a failed attempt motivated by religion to bring the soul into discussion on a scientific level?

**Marya:** I don't think they are Oswy - I think they are taking a hard line there, and I do agree with them (as far as I can remember) - we have to let go of the fantasy that there is somehow 'more' going on that what is really there - and yes, I think that in time, people will hopefully not think about it intuitively and instead, see it for what it is.

**Renald:** bzzz!

**Oswy:** Sim what is inconceivable in a possible world about PZ's?

**Shingles:** I agree with Sim

**Simulat:** and it's an easy intuition because of the structure of our language

**Simulat:** it is inconceivable that they would be exactly like us and not be conscious

**Oswy:** Marya our use of the concept of mind as a distinctive substance is very useful because it is true. The Churchland's attempts to use science language is laughable.

**Onasander:** I have four brains

**Shingles:** its funny, intuitional thinking can be very truthfully informative, Marya

**Deoridhe:** I find the idea of reducibility very troubling.

**Onasander:** One in my head, one in my spine, one in my laptop, and I share one in the SL CPU

**Reflection:** well Marya, I think what is going on "there" is certainly infinite and will always be utterly beyond our ability to precisely and fully describe and understand it, which is why poetry and other forms of analysis are both valid and useful, but none of this suggests that there is a different dimension to reality, called "mind".

**Renald:** Oswy, Sim... to me the problem seems less one of inconceivability, and more one of poor examination of the problem. After all, no one has direct access to another's consciousness; we all infer it in each other. If I went to another planet, it would be much the same. I'd have no way of knowing the zombies were zombies.

**Onasander:** one will though?

**Simulat:** Oswy - you assert that it is true, but how do you show it's true?

**Oswy:** Sim Shingles You will have to defend that position It is logically possible that there are physical replicas of us in a possible world.

**Marya:** I don't think the concept of mind as a distinctive substance is useful and it is certainly not 'true', and science does show us that it is not true - so I'm not certainly why you would say it is useful and true?

**Onasander:** but beyond these four brains, I deal with all yours to make a meta consciousness of behaviour

**Oswy:** Sim That is confused. I am not saying it is true I am saying it is conceivable and logically possible.

**Simulat:** Oswy - I say it is not logically possible - it's just a grammatically correct sentence

**Onasander:** a self determining behaviour traceable back to every point in the chain on a material basis

**Oswy:** That is all I have to establish to establish the possibility of the extra substance.

**Shingles:** It is, but let me put the hole in that boat by asking: If there is more than ONE substance how do the two effect one another, how can they interact, Oswy?

**Renald:** Oswy, how would one know, though? If it weren't a thought experiment, where the thought experimenter could just say "this is how it is"

**Chico:** Ona, \*consciousness is not brain alone\* - why are you saying this?

**Simulat:** its like saying that a thing can both be and not be at the same time Oswy - and that is not logically possible

**Marya:** A teacup flying around the Milky Way is conceivable, but that doesn't make it true nor logically possible

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**Oswy:** Sim are you saying that only human like entities can exist in the universe that is a big claim?

**Onasander:** because- we admit to programming- but not how programming is brought about, and how it is used, and where

**Simulat:** even though its a grammatically correct sentence

**Deoridhe:** Look, if we accept as axiomatic that science can only give us part of the picture, then trying to limit an understanding of the mind/brain to just science seems to be axiometrically incorrect, since we've already established science only gives us one POV.

**Simulat:** no Oswy - I'm saying that if their were creatures who really were physically just like us that they would be conscious just like us

**Chico:** With brain I mean the neurons and the interaction between them, which embodies also a program. What did I miss, Ona?

**Oswy:** Marya that is precisely the point Nobody is speculating about teacups. We are speculating about the possibility ie the logical possibility of physical entities without consciousness.

**Shingles:** science keeps unlocking doors, one day it shall be that we know more about the brain and scientific accounts of consciousness (if correct) shall be wonderful and nothing worthy of fear, Deo

**Simulat:** I don't think that that is established at all Deo

**Onasander:** you missed hat I said about me having 4 brains, and my bringing up the stegosaurus having two brains

**Oswy:** Much of science description would like to move to that point ie the Churchland's they want to eliminate mind just for the physical.

**Renald:** Deo, I'll be impressed if you even slow the materialists down with that angle :-)

**Onasander:** and group think

**Onasander:** effecting consciousness

**Deoridhe:** I don't accept that as a positive goal, shingles. I think science has a tendency to ignore gestalts and that the mind is a gestalt.

**Marya:** if they are identical to us Oswy, then they are identical to us - that is the logic - if they were not conscious, they would not be identical to us - that I think is the point Sim is trying to make

**Oswy:** It is the science description that leaves us with PZ's

**Deoridhe:** Eh, true enough Ren, but I never claimed to be a materialist.

**Shingles:** however the mind is OF the body, is it not, Deo?

**Renald:** Marya, Oswy, Sim, and my further point is that even if the zombies were identical except for consciousness, how would one ever determine that?

**Deoridhe:** Yes, I never claimed otherwise, shingles.

**Oswy:** Shingles I don't deny that one day science may be able to describe the substance of mind as a separate entity to the body, that is my whole point.

**Chico:** Who can explain me the philosophical necessity to have a \*mental substance\* as a layer on top of the \*brain substance\*?

**Oswy:** I am going to open up question 2.

**Reflection:** certainly Oswy our physical knowledge of the brain is paltry at present, and so all manner of other approaches to understanding it are perfectly valid and necessary, we are just being skeptical about whether there is something to "mind" that doesn't fundamentally have to do with "brain" functioning, I believe

**Shingles:** But my point is that it completely is not, Oswy

**Marya:** I do take your point Ren :)

**Oswy:** We have phenomenon Agency , Consciousness , Qualia , Continued Personal Identity free will.

**Chico:** and?

**Simulat:** How about this Oswy - that the first person view and the third person view are just different perspectives on the same thing - that you don't need to postulate a magic substance to account for the first person perspective

**Oswy:** The present scientific description has no way of coping with these things except in a descriptive way.

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**Reflection:** I think Os, it is sort of an Occam's razor thing, why postulate this entire other "substance" when it seems unnecessary?

**Chico:** That is because we don't know everything yet.

**Oswy:** Postulating a separate substance mind does account for them so it is to be preferred.

**Shingles:** it is if it accepts anecdotal evidence

**Chico:** So why the extra layer?

**Simulat:** I think that the scientific perspective has gone a long way to explaining all of those things Oswy - but the explanation is way different than Plato or Descartes thought

**Shingles:** it sees this Dualism is another attempt at plastering over the gaps

**Simulat:** they speculated and got it wrong

**Oswy:** Chico Yes I agree we don't know everything yet but we have phenomena that can best be explained by mind substance so we should go for it.

**Chico:** By labelling the unknown with \*mind substance\* you don't achieve any explanation.

**Oswy:** Ref it is not unnecessary Science as is has no way of coping with these things.

**Onasander:** Just for giggles- How many times is information processed from one mind to the next in this conversation- I think it, send it to my fingers, my fingers respond to the touch- one cycle- set to my CPU- two, sent to SL-three, received by your computer, 4, sent to your screen and transmitted to your brain, 5

**Reflection:** Oswy when we are philosophizing about agency, consciousness, qualia, and the rest, there is nothing non-scientific about that discussion. If it meaningful then it leads to testable hypotheses sooner or later

**Simulat:** The honorable thing to do when confronted with error is to admit it :-)

**Renald:** Oswy... how do you mean "coping"?

**Onasander:** five times information is reprocessed- how do we know if it is correct?

**Shingles:** but the Sun rising and setting was best explained once by the Sun orbiting the earth, we since discovered that to be flawed, Oswy!

**Oswy:** Ref where are the hypotheses? Even Fodor admits and Searle we have no real idea how to explain these features in scientific terms except an attempt to eliminate them.

**Reflection:** they are being developed and tested in psychological experiments all the time Oswy

**Oswy:** Sim not sure I understand that last point.

**Onasander:** if we can't assure that the information is correct, and yet we are communicating none the less- I think there may be a possibility for mind body dualism

**Shingles:** If there is more than one substance, how can the two interact, Onasander?

**Oswy:** Shingles I agree we may find an explanation in time but it will not be within the present monist paradigm it will be in a Dualism paradigm and that will fit our felt experience.

**Onasander:** this is what I have been saying

**Chico:** Is somebody advocating \*mind substance\* here, and why?

**Onasander:** read what I wrote above

**Onasander:** there may be the chance for it

**Simulat:** Um - rather than perpetuate Descartes' error - why not just get on with the work of trying to understand - why insist that his speculation must be correct when it is basically just invoking magic and contradicts science

**Reflection:** for example Os, while I haven't thought about this previously, the whole field of applied and basic neuropsychological assessment could be seen as the study of qualia, it seems to me

**Shingles:** then Science shall mature further

**Onasander:** nothing contradicts science

**Marya:** I don't agree Oswy - I don't think the mind substance explanation is the best explanation at all - and we don't need to totally eliminate anything other than misleading ideas - we can experience qualia without it having to 'be' any more than the result of our biological processes - as I said before (at other meetings), it seems to be the human ego that so desperately wants to believe that we are somehow 'more' than what we are, when the realities that science shows us, is that this is not the case - and none of the science takes anything away from the fascination with the world - in fact I think it makes it even more amazing.

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**Onasander:** you anthropomorphize it

**Oswy:** Shingles It is not a question of how do they interact they obviously do. Our take is to explain that interaction in a new paradigm. A paradigm that accounts for the obvious.

**Shingles:** by its very nature, yes, Onasander

**Chico:** Marya, I fully agree!

**Onasander:** yes what?

**Shingles:** no that assumes that there are two substances, and further that interaction between different substances is possible, Ockham would be very cross with you, Oswy

**Onasander:** Can you validate Ockham's Razor?

**Oswy:** OK, Marya/Chico, explain the Redness of the Rose in scientific terms . Or music. or Art Or Free Will.

**Reflection:** As another example Os, I think the issue of "free will" is the focus of much of the empirical analysis of the behaviourists in the 20th century (and they don't find much of it btw;-)

**Oswy:** Ref Are you denying Free Will? Is it an Illusion? Is human Agency an Illusion?

**Shingles:** if he does, he was compelled to

**Chico:** Redness is the representation of a wavelength made by our brain - how in detail is still being investigated.

**Oswy:** All Again I don't think you can think outside the scientific paradigm as it is presently constituted.

**Simulat:** when I look at a red thing it puts my brain into a certain state and my first person perspective on that state is that I see red - I don't understand why that's so difficult Oswy - why do you have to think that there is something more there than my brain state?

**Oswy:** In the future when we do have the dualist paradigm you will be seen as Pre Copernican.

**Marya:** I have a certain number of cones in my eyes Oswy, as do you and other humans - that means we can see and 'experience' colours - we experience those things because that is what our biology allows us to experience - just as a dog has a far more advanced sense of smell - it can experience things that we just cannot - there is no mystery in that

**Chico:** Music aesthetics as well, Oswy...

**Shingles:** how can two different substances interact, Oswy?

**Chico:** And Oswy, free will might be an illusion...

**Renald:** Oswy, do scientific accounts for our sensations and perceptions "eliminate" them?

**Reflection:** for the most part Os, it probably is. Maybe we have a certain range of variability of response available to us based on the determining interaction of the environment and our own previously conditioned patterns of behavior. But this issue not only is highly amenable to testing, but has been examined empirically for a long, long time (which is I think an important outgrowth of philosophical thought concerning these issues)

**Oswy:** Sim the difficulty is that you use the first person perspective in your explanation. That to me is the mind the substance of mind taking in this perception. You just can't get away from it and you can't reduce the 1st person to the 3rd in science

**Shingles:** how can two different substances interact, Oswy?

**Onasander:** gravity differs from matter; still they interact

**Simulat:** Oswy - that seems a reasonable thing to do to me

**Shingles:** gravity is a force that is a condition of matter

**Oswy:** Ren Elimination is the whole Raison d'être of the Churchlands. Their whole project is called Eliminative Materialism.

**Chico:** Oswy, how do you derive \*mind substance\* from observation?

**Simulat:** it accounts for our experience and doesn't violate science and it doesn't invoke magic substances unnecessarily

**Shingles:** how can two different substances interact, Oswy?

**Onasander:** the more I think about it, the more increasingly untenable a purely materialist base for intellect seems; I may be changing my views

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**Reflection:** Oswy, the fact that a living human brain develops a perspective upon itself (as of everything else) is not an argument in favor of a separate substance. Again "identify" is something that is amenable (and has been ) tested

**Oswy:** Try listening to Mrs Churchland explain how she has had a hard day at the office in terms of Serotonin levels it's laughable.

**Shingles:** how can two different substances interact, Oswy?

**Onasander:** has anyone not taken basic chemistry?

**Renald:** Oswy, that's... a translation problem.

**Marya:** Agreed, Ren

**Onasander:** we all know who they do

**Renald:** Statements outside of one's native language always suffer.

**Onasander:** we all claim to believe in magical atoms and quarks

**Shingles:** all elements when at the sub-atomic level become the same substance, Ona

**Onasander:** that are clearly unlike anything we know

**Onasander:** who says? Some dead Greeks and guys in white coats? Supported by MY money?

**Shingles:** oh let me see, Physics?

**Onasander:** I say otherwise, as I am more real

**Renald:** All, addresses, please.

**Onasander:** I call deception

**Oswy:** Shingles, what is gravity and how does it interact. At present I don't know but I know it does. I know I need a paradigm to explain it. Just ass I need a paradigm to explain mind body interaction. Elimination of mind is not enough.

**Shingles:** that still does not address the question Oswy

**Simulat:** Ona - you are using a computer, and we couldn't have built computers without the knowledge we have of subatomic things

**Onasander:** We did; the Greeks of Rhodes did; 22 hundred years ago

**Marya:** we don't have to 'eliminate mind' as such Oswy - we just need to eliminate false ideas about what it is - I think the Churchland's are trying to eliminate the descriptive language we use as well - and it seems many have quite some trouble with that

**Shingles:** if you're saying that dualism is the nature of the Universe, you need a description of how that interaction is possible, Oswy

**Onasander:** does he?

**Oswy:** Ren The Churchland's want to eliminate what they call Folk Psychology FP in favour of a science based language they think that once we do this we won't have a problem.

**Onasander:** you don't need a description for yours

**Shingles:** or else why hold it such, Ona?

**Renald:** Well, Oswy, that sounds rather utopian to me...

**Onasander:** we have nothing to back anything here; if anything

**Reflection:** sure Oswy, it is way too early to be describing a bad day in terms of a single neurotransmitter, that \*is\* ridiculous, but that is not the way it is done empirically. There are hundreds of relevant variables that are measureable that define such phenomenon (not most of them physical, but all of them quite likely to be reduced to neuronal patterns of response that will be identifiable as soon as microscopic neuronal activity can be imaged in real time)

**Onasander:** We are backing one idea over another without proof and all siding- this is a behavior of ideology

**Marya:** You'll need to be more specific there Ona

**Onasander:** we have no proof one way of another

**Oswy:** Shingles No I don't. I need empirical evidence that there is interaction ie Agency Free Will etc. I then need to seek the explanation in a new paradigm to exceed the scientific paradigm that has failed to account for the things. Don't pretend you can explain human agency because you cannot.

**Shingles:** how else might one philosophise?

# Second Philosophy

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**Onasander:** we just all lined up on one side in the name of science

**Marya:** we do have proof though Ona - why do you presume there is none?

**Onasander:** without asking what science was or how is can claim such things

**Onasander:** I pointed out; my consciousness interacts not in A MIND; It's MANY THINGS

**Simulat:** but why Oswy when there has been so much progress towards understanding with the scientific paradigm?

**Oswy:** Shingles We may for instance begin to question the whole causal paradigm

**Shingles:** no, but I can say that your claim of dualism is as yet unfounded, Oswy

**Onasander:** then someone was bold enough to throw Occam's razor out there. I can use it to destroy just as easily your prepositions and make you look just as foolish as Descartes in today's world. We haven't come to a conclusion what is consciousness or where the mind starts or ends

**Oswy:** Shingles it is a hypotheses that explains agency free will etc. Your scientific paradigm is no where near explaining these things.

**Renald:** Oswy... a lot of this seems like it should be context driven. There's a whole science behind what happens when I activate an electric lamp... that doesn't rob expressions like "turning on the light" of significance.

**Onasander:** the mind being separate from matter may in fact take a good many steps needless steps, out of the equation and simplify

**Marya:** Yes exactly Renald

**Chico:** Ona, it might take centuries to answer these questions. That we have to accept...

**Onasander:** we just blindly accepted one position

**Reflection:** Oswy, how does "mind as substance" explain agency or freewill?

**Oswy:** Sim I don't want to rubbish science it is incredible in what it can explain. But it cant explain everything I seek a wider explanation. I want us to escape the bewitchment of science just as Wittgenstein wanted us to escape the bewitchment of language.

**Shingles:** I haven't yet explained my understanding of Science, I concede that as yet we may not fully account for it, but that in time we may, what I am confused about is your insistance that there will with this necessarily be Dualism, Oswy

**Simulat:** Ona - calling the discussion a farce is sort of off topic :-)

**Renald:** Shingles, obviously Oswy is a prophet :-)

**Shingles:** that's harsh, Ren

**Onasander:** we all came in very one sided

**Oswy:** Onasander. Sorry I have been neglecting you. Could you state you point again sorry to have missed it?

**Renald:** heh

**Chico:** There is no need to make fun of Oswy

**Renald:** Oh, I meant no disrespect...

**Oswy:** Ren I am not the only one questioning the dominance of eliminative science or scientific reductionism.

**Oswy:** I see myself as John the Baptist rather than Christ.

**Shingles:** why is it Eliminative? there are other Scientific approaches than that, Os; such as 'Accountative'.

**Renald:** Oswy, indeed... I question it myself. But this seems hardly convincing except... well the Baptist was a prophet, certainly :-)

**Reflection:** Oswy, you have suggested in the intro that religious analysis is OFF LIMITS!!!!?

**Chico:** Why aren't people eager to understand mind not willing to study materialistic aspects (physics, neurobiology, etc) before claiming \*mind substance\* as a mysterious extra layer?

**Marya:** Oswy, I am uncertain why people are so afraid of eliminativism or reductionism - why be afraid of what science teaches us and why is it presumed that that 'must' necessarily take anything away from the 'experience' of being alive? Why can they not work together to better understand the world and ourselves?

**Simulat:** And Oswy - I don't know of scientists who are reductionist - scientists tend to understand very well the complexity and wonder of the world it seems to me

## Second Philosophy

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**Oswy:** Shingles I can only quote the Churchlands. They see the language of beliefs and emotions as something like alchemy and they think that if we use the language of science then the problem will vanish. So instead of saying ah I see a lovely rose I should say I experience brain state 345z.

**Renald:** heh; Prescriptivism... how very scientific.

**Simulat:** you should read Dennett Oswy - he'd drive you up a wall too :-)

**Oswy:** Sim I could quote chapter and verse on reductionist scientists I think you are being too generous.

**Shingles:** but without your brain to interpret that mind state, mind state 345z is meaningless, Oswy

**Shingles:** nice, Ren :)

**Simulat:** sure - but do we need to take them as representing all scientists, when there are many scientists who are not reductionist at all?

**Chico:** Brain stated \*345z\* might indeed be a representation of the red rose, with all its beauty - that doesn't diminish anything...

**Onasander:** I am saying, we all came into this discussion as if this was a old idea- that science has somehow disproven - we tossed words like fallacy and Occam's razor around to buttress it, claiming accepted paradigms- but we never looked at what we were saying- we never asked what consciousness was- how it works via a dualism, etc.... someone challenged it, and suddenly the word science became magical, defeating everything- has anyone applied the Occam's razor in seeing if it's even needed the other way? I pointed out how many different way's information is reprocessed in this conversation- how great the chance for loss was- there may be merit in looking at dualism that a abuse of the word 'science' would ordinarily prohibit in more respectable company who obviously don't understand the meaning of that word

**Oswy:** Sim Dennett does drive me up the wall. He thinks Functionalism is the answer. He claimed to explain consciousness and made himself a laughing stock.

**Renald:** Oswy... scientists can be reductionist if they want... "it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."

**Reflection:** Oswy, who ever they are the Churchlands have a fairly remote position, and it does not speak for science, the entire field of psychology is based upon empirical analysis of variables having to do with emotion and belief

**Oswy:** Chico State 367z does not explain or give a sense of the qualia of a red rose.

**Renald:** Not without translation, no.

**Shingles:** you're absolutely right, Chico

**Marya:** Thank you Ona

**Simulat:** I'm re-reading Consciousness Explained in a study group Oswy - and he seems to me to make a lot of sense - but certainly he doesn't invoke magic substances to defend his perspective

**Onasander:** dualism may in fact take much out of the complication of communication theory; has anyone thought of this? I know a few religions have

**Chico:** I am saying that the hypothetical, in future measurable state \*xyz\* is a representation of the sense of qualia of a red rose.

**Oswy:** Ona I think you are agreeing with me and I with you. We need to examine the paradigms with an open mind.

**Onasander:** yes

**Shingles:** which is fair enough, but how can two different substances interact, (without a misunderstanding of what Substance is, if you please), Ona?

**Chico:** What's wrong with that state representation. Oswy?

**Onasander:** Mind body dualism in both cases would still hold to Boyd's OODA Loop

**Oswy:** If we have a paradigm that eliminates and/or can't explain a number of common features of human existence ie agency free will etc then there has to be something wrong with it. A solution is Dualism.

**Renald:** Chico, you have to accept the idea of representation, apparently.

**Onasander:** he is the cutting edge of communication theory

**Shingles:** Is it as Leibniz claimed? Through a gland?

**Renald:** Oswy, no offense, but... that doesn't follow.

**Shingles:** A solution to the rising/setting of the Sun was that it orbited the earth once, Oswy

# Second Philosophy

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**Chico:** Sure, Renald - representation is all we can do - there is always a filter to truth.

**Renald:** I mean, yes, if this then that, but... "A solution is dualism?"

**Renald:** Right, Chico

**Oswy:** All Descartes posited the site of interaction as the pineal gland it was all he had to go on at the time.

**Reflection:** Oswy, perhaps I missed, how "mind substance" explains free will, better than does well defined and now quite antique empirical methodologies

**Onasander:** this reminds me of advaita

**Shingles:** bare assumption, then, oh good

**Oswy:** Ren what does not follow about my logically watertight ideas?

**Renald:** hehe, Oswy, I just meant that I don't see how dualism represents a solution to the problem you're claiming. Unless... Well, it breaks everything.

**Simulat:** That way of arguing is identical to the way that ID people argue Oswy - there is this asserting of something without even a pretence of demonstrating that its true as a "possible" solution to a hard problem that is already well on its way to being solved

**Shingles:** if a good exposition of how dualistic substances can interact cannot be found, where lays the merit in its theory? Only that it seems a convenient explanation. Well, the history of science has overturned many 'convenient' theories and shall continue to do so, Oswy

**Renald:** Also, Oswy, I think there are more effective, useful ways to handle the "problem" of reductivism or eliminativism.

**Onasander:** what problem is well on its way to being solved? What's stopping it?

**Oswy:** Ref If you say that mind is a separate substance then the mind can intervene and disrupt the determinist sequence that physicalism posits. It's the same with agency. Mind has a will that can intervene in the flow of events. Mind also ensures the continuance of personal identity over time and of course mind is capable of experiencing qualia. it all perfectly simple.

**Onasander:** is a dualistic mass getting in the way?

**Shingles:** it's not a problem, it can't interact with the physical, Ona ;)

**Onasander:** or is it just conforming with how we think it should?

**Simulat:** we have more and more powerful explanations through science of the problems of what a mind is, and how a brain can be conscious Ona

**Chico:** Oswy, regarding our ability to \*see the beauty of a red rose\*, think about people with brain injuries...

**Onasander:** my question was directed to sim

**Reflection:** those things seem to be perfectly amenable and have/are submitted to empirical examination every day Oswy, without reference to "mind substance", I think

**Oswy:** Shingles are you saying that you won't believe the mind interacts with the body ie the mental with the physical in spite of the obvious evidence just because a casual mechanism cannot yet be explained?

**Simulat:** Just as we are learning more and more about how evolution created the biological world, or what physical reality is Ona

**Shingles:** you assume still they are separate

**Simulat:** and those are all really hard problems Ona

**Onasander:** there is a force to discover then sim?

**Reflection:** also, Oswy, the "determinist sequence" is also, I think, a philosophical stance, rather than a scientific one, even though many famous scientists seem to espouse it

**Marya:** You know Oswy/Ona, it is one thing to keep an open mind, and of course we should and most of us do do that - but it is another to disregard what science shows us - that is perhaps a more misguided way of approaching philosophy. Holding on to the 'old ways' of thinking is only going to hold us back.

**Oswy:** Chico The mental clearly does interact with the bodily. And vice versa. Damage to the body will affect the mental in turn. The two substances are interrelated.

**Onasander:** Nietzsche thought the same in his dualism

**Renald:** Oswy... let's assume for a moment that mind is what you say it is. What sort of things can we point at, that make a dualist universe demonstrably different from the one science says we inhabit.

# Second Philosophy

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**Onasander:** this isn't science- no science in this thread

**Chico:** Tell us an experiment crucis, Oswy.

**Shingles:** hear me when I say that the mind is a formulation of energy (a highly complex one) that occurs within the organ of the brain, as such it can be thought of as similar to a force, so it doesn't have substance that is distinct from matter, the mind then is the activity of that matter, Oswy

**Chico:** How do you \*know \*about this interrelationship, Oswy?

**Reflection:** Onasander, when we refer to empiricism and the ways in which these questions are examined empirically over the past 150 years, we are discussing the philosophical issue, in light of the history of science as it pertains to these questions

**Simulat:** I agree Marya - just because people in the past had speculations doesn't mean that those speculations need to be accepted as true

**Oswy:** All Marya. I agree but I think you are the one who are holding on to the old paradigm useful as it has been. The new dualism recasts the idea shorn of its religious connotations and it explains a lot. It thus fits in with our latest thinking in the philosophy of science.

**Marya:** Yes agreed, Ref

**Onasander:** There is much going on within the blob of a brain- at least five different brain waves, blood, vessels opening and contracting, different kinds of cells- some of the information inherent, some from senses outside of the brain, information from outside the body

**Onasander:** that's for starters; parasites; cancer; radiation; malnutrition; stress; we know this effects it

**Shingles:** hear me when I say that the mind is a formulation of energy (a highly complex one) that occurs within the organ of the brain, as such it can be thought of as similar to a force, so it doesn't have substance that is distinct from matter, the mind then is the activity of that matter, Oswy

**Onasander:** but beyond this, we have a lot of unknowns

**Oswy:** Chico I have empirical evidence every time I experience qualia free will agency personal identity over time. Every time I voluntarily raise my arm or make a decision I have empirical evidence of the action of the mind the mental.

**Simulat:** I don't think it's a better explanation than the one that science already gives us Oswy - and at least with science there is a way of checking assertions - but there is no way proposed of checking assertions about mental substance

**Onasander:** truth is a form of magical belief best left in tribes in the tropics Sim; another form of dualism

**Oswy:** Ona yes that is true and we have a lot of obvious knows that science is distorting itself to explain.

**Simulat:** As I said at the start - I think that the error you are making is to think of an action as a thing

**Onasander:** science does not explain

**Shingles:** that's what it does, Oswy

**Onasander:** it is a grouping of methodologies; no explanation comes from it, just results

**Oswy:** Sim, you need to explain sorry.

**Shingles:** hear me when I say that the mind is a formulation of energy (a highly complex one) that occurs within the organ of the brain, as such it can be thought of as similar to a force, so it doesn't have substance that is distinct from matter, the mind then is the activity of that matter, Oswy

**Marya:** I do agree with that Sim

**Shingles:** Sim is right

**Renald:** Oswy, a meta-question... do you think you're making any progress with this?

**Reflection:** Oswy, it is these sorts of statements about your observation of your own behavior which has been submitted to empirical examination, and as one example, while you may think you are raising your hand because you have "chosen" to do so, massive amounts of evidence suggest that with meaningful and purposeful behavior, habit formations do the lifting of the arm, and the conscious part of our brain (the mind), then takes credit for the action through evocation of the construct of choice

**Onasander:** there is no wizard of oz/science telling us

**Renald:** What was that, Shingles?

**Simulat:** The mind isn't a thing in our body - the mind is what a brain does

# Second Philosophy

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**Shingles:** which part, Ren?

**Oswy:** Shingles that is a mantra in scientific language. I don't disagree with it as far as it goes but it is incomplete.

**Onasander:** unless it be in a place where science can't test; using our methods

**Simulat:** red is not a thing in our heads - perceiving red is a thing that our brain does

**Oswy:** Ren Tonight no but it's my first night.

**Chico:** Oswy, that is no evidence for \*mind substance\*. You have to demonstrate an unambiguous casual connection between such a substance and your \*free will\*, plus you have actually to demonstrate evidence for \*free will\* (that is another topic).

**Renald:** OK, Os... just curious.

**Simulat:** and if you see mentality as processes, then there is no need to invoke substances

**Shingles:** As science is and necessarily shall remain. As I said this assertion of dualism is an attempt to prematurely complete that gap, at least my description is not didactic, Oswy

**Marya:** Ref, that makes a lot of sense

**Oswy:** Ref, you are at the elimination game again eliminating the will.

**Marya:** and yes, Sim, agree very much with that too

**Simulat:** as an example - when I move (an action) I can express that as a noun - that is I can say that I made a movement - but it would be silly to ask what sort of substance a movement is made out of

**Oswy:** Sim Minds are not brains. Minds interact with bodies.

**Reflection:** Os, I am just describing enormously old and deep lines of empirical research, I have no personal desire to eliminate will or choice, only to recognize their boundaries

**Chico:** Ref points out recent studies that show that the action to raise the hand happens actually before the perception of the decision to lift the hand - a fascinating outcome...

**Marya:** I think that's an excellent way of saying it, Sim

**Oswy:** Sim Minds experience Red in interaction with bodies that perceive red

**Simulat:** you are making the substance mistake again Oswy - I didn't say that a mind is a brain - I said that a mind is what a brain does

**Shingles:** The body and the mind are one, Os

**Oswy:** It simple when you begin to use Dualism language. Marya take note.

**Marya:** lol Oswy ...

**Renald:** Oswy... there's a relatively robust answer to all this in cybernetics and the idea of emergent phenomena. I have to confess being confused about the appeal of combining science with dualism.

**Shingles:** Sim is on fire tonight :)

**Simulat:** :-)

**Shingles:** Imao

**Oswy:** Ref I am not trying to eliminate bodies that would be to commit the error of my opponents. I am arguing for an interaction of mind and body that we quite patently see.

**Shingles:** yes, we see it because mind and body are essentially one

**Reflection:** well, Os, I am a defender of poetry as an approach to understanding, so I'm not sure we are that far apart. I'm just having trouble with "mind substance"

Renald Starostin nods

**Shingles:** its what they made God out of, Ref :D

**Renald:** bzzz!

**Oswy:** Since it is 9-30 I will draw the formal debate to a close. I am not going to attempt a conclusion because I see that the battle lines are clearly drawn and perhaps that is enough for one night's work. Thanks to all for a good humoured debate.