
EPISODE IV

Agent and Person

If habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an involuntary action, what then is it? It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort.

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*

The environment can act on the subject only to the exact extent that he comprehends it; that is, transforms it into a situation.

– Sean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

Embodiment

1. In the quotation at the end of my previous episode, McDowell uses the notion of ‘mindedness’ in passing. Presumably, this is to prevent the reification of our mental phenomena. Same consideration appears in the replacement of ‘meaning’ with ‘meaningfulness’ in the literatures of philosophy of language. For McDowell, mindedness is ‘*conceptual* mindedness.’¹ As I briefly mentioned in episode one, this claim is very controversial and there are many negative arguments from different considerations. In the present episode I take up this debate in the context of action and agency. In particular, the debate between McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus will be considered in details. But before that, let me say more about McDowell’s conceptualism, especially its application to action.

In talking about conceptual capacities, McDowell relates it to the idea of rationality.

¹ ‘What Myth?’ *Inquiry* 50 (2007), pp.338-51, at p.345, my italics.

He writes:

The notion of rationality I mean to invoke here is the notion exploited in a traditional line of thought to make a special place in the animal kingdom for rational animals. It is a notion of responsiveness to reasons *as such*.²

As McDowell immediately says, this ‘wording leaves room for responsiveness to reasons...on the other side of the division drawn by this notion of rationality between rational animals and animals that are not rational.’³ For example, when we observe a dog fleeing from potential dangerous, we are justified in saying that he is responsive to dangerous as a reason to flee, without attributing him a belief *that he is in danger*, i.e., the reason *as such*.

Things are quite different in the case of human being. As McDowell says, we have the ability to ‘step back from an inclination to flee, elicited from her by an apparent danger, and raise the question whether she *should* be so inclined – whether the apparent danger is, here and now, a sufficient reason for fleeing.’⁴ If she then decides to act on the reason, her action exhibit ‘self-determining’ subjectivity.⁵

Recall that when in experiences, conceptual capacities are ‘operative,’ rather than exercised, for we do not normally actively decide which concepts to apply, contrary to the case of judgments.⁶ Similarly, in the case of actions we do not usually pay attention to what we are doing or going to do, but if we can regard them as *intentional* actions, we need to connect it to the idea of rationality. McDowell reminds:

Acting for a reason, which one is responding to as such, does not require that one reflects about whether some consideration is a sufficient rational warrant for something it seems to recommend. It is enough that one could.⁷

This is the way McDowell conceives the relation between conceptual capacities and rationality. This by the way responses to a usual query: how can McDowell put a

² ‘Conceptual Capacities in Perception,’ p.1066. I start my exposition of this episode from this piece because it is also what Dreyfus has in mind when he gave his presidential address and later responses. Unfortunately he never cites this paper from McDowell explicitly.

³ Ibid., p.1066.

⁴ Ibid., p.1066.

⁵ Ibid., p.1066. I think the distinction here can be understood together with McDowell’s invocation of Gadamer’s distinction between ‘world’ and ‘environment,’ discussed in my first episode. With this new distinction, McDowell reinforce the point the discriminatory capacities do not qualified as conceptual capacities in his sense; see p.1067. This point is very important when he debates with varieties of nonconceptualism.

⁶ I say ‘normally,’ because we do sometimes conduct top-down inferences in perceiving things. Consider the case in which an expert is in a better position to see something almost invisible from a vulgar’s point of view. The same consideration applies to action.

⁷ Ibid., p.1066.

heavy weight on the notion of ‘conceptual capacities’ without saying anything about the metaphysics of concept? To this McDowell would reply that his invocation of the notion of ‘concept’ is a matter of ‘stipulation: conceptual capacities in the relevant sense belong essentially to their possessor’s rationality in the sense I am working with, responsiveness to reasons as such.’⁸ He further works out this stipulation with his interpretation of Fregean sense.⁹ But in any case, he can leave open the nature of concept, as long as we do not regard it as normatively inert items populated in the inner space.

There is another important point about the exercise / operative distinction. In the case of judgments, we exercise conceptual capacities through conducting inferences; in experiences it is not the case. As McDowell explains, ‘[t]he content that the explanation attributes to the experience is *the same* as the content of the belief explained, not *a premise* from which it would make sense to think of the subject as having reached the belief by an inferential step.’¹⁰ And something analogue can be said about action.

After setting the stage, McDowell then offers his case for conceptualism:

[I]f our notion of an experience is to be capable of playing the role it plays when we explain perceptually based beliefs as manifestations of rationality, we must understand having such an experience – being in possession of such an entitlement – as itself, already, an actualization of the conceptual capacities that would be exercised by someone who explicitly adopted a belief with that content.¹¹

Again, something parallel can be said about actions. Simply put, the thought is that human experiences and actions are integral parts of human rationality, so given McDowell’s stipulation of conceptual capacities, the ‘pervasiveness of *conceptual* rationality’ follows.¹²

Notice that in the above stipulation, McDowell says nothing about language. It is definitely McDowell’s view that language is a crucial precondition of rationality, as he puts it, ‘the ability to step back from considerations and raise the question whether they constitute reasons for action or belief...is coeval with command of a language,’¹³ but he never argues that conceptual capacities are linguistic or ‘quasi-linguistic’¹⁴ in

⁸ Ibid., p.1067. John Searle says something similar when he declares that what he is doing is ‘logical analyses.’

⁹ See *Mind and World*, p.107.

¹⁰ ‘Conceptual Capacities in Perception,’ p.1068, my italics.

¹¹ Ibid., p.1068.

¹² ‘What Myth?’ p. 349, my italics.

¹³ ‘Conceptual Capacities in Perception,’ p.1071.

¹⁴ ‘Sense Experience, Concepts, and Content – Objections to Davidson and McDowell,’ at p.249.

Michael Ayers's term – whatever that means. This makes room for the thought that 'experience as actualization of conceptual capacities *in sensory consciousness*.'¹⁵ This damps a similar worry raised by Arthur Collins, that McDowell is 'committ[ing] to a picture in which our experience comes as it were with subtitles.'¹⁶ This is important in the present context, for if the sense of the conceptual is indeed 'quasi-linguistic,' the Ayers-Collins line of objection will appear again. To be sure, so far McDowell does not say anything positive about the sensory aspect of experience, but the objection was that McDowell cannot make room for that. It is enough for now to say that the room has been made, though the accommodation hasn't been prepared.

As usual, McDowell has a diagnosis for the misfire. Here it goes:

In disallowing my proposal that actualizations of conceptual capacities can present things in a sensory way, Ayers assumes a sharp separation between the sensory and the intellectual, as I shall put it to avoid that tendentious implication.¹⁷

The dualism of intellect and sensory is only assumed, without any argument. And McDowell's argument for conceptualism above provides some reason for not believing it. As acknowledged above, he does not have positive account about the way the conceptual and the sensory can merge together, but at least he depicts a way to understand the conceptual without precluding the sensory. Again, we can draw a parallel for actions. Experiences are of course sensory; actions are of course bodily. But without arguments, we should not simply assume that the sensory and the bodily are incompatible with the conceptual. Later we will see that Dreyfus is attempting to provide arguments for the dualism in question, but I shall complete my exposition of McDowell before evaluating Dreyfus's case.

For McDowell, conceptual capacities, freedom, and self-determining subjectivity come in the same package.¹⁸ But we should not forget that we are not unconditionally free, both in experiences and in actions.¹⁹ As McDowell say, 'there is a sense in which perceptual experience can compel belief,'²⁰ there is also a sense in which the world, together with affordances and solicitations, can compel actions.²¹ The passivity in perceptions and actions is of course acknowledged. The issue is how we should

¹⁵ 'Conceptual Capacities in Perception,' p.1071.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.1071. See Arthur Collins, 'Beastly Experience,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58 (1998), pp. 375-80.

¹⁷ 'Conceptual Capacities in Perception,' p.1072.

¹⁸ I will say more about this in my epilogue.

¹⁹ See also *Mind and World*, p.96.

²⁰ Ibid., p.1074.

²¹ The former concept is introduced by J. J. Gibson: "'affordance": all action possibilities latent in the environment, objectively measurable, and independent of the individual's ability to recognize these possibilities,' *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Houghton Mifflin, 1979). The latter concept will be characterized and discussed when I introduce Dreyfus's thoughts later.

understand the relations between freedom and passivity. Again, this is the focal disagreement between McDowell and Dreyfus.

Let me adumbrate what I have said before getting into the debate. McDowell first stipulates the sense in which rational animals possess conceptual capacities. This is the capacity to be responsive to reasons *as such*. He then rehearses a distinction between exercised and operative conceptual capacities. In experiences, the capacities are passively at work. The main argument for the conceptuality is that experiences are integrated into the larger framework of rationality, and this (together with other thoughts not presenting here) implies that experiences are conceptual through and through. This does not, *contra* many critics, mean that experiences are quasi-linguistic. To think otherwise is to embrace the dualism of intellect and sensory, without arguments. Experiences belong to the realm of self-determining subjectivity, but there is indeed a sense in which perceptions can compel beliefs, for it is in a significant sense passive. Now, everything said above has a place in the parallel story of actions. In actions, conceptual capacities are passively at work. They are conceptual because they are integral parts of the larger framework of rationality. They are passive because we are constrained by affordances, solicitations, and the world. We should not, however, conceive the conceptual and the passive aspects of action with the dualism of intellect and bodily.²² This is the general McDowellian picture.²³

Like experiences, actions also mediate mind and world, though with different 'directions of fit.'²⁴ Perceptions reflect the world, actions change the world; perceptions sustain beliefs, actions carry out intentions. To expect a parallel story for actions is not unnatural at least. In his Locke Lecture, McDowell claims that 'intentions without overt activity are idle, and movements of limbs without concepts are mere happenings, not expressions of agency.'²⁵ And some philosophers start to envisage what McDowell would say, or should say, about action, Jonathan Dancy for example.²⁶ Some other philosophers go even further to criticize the envisaged McDowellian account of action; as mentioned, Hubert Dreyfus is one among them.²⁷ In presenting his picture, as we have seen, McDowell invokes plenty of resources from the mighty deads, including Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, and

²² McDowell's own term for this is 'dualism of embodiment and mindedness.' 'Response to Dreyfus,' *Inquiry* 50 (2007), pp.366-70, at p.369.

²³ Most of the following materials are drawn from my 'Self, Action, and Passivity,' under review. I take issues with Dreyfus in great details because his debate with McDowell also touches the issue of conceptuality and the Myth of the Given, two of my main themes in this essay.

²⁴ See John Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, p.7.

²⁵ *Mind and World*, p.89.

²⁶ 'Acting in the Light of the Appearances,' in C. MacDonald and G. MacDonald (eds.), *McDowell and His Critics*, pp. 121-34, and McDowell's reply to it, pp. 134-41 in the same anthology.

²⁷ Dreyfus has a series of objections and modifications, so I will refer to specific pieces in due course.

Gadamer.²⁸ A blatant feature of this list is that phenomenologists are absent: Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty are not in the list. Dreyfus suggests that McDowell's position is defective exactly in this respect.²⁹

2. In considering Dreyfus's objections, McDowell adumbrates his relevant thoughts as follows:

I have urged that our perceptual relation to the world is conceptual all the way out to the world's impacts on our receptive capacities. The idea of the conceptual that I mean to be invoking is to be understood in close connection with the idea of rationality, in the sense that is in play in the traditional separation of mature human beings, as rational animals, from the rest of the animal kingdom. Conceptual capacities are capacities that belong to their subject's rationality. So another way of putting my claim is to say that our perceptual experience is permeated with rationality. I have also suggested, in passing, that something parallel should be said about our agency.³⁰

We will see that McDowell and Dreyfus have very different notions of the main concepts appeared in the above passage, such as 'perception,' 'concept,' 'receptive capacities,' 'rationality,' 'animals,' and 'agency.'³¹ But first let's go back to where the story began. In his editorial introduction to Samuel Todes's *Body and World*, Dreyfus briefly took issue with McDowell. He writes:

Neither Davidson nor McDowell tries to describe *perceptual objects as they are in themselves* and how they become the objects of thought. By calling attention to the structure of nonconceptual, practical perception and showing how its judgments can

²⁸ However, McDowell opposes to his colleague Brandom's attitude towards those big names, indicated by the title of Brandom's historical anthology, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Harvard University Press, 2002).

²⁹ Husserl is an exception. Dreyfus is also hostile to Husserl's thoughts, so he regards his objections to McDowell as both Heideggerian and Merleau-Pontyan. Indeed, McDowell's notion of 'passive actualization of conceptual capacities in experiences' is very congenial to Husserl's notion of 'passive synthesis,' as pointed out by Lilian Alweissl in 'The Myth of the Given,' in János Boros (ed.) *Mind in World* (Brambauer Pécs), pp.39-65. See also Husserl's *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic* (Springer, 2001).

³⁰ 'What Myth?' pp.338-9. The familiar voice of this passage confirms that in this debate what Dreyfus and McDowell in minds is McDowell's earlier paper 'Conceptual Capacities in Perception.' This is important, because for some reasons unbeknownst to me, neither of them refers to that piece explicitly, but this is not good for readers.

³¹ McDowell himself, in his replies to Dreyfus, has attempted to clarify his relevant notions, and Dreyfus concedes that he misunderstood McDowell at some points. But his concessions are *piecemeal*, and there are still some significant misunderstandings lurking in Dreyfus's final response. What I will do here is to correct the misunderstandings in a *systematic* way, and through this I hope the lurking misunderstandings would thereby be dislodged.

be transformed into the judgments of detached thought, Todes is able to provide a framework in which to explain how the content of perception, while not itself conceptual, can provide the basis for *conception*. Thus, Todes's *Body and World* can be read as a significant anticipatory response to McDowell's *Mind and World*.³²

Here Dreyfus separates perception from conception. He thinks that there is something called 'perception as they are in themselves, independent of conception.' This seems to beg the question against McDowell, but I think Dreyfus is unblamable at this point, for what he did there is to introduce Todes's seminal work, situating it into certain philosophical contexts by contrasting it with McDowell's thoughts. Although it will be better if he provides substantive arguments for the claim, I think we can be more charitable here.³³ What I mainly concern here is a series of debates where Dreyfus and McDowell engage with each other seriously.

A few words about my strategy: the debate between McDowell and Dreyfus appears like continuous conversations: Dreyfus's Presidential Address was responding to McDowell's earlier works, and later on *Inquiry* they respond to each other for twice. In addition, Dreyfus does not reach his stable framework until the final response. Therefore, it would be onerous and ineffective for us to go through the discussions with the original sequence. Hence I shall offer a two-stage presentation of Dreyfus's objections. First it's general structure, and then its details. This means that sometimes I will fit Dreyfus's earlier points and examples into his later, stable framework. The motivation is to present Dreyfus at his best. In what follows I will discuss how Dreyfus reaches his stable framework first.

Dreyfus seriously argues against McDowell in his 2005 APA Presidential Address. He starts his argumentation by posing this rhetoric question: '[c]an we accept McDowell's Sellarsian claim that perception is conceptual "all the way out," thereby denying the more basic perceptual capacities we seem to share with prelinguistic infants and higher animal?'³⁴ The positive statement of the position goes like this: 'in assuming that all intelligibility, even perception and skillful coping, *must be, at least implicitly, conceptual*...Sellars and McDowell join Kant in endorsing what we might call *the Myth of the Mental*.'³⁵ In supporting this claim, he brings in a distinction that

³² 'Todes's Account of Nonconceptual Perceptual Knowledge and Its Relation to Thought,' in *Body and World* (MIT Press, 2001), pp.xv-xxvii, at p.xvi, my italics.

³³ For a detailed discussion concerning the relations between Todes, Dreyfus, and McDowell, see Joseph Rouse, 'Mind, Body, and World: Todes and McDowell on Bodies and Language,' *Inquiry* 48 (2005), pp.36-61.

³⁴ 'Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise' (APA Pacific Division Presidential Address 2005, later published in *Topoi* 25 (2006), pp.43-49), p.1; my reference to the electronic version available here:

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~hdreyfus/pdf/Dreyfus%20APA%20Address%20%2010.22.05%20.pdf>

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7, italics altered by me.

is crucial to his argumentations:

The actual phenomenon [i.e. expertise] suggests that to become experts we must switch from *detached rule-following* to a more *involved and situation specific way of coping*...Such emotional involvement seems to be necessary to facilitate the switchover from *detached, analytical rule following* to an entirely different *engaged, holistic mode of experience*...³⁶

Dreyfus uses some other distinctions to supplement this one, including detached theoretical perspective / engaged situation in the world,³⁷ calculate / involve,³⁸ and knowing-that / knowing-how.³⁹ I shall focus on the one appeared in the quotation. Dreyfus assumes that McDowell regards actions as detached rule-following, but he never tells us why he thinks that. Moreover, we have positive reasons to think otherwise. Recall that McDowell painstakingly disabuses this detached conception of rule-following in his critique of Kripke's Wittgenstein, as discussed in my previous episode. For example, he writes:

[Kripke's] line of interpretation gets off on the wrong foot, when it credits Wittgenstein with acceptance of a 'skeptical paradox'... the reasoning that would lead to this 'skeptical paradox' starts with something Wittgenstein aims to show up as a mistake: the assumption, in this case, that the understanding on which I act when I obey an order *must be an interpretation*.⁴⁰

To rehearse, Kripke conceives understanding as a species of interpretation, so whenever I use the 'plus' function, I can interpret my past usages of it so as to conform other deviant functions, hence the paradox. McDowell urges that the source of the paradox is the *detached* conception of rule-following: we *need to do interpretation* when our understanding is functioning. The problematic inner space model has it that there are some freestanding mental items that have no intrinsic normative relations with the external world, so we need interpretations to build up these relations. It is this *detached* picture, McDowell submits, that generates the skeptical paradox. He further connects his critique to Wittgenstein's notions of 'practice,' 'custom,' and 'form of life'; I shall not here repeat the discussions of my previous episode. It is not clear, then, why Dreyfus does not regard McDowell as an

³⁶ Ibid., p.7-8, my italics.

³⁷ Ibid., p.3.

³⁸ Ibid., p.15.

³⁹ Ibid., p.17.

⁴⁰ 'Wittgenstein on Following a Rule,' p.236.

ally at least in this respect.

The distinction between detached rule-following and involved skillful coping seems to be dubious; moreover, it is precisely what McDowell disagrees with when he writes that '[w]e find ourselves *always already engaging* with the world.'⁴¹ Dreyfus's distinction is actually congenial to McDowell.

Dreyfus admits this misunderstanding in his reply: 'I did assume, accepting the traditional understanding, that McDowell understood rationality and *conceptuality* as *general*. I should have known better. I'm sorry that I attributed to McDowell the view of rationality he explicitly rejects in his papers on Aristotle.'⁴² Unfortunately, Dreyfus lapses again, ten pages later, when he contrasts 'detached conceptual intentionality' with 'involved motor intentionality.'⁴³ I am puzzled by this: Dreyfus first claims, rightly, that he and McDowell agree that conceptuality is situation-dependent; that is, not general or detached. But after that he, in the very same paper, describes conceptual intentionality as detached. I don't know how to make of this. In his rejoinder, McDowell observes:

Dreyfus acknowledges that he was wrong to think practical intelligence, as I conceive it, is situation-independent. But he still thinks my view of mindedness can be characterized in terms of 'detached conceptual intentionality.'⁴⁴

Here McDowell writes as if Dreyfus only admits that practical intelligence is situation-dependent in McDowell's sense, but in fact, he confesses that he should not understand McDowell's notions of 'rationality,' 'conceptuality,' and related notions as situation-independent. Therefore, I cannot see any decisive progress in Dreyfus's first reply. I am not saying that there is no progress at all, but Dreyfus still preserves the general structure from his Presidential Address. It can be dubbed the 'detachment / involvement' distinction.

Dreyfus replaces this structure with a new one in his second reply. Now the crucial distinction is constituted by 'subjectivity' and 'absorption':

[There is] a deep issue dividing us – an issue that is obscured by my failure to

⁴¹ *Mind and World*, p.34, my italics.

⁴² 'The Return of the Myth of the Mental,' *Inquiry* 50 (2007), pp.352-65, at p.353. An earlier version of it is 'Detachment, Involvement, and Rationality: are We Essentially Rational Animals?' a talk given in Harvard. We can clearly see the disagreement between McDowell and Dreyfus in this title. Dreyfus mentions Aristotle because he and McDowell conduct the discussion by focusing on Aristotle's notion of 'phronesis,' which has been discussed in my first episode. Since they have reached agreement at this point, I shall not talk more about it here. I relate the discussion to Kripke and Wittgenstein instead, for the connection is relevant but missed in their exchanges. As to the relation between phronesis to demonstrative thoughts, see 'What Myth?' p.342.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.363, and notice my italics in the passage I just quoted.

⁴⁴ 'Response to Dreyfus,' p.366.

distinguish explicitly *absorption* and involvement.

I should have argued that *subjectivity* (not detachment) is the lingering ghost of the mental...⁴⁵

In this final response, Dreyfus realizes that it is inappropriate to saddle McDowell with the notion of ‘detachment,’ and he proposes that it is ‘subjectivity,’ which he means the operation of ‘subject’ or ‘agent,’ that is at fault. Besides, realizing that McDowell can accommodate the phenomena of ‘involvement,’ Dreyfus submits that it is ‘absorption,’ that is, ‘involved coping *at its best*’⁴⁶, that shows the falsity of conceptualism.⁴⁷ This completes my characterization of Dreyfus’s stable framework. Now I turn to the details of his objections.

3. The final version of the general framework is the ‘subjectivity / absorption’ distinction. By ‘subjectivity’ Dreyfus means ‘agency,’ which is ‘the lingering ghost of the mental’⁴⁸ according to him. As to ‘absorption,’ he writes that ‘[i]n fully absorbed coping, there is no immersed *ego*, not even an implicit one.’⁴⁹ He further adds that ‘in *attentive, deliberate...action* an ego is always involved.’⁵⁰ Notice that before Dreyfus reaches this final version, the notion of ‘attention’ and the like has occupied a central place in his objections, including his favorite example from Chuck Knoblauch:

As second baseman for the New York Yankees, Knoblauch was so successful he was voted best infielder of the year, but one day, rather than simply fielding a hit and throwing the ball to first base, it seems he *stepped back* and took up a ‘free, distanced orientation’ towards the ball and how he was throwing it – to the mechanics of it, as he put it. After that, he couldn’t recover his former absorption and often – though not always – threw the ball to first base erratically – once into the face of a spectator.

Interestingly, even after he seemed unable to resist stepping back and being mindful, Knoblauch could still play brilliant baseball in difficult situations – catching a hard-hit ground ball and throwing it to first faster than thought. What he couldn’t do was field an easy routine grounder directly to second base, because that gave him time to think before throwing to first.⁵¹

⁴⁵ ‘Response to McDowell,’ *Inquiry* 50 (2007), pp.371-77, p.373, my italics.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.373, my italics.

⁴⁷ This remark suggests that what Dreyfus is describing here is a distinction, not a dichotomy: the differences between attentive, involved, and absorbed actions are a matter of degree. This will become important latter in my discussion.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.373.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.374, my italics.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.374, my italics.

⁵¹ ‘The Return of the Myth of the Mental,’ p.354.

The notion of ‘attention’ and the like play a heavy role in Dreyfus’s objections through out the whole debate. Here is another example:

[We] are only part-time rational animals. We can, when necessary, step back and put ourselves into a free-distanced relation to the world. We can also monitor our activity while performing it...But *monitoring* what we are doing as we are doing it...leads to performance which is at best competent.⁵²

This line of argumentation, nevertheless, is both uncharitable as an interpretation and ungrounded as a thesis. Consider the passage McDowell first invokes the notion of ‘stepping back’:

Consider someone following a marked trail, who at a crossing of paths goes to the right in response to a signpost pointing that way. It would be absurd to say that for going to the right to be a rational response to the signpost, it must issue from the subject’s making an explicit determination that the way the signpost points gives her a reason for going to the right. What matters is just that she acts as she does because (this is a reason-introducing ‘because’) the signpost points to the right. (This explanation competes with, for instance, supposing she goes to the right at random, without noticing the signpost, or noticing it but not understanding it.) What shows that she goes to the right in rational response to the way the signpost points might be just that she can *afterwards* answer the question why she went to the right – a request for her reason for doing that – by saying ‘There was a signpost pointing to the right.’ She need not have adverted to that reason and decided on that basis to go to the right.⁵³

First of all, notice that the subject in this scenario steps back and reflects on her *reason* for the action *retrospectively*, as opposed to Dreyfus’s subject who steps back and reflects on his *mechanics* of the action when he *is carrying out the action*. So the fact that the stepping-back screws up the expertise is simply irrelevant. Secondly, it is clear that ‘mindedness’ never means ‘attention’ in McDowell’s writings⁵⁴: it would be insane to hold that our perceptual experiences (and actions) are *attentive* all the way out; if that were the claim, *Mind and World* would be easily refuted. Dreyfus’s reading

⁵² Ibid., p.354-5, my italics. See also p.354-55, 363.

⁵³ ‘Conceptual Capacities in Perception,’ p.1066. I did not quote this example when I characterized McDowell’s position, for I want to leave it here to compare with the Knoblauch example from Dreyfus.

⁵⁴ And McDowell never uses the notion of ‘mindful.’ Although ‘mindful’ and ‘minded’ are almost interchangeable according to many dictionaries, ‘minded’ is supposed to capture the *passivity* of the mind. This thought is not available for Dreyfus for he always identifies mind with attention etc.

of McDowell strikes me as uncharitable.

Dreyfus reminds us that absorbed coping is involved coping at its best. He should have acknowledged that, by similar considerations, attention, deliberation, and monitoring are mindedness at its best. This means that mindedness is not exhausted by attention and the like. To claim otherwise, Dreyfus needs to establish that attention is the mark of the mental. I see every reason to oppose to this proposition.⁵⁵

McDowell never claims that there is an immersed or implicit self in actions, if we understand self with attention and the like. Self does accompany intentional actions in a weaker sense that actions are within the realm of the conceptual or the rational. But Dreyfus disagrees. He urges that cases like chess Grandmaster show that absorbed coping is in no sense rational.⁵⁶ I suggest we compare that case with the case like alien hand or reflexive behaviors. Dreyfus is not willing to identify absorbed coping with mere reflexive behaviors⁵⁷, so presumably it still has to do with our agency. Dreyfus is hostile to this idea, for he persistently confines mindedness to the realm of the attentive. But as I just said, McDowell never claims that, and the claim itself is simply wrong: when you are not paying attention to one of your beliefs, that doesn't disqualify that belief's status as a *mental* state. To concentrate on the notion of 'attention' is a red herring of the whole discussion.

In identifying mindedness with the attentive, Dreyfus cannot make sense of McDowell's proposal:

This pervasiveness claim, however, seems to be based on a *category mistake*. Capacities are *exercised* on occasion, but that does not allow one to conclude that, even when they are not exercised, they are, nonetheless, '*operative*' and thus pervade all our activities.⁵⁸

We are not allowed to make that conclusion, according to Dreyfus, for to claim that conceptuality is operative involves a category mistake. But that is not so. To say that conceptuality or mindedness is operative is to insist that conceptual capacities can be activated *passively*. This may sound strange for Dreyfus or some others, but they need to tell us why that's incoherent or at least problematic. McDowell offers reasons for this claim in his Locke Lecture, as we have seen above.

Dreyfus acknowledges that 'mindedness' is a technical term on McDowell part⁵⁹, but he doesn't really respect this point: he opens his response to McDowell by

⁵⁵ It may be more plausible to view attention as the mark of the conscious, but even this is not settled. There is a symposium on this in ASSC 12; speakers include Ned Block and Kristof Koch.

⁵⁶ 'Response to McDowell,' p.374.

⁵⁷ He mentions Homer at this point; see *ibid.*, p.374.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.372, my italics.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.374.

classifying ‘conceptuality’ and ‘mindedness’ as *mentalist* notions.⁶⁰ ‘Mentalism’ is a very vague term, to be sure, but to my knowledge none of its meanings fits McDowell’s usage. If McDowell uses ‘conceptuality’ mentalistically, how can he manage to answer the charge that his position is idealistic in Berkeley’s sense?

Dreyfus would presumably press this question: ‘if mindedness is not identical to a monitoring self, then what is it?’ To this McDowell has an answer:

It is a matter of an ‘I do’...Conceiving action in terms of the ‘I do’ is a way of registering *the essential first-person character* of the realization of practical rational capacities that acting is.⁶¹

Dreyfus objects to this, but again on the false assumption that this first-person character is attention etc.⁶² What McDowell does mean, however, is that our absorbed coping, involved coping at its best, is not like cases like alien hands. By contrast, in repudiating this first-person character, it is unclear how Dreyfus can leave room for the crucial distinction between absorbed coping and mere reflexive behaviors.

Dreyfus sets a dilemma between ‘a meaninglessly bodily movement’ and ‘an action done by a subject for a reason’ to McDowell.⁶³ McDowell would escape this dilemma by insisting that (intentional) bodily movements are *meaningful*. Dreyfus would agree on this point, but it should be clear that this ‘motor intentionality’ can be appropriately understood only by those who respect the distinction between absorbed coping and mere reflexive behaviors.

About this ownership consideration, Dreyfus says:

Of course, the coping going on *is* mine in the sense that the coping can be interrupted at any moment by a transformation that results in an experience of stepping back from the flow of current coping. I then retrospectively attach an ‘I think’ to the coping and take responsibility for my actions.⁶⁴

McDowell’s explanation of this is the pervasiveness claim, but Dreyfus’s is not convinced. His alternative explanation is, surprisingly enough, purely physiological.⁶⁵ But this is problematic. For one thing, this physiological claim is compatible with all camps in this debate; for another, if it is the whole story for Dreyfus, then how can the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.371.

⁶¹ ‘Response to Dreyfus,’ p.367, my italics.

⁶² ‘Response to McDowell,’ p.375.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.374.

⁶⁴ ‘The Return of the Myth of the Mental,’ p.356. Here he recognizes that the stepping back at issue is retrospective, but he lapsed earlier in discussing Knoblauch’s case.

⁶⁵ ‘Response to McDowell,’ p.374.

notion of ‘responsibility’ mentioned in the quotation above be explained?

Later Dreyfus seems to radicalize his answer. In describing McDowell’s view he disagrees with; he writes that: ‘to the question “who act?” [McDowell] responds: “the answer is ‘I do’”.’⁶⁶ But if this is an answer Dreyfus objects to, he seems to have no alternative but commit that the answer is ‘this body does.’ That’s why McDowell argues that ‘[t]he real myth in this neighborhood is...*the Myth of the Disembodied Intellect*.’⁶⁷ Dreyfus replies that this Myth is more like Gadamer’s and McDowell’s view, for ‘[i]t assumes that human beings are defined by their capacity to distance themselves from their involved coping.’⁶⁸ This doesn’t seem right to me. Even if one holds this definition of human beings, it does not follow immediately that our mindedness is disembodied. Dreyfus rejects this because he mistakenly identifies mindedness with attention or deliberation. And McDowell attributes that Myth to Dreyfus because ‘[i]f you distinguish me from my body, and give my body that person-like character, you have too many person-like things in the picture...’⁶⁹ That is to say, if both the self and ‘this body’ are person-like things and the self is not this body, than it must be a disembodied person. Dreyfus does not address this objection at all.

Dreyfus thinks our animal nature has no philosophically interesting differences from other animals. This is backed up by what McDowell identifies as the ‘quick argument’: from the premise that we share basic perceptual capacities and embodied coping skills to the conclusion that ‘those capacities and skills, as we have them, cannot be permeated with rationality, since other animals are not rational.’⁷⁰ ‘But the quick argument does not work.’ McDowell continues,

[t]he claim that the capacities and skills are shared comes to no more than this: there are descriptions of things we can do that apply also to things other animals can do...But the truth about a human being’s exercise of competence in making her around, in a performance that can be described like that, need not be *exhausted* by the match with what can be said about, say, a cat’s correspondingly describable response to a corresponding affordance. The human being’s response is, if you like, indistinguishable from the cat’s response *qua* response to an affordance describable in those terms. But it does not follow that the human being’s response cannot be unlike the cat’s response in being the human being’s rationality at work.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.373.

⁶⁷ ‘What Myth?’ p.349, my italics. Recall the dualism of intellect and sensory / bodily criticized at the earlier stage of this episode.

⁶⁸ ‘The Return of the Myth of the Mental,’ p.355.

⁶⁹ ‘Response to Dreyfus,’ p.369.

⁷⁰ ‘What Myth?’ p.343.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.343. If McDowell is right here, affordances can be ‘data for [one’s] rationality’ (Ibid., p.344).

This reflects a central thought of McDowell's thinking: when two phenomena share something, we are not forced to regard this 'something' as a *discrete* thing, 'a core' shared by these two phenomena. 'It is not compulsory,' as he likes to put it. And he further argues that 'if we do take this line, there is no satisfactory way to understand the role of the supposed core in our perceptual lives.'⁷² Here 'perceptual lives' is of course just an example. This central thought is two-staged: first, the factorizing way is not compulsory, and second, it will lead to in principle irresolvable quandary. In the case of passivity, the devastating problem is the infamous Myth of the Given. I have discussed this in my second episode, but since it is highly relevant to the present debate between McDowell and Dreyfus, I shall enter into this again, though with a different angle.⁷³

4. 'The Myth of the Given,' to rehearse, was introduced and criticized by Wilfrid Sellars in his celebrated 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.' Most contemporary philosophers identify the myth with indubitability, but that's not Sellars's original formulation.⁷⁴ Dreyfus is not aware of this:

Given its structural similarity to empiricism, we need to make clear that existential phenomenology does not assume an *indubitable* Given on which to base empirical certainties. As with all forms of intentionality, solicitations can be *misleading* and in responding to such solicitations one can be misled.⁷⁵

Notice that Dreyfus distances himself from the Myth of the Given by stressing that the foundations in his picture are not indubitable, but this does not respond to the mystical part of the Given identified by McDowell. Notice that when McDowell diagnoses the oscillating seesaw in modern philosophy, he never mentions 'foundationalism.' Foundationalism, at least in its stronger form, often implies indubitability, but that's not the problem McDowell (and Sellars) is identifying. The McDowellian problematic is constituted by coherentism and *the Myth of the Given*, not foundationalism.

Also see pp.343, 348-9 for the example of going through a hole. In this case, '*the fact* that a hole in the wall if of a certain size will be a *solicitation*' ('Response to Dreyfus,' p.369, my italics).

⁷² *Mind and World*, p.64.

⁷³ In the context of the difference between human being and mere animals, McDowell invokes the distinction between 'being open to the world' and 'merely inhabiting an environment' ('What Myth?' p.343-4). What McDowell insists is that our coping with the environment and animals' case are different in kind. After entering the space of reasons, we cannot 'unlearn.'

⁷⁴ Willem deVries and Timm Triplett make an admirable effort to gloss this formidable piece. In page xxii and xxiii, they point out that Sellars did not identify the myth with incorrigibility (indubitability). See Willem deVries and Timm Triplett, *Knowledge, Mind, and the Given: Reading Wilfrid Sellars's 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'* (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000).

⁷⁵ 'The Return of the Myth of the Mental,' p.362, my italics.

The worse thing is that later Dreyfus says something exactly fall prey to the Myth of the Given:

The world of solicitations, then, is not foundational in the sense that it is indubitable and grounds our empirical claims, but it is the self-sufficient, constant, and pervasive background that provides the base for our dependent, intermittent, activity of stepping back, subjecting our activity to rational scrutiny, and spelling out the objective world's rational structure.⁷⁶

It is not clear that what the 'base-providing' claim amounts to, but obviously Dreyfus thinks solicitations have to do with our rational structures. Now how does he characterize solicitations as such? In the figure that he invokes to contrast McDowell's notion of 'world' with Merleau-Ponty's one, he writes that for phenomenologists the world is '[s]olicitations to act; [a] web of attractions and repulsions.'⁷⁷ Later in contrasting with 'affordance,' he binds solicitations with the notion of 'drawing.'⁷⁸ Now solicitations sound like something in the realm of law: in this realm there is no freedom; we are just drawn into these or those movements of limbs, or 'expertise' in Dreyfus sense. Freedom kicks in when we step back and reflect, so it does not belong to solicitations, in Dreyfus's sense. Dreyfus says that solicitations 'can be misled'⁷⁹, and this makes Merleau-Pontyan world 'normative.'⁸⁰ But solicitations in this sense are just attractions and repulsions constituted by relations between objects and our bodies, which subject to the realm of law, so 'being misled' can be only a metaphor. By contrast, McDowell's world deserves to be called 'normative,' for he argues that the world is encompassed by the realm of the conceptual, and conceptual relations are normative connectedness.

In this way, Dreyfus unwittingly commits a version of the Myth of the Given: solicitations are inhabitants in the realm of law, but they are supposed to 'provide the base' for the space of reasons: '[t]hese solicitations have a systematic order that...works in the background to *make rationality possible*.'⁸¹ Given that Dreyfus is not a bald naturalist, who are willing to bite the bullet of reducing the space of reasons to the realm of law, his picture is ultimately fall prey to the Myth of the Given.

I find Dreyfus's notion of the body peculiar. On the one hand, he attributes the body person-like characters; on the other, the body responds to only solicitations conceived as inhabitants in the realm of law. I see no way to reconcile these two elements in his

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.363.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.357.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.361.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.362.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.357.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.358, my italics.

picture.

Dreyfus recognizes a problem similar to the one we are discussing: '[the existential phenomenologist] owes an account of how our absorbed, situated experience comes to be *transformed* so that we experience context-free, self-sufficient substances with detachable properties...'⁸² But the problem is much more serious than this. Given that Dreyfus presumably accepts the *sui generis* character of the space of reasons, and given that his understanding of solicitations commits him to putting them in the realm of law, the 'owing an account' acknowledgement does not touch the real and deep problem. He goes on to accuse that 'the conceptualists can't give an account of how we are absorbed in the world...'⁸³ But this is not so. Given that McDowell never identify conceptuality and mindedness with a monitoring self, cases like Knoblauch and Grandmaster are simply irrelevant. Dreyfus prefers the phenomenological approach because it 'accepts the challenge of relating the preconceptual world to the conceptual world...'⁸⁴, but what we should say is that the phenomenologist accepts the challenge *before he really appreciates it*. On the contrary, while the conceptualist also accepts the *sui generis* character of the space of reasons, he puts solicitations in the realm of the conceptual, and this avoids the Myth of the Given and intellectualism at the same time (since conceptuality is not in the realm of law, and is not identical to a monitoring self either).

5. If what I have said so far is correct in general outlines, I side with McDowell that many of Heidegger's, Merleau-Ponty's, and Dreyfus's thoughts should be regard as supplementations, as opposed to corrections, to the conceptualist picture.⁸⁵ Although the cases of Knoblauch and Grandmaster are compatible with McDowell's view, more can be, and should be said on these or other interesting cases. I conclude that though Dreyfus's objections raise interesting questions for us to think, his case against McDowell nevertheless cuts no ice.

Before closing this section, I want to remind my readers about the relation between Dreyfus's picture criticized by McDowell and the inner space model. According to McDowell, Dreyfus unwittingly commits the Myth of the Disembodied Intellect in depicting his picture of agency. This Myth, as I mentioned in passing, is parallel to the dualism of intellect and sensory lurking in Michael Ayers's thinking. Now we should further recognize that the Myth of the Disembodied Intellect is a special version of the inner space model. Originally, the inner space is defined by a self as an inner eye directing at self-standing mental items. Now in the context of bodily agency, the

⁸² *ibid.*, p.364, my italics.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.364.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.364.

⁸⁵ 'What Myth?' p.349.

self-standing mental items are replaced by automaton-like bodily movements, independent of a detached self. There is a *distance* between the intellect and mindless bodily movements; with this picture at hand, ‘it is too late to try to fix things by talking about the former merging into the latter.’⁸⁶ Dreyfus fiercely argues against any detached conception of embodied agency, but his unconscious commitment of the inner space model makes the very idea of ‘embodiment’ unavailable to him.

Consequently, McDowell’s own position binds the subject and its bodily capacities together:

The fact is that there is nothing for me to mean by ‘I,’ even though what I mean by ‘I’ is correctly specified as *the thinking thing I am*, except the very thing I would be reefing to (a bit strangely) if I said ‘this body’...⁸⁷

And McDowell identifies ‘I’ with ‘person.’⁸⁸ It seems to follow that person is identical with its living body. This raises important issues about personhood. In the next section I discuss how McDowell conceives personhood and the mind-body relation.

Embedment

1. McDowell starts with John Locke’s definition of personhood: a person is ‘a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and consider itself as itself, the same thinking being, in different time and places.’⁸⁹ The crux here is a person’s “inner angle” on its own persistence.⁹⁰ Locke’s sketchy characterization permits different ways of development. Derek Parfit thinks the only legitimate way to cash out this Lockean idea is to accept a version of ‘reductionism.’⁹¹ According to McDowell, Parfit’s line of thinking presupposes a dubious dualism between ‘purely mental’ and ‘purely material,’ the assumption ‘that there is no alternative to reduce except to commit ourselves to continuants whose persistence through time would consist in nothing but the continuity of “consciousness” itself.’⁹² In another word, ‘Locke’s phenomenon must be understood in isolation.’⁹³

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.350.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.350.

⁸⁸ ‘Response to Dreyfus,’ p.369.

⁸⁹ Tom L. Beauchamp (ed.), *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1999), 3.27.9.

⁹⁰ ‘Reductionism and the First Person,’ p.359.

⁹¹ *Reasons and Persons* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984).

⁹² ‘Reductionism and the First Person,’ p.360. From the context we can see that by ‘consciousness’ Locke means ‘self-consciousness.’

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.361.

McDowell introduces Gareth Evans's discussions of 'identification-freedom' at this point. McDowell comments:

In continuity of 'consciousness,' there is what appears to be knowledge of an identity, the persistence of the same subject through time, without any need to take care that attention stays fixed on the same thing. Contrast keeping one's thought focused on an ordinary object of perception over a period; this requires a skill, the ability to keep track of something, whose exercise we can conceive as a practical substitute for the explicit allocation of a criterion of identity. Continuity of 'consciousness' involves no analogue to this – no keeping track of the persisting self that nevertheless seems to figure in its content.⁹⁴

So far, the description is pretty innocent indeed. But there is a common Cartesian response to it.⁹⁵ The response assumes that:

the content of that awareness must be provided for completely within the flow of 'consciousness'; and to conclude, from the fact that no criteria for persistence through time are in play in the field to which that assumption restricts us, that what continuing to exist consists in for the continuant in question must be peculiarly simple, something that does not go beyond the flow of 'consciousness' itself. In particular, this line of thought rules out the idea that the continuant in question might be a human being.⁹⁶

This condensed passage cries out for exposition. I think here the argument contains two premises; one is the 'narrow assumption' (within the flow of 'consciousness')⁹⁷, and the other is the 'identification-freedom.' However, it is not at all obvious that they can jointly imply the conclusion that the constituent is 'simple,' in particular, not a human being. First of all, it is not clear that what 'simple' is supposed to mean, so I am going to focus on the notion of 'human being.' In the context of personal identity, 'human being' usually means human *animal*. So the conclusion is saying that the conception of the subject ('person' in this context) is at odd with a human animal.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.361-2. McDowell refers to Evans's *The Varieties of Reference* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982), in particular pp.326-7.

⁹⁵ As usual, the term 'Cartesian' only signifies a way of thinking, but later I will justify of my (and McDowell's) usage of this label to some extent.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.362.

⁹⁷ The term 'narrow assumption' is from Maximilian De Gaynesford's paper 'Kant and Strawson on the First Person,' in Hans-Johann Glock (ed.) *Strawson and Kant* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2003), pp.155-67, at p.157. The notion of 'narrow' comes presumably from the notion of 'narrow content.' In this context, 'narrow' means 'irrelevant to external, wider conditions.' De Gaynesford criticizes McDowell's argument against Kant's thesis that the transcendental apperception is only a 'formal' condition; I will say something on McDowell's behalf in my next episode.

This partially explains McDowell's usage of 'simple': a human animal is constitutive of divergent parts, so it is by no means simple.⁹⁸ Now, what does the combination of the narrow assumption and the identification-freedom amount to? I begin with the later. If we can keep track with the persistence of a given object without any effort, it follows that the object does not have 'hidden aspect,' that is, simple. It seems to follow that we, as human animals, cannot have this power of identification-freedom. The role of the narrow assumption, however, is just to ensure this power: if all we are considering is 'within the flow of "consciousness",' which 'can hold [things] together in a single survey seem to figure within its purview,'⁹⁹ then the trouble maker identification-freedom is forced on us. But this does not sit well with the fact that we are human beings.

This is of course unacceptable from a naturalist point of view. According to McDowell, this motivates Parfit's reductionist response:¹⁰⁰

this line of thought purports to force on us...to revise our view of the content of the flow of 'consciousness' in a Reductionist direction: to conclude that 'consciousness' does not, after all, present the temporally separated states and occurrences over which it plays as belonging to the career of a single continuant, but rather as linked by a conceptually simpler relation of serial co-consciousness, which might subsequently enter into the construction of a derivative notion of a persisting subject if such a notion seems called for.¹⁰¹

This reductionism preserves both the identification-freedom and the narrow assumption, but avoids the conclusion by *deflating* the notion of 'consciousness' involved in the narrow assumption. Since the two premises can deduce the Cartesian-flavor ego only on the assumption of the *ego* theory, Parfit purports to avoid the unpalatable conclusion by replacing the ego theory with the *bundle* theory.¹⁰²

2. Rather than arguing against this reductionism immediately, McDowell proposes another line of thought in respond to the original argument.

The alternative is to leave in place the idea that continuity of 'consciousness'

⁹⁸ This will be clearer when we see that McDowell applies the same argument to Kant; see my next episode.

⁹⁹ 'Reductionism and the First Person,' p.361.

¹⁰⁰ We can see this in *Reasons and Persons*, pp.204-5. My emphasis is on the Evans-McDowell line of thought, however.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.363.

¹⁰² McDowell does not proceed with these terms, but I think this is a good way to understand the issue. The exact formulation of the ego / bundle theory distinction is a big topic on its own, but I think the characterization provided by McDowell is sufficient for our purpose.

constitutes awareness of an identity through time, but reject the assumption that that fact needs to be provided for within a self-contained conception of the continuity of 'consciousness.' On the contrary, we can say: continuous 'consciousness' is intelligible (even 'from within') only as a subjective angle on something that has more to it than the subjective angle reveals, namely the career of an objective continuant with which the subject of the continuous 'consciousness' identifies itself. The subjective angle does not contain within itself any analogue to keeping track of something...this is thanks to its being situated in a wider context, which provides for an understanding that the persisting referent is also a third person, something whose career is substantially traceable continuity in the objective world.¹⁰³

Again, the remarks here are not crystally clear. I shall understand it with the above framework. The key point here is to situate the subjective angle in a wider context, to insist that the persisting referent is also a third person. This amounts to renounce the narrow assumption. Now how does this move discard the 'purely mental' stuff? Recall the identification-freedom condition. This condition implies that the object in question is simple, i.e. with no hidden aspects. But this is incompatible with the fact that we are human beings. We can avoid this, McDowell proposes, by recognizing that the freedom of identification in question is not freedom *simpliciter*: a subject is embedded in a wider context, as a third person. With this recognition, the identification-freedom does not imply the purely mental stuff.

Now we have two pictures competing with each other, and McDowell says that 'it should seem doubtful that Reductionism deserves respect on the ground of its opposition to Cartesian philosophy.'¹⁰⁴ Notice that reductionism is in effect 'bald naturalism' in McDowell's phrase, and McDowell's stance towards it is always to dislodge its motivation and to provide a more satisfying alternative. What he tries to point out is that Parfit's reasoning is driven by the purely mental / purely material dichotomy. But as McDowell shows, there is a way to avoid Cartesian purely mental stuff without reducing 'consciousness': to recognize that the identification-freedom condition does not imply the unpalatable conclusion, for a subjective angle is also a third person, embedded in a wider context.

One might wonder that in what respect McDowell's picture is a more satisfying one. Indeed, many people may prefer Parfit's solution, for reductionism seems to be a straightforward consequence of the scientific worldview. To see how McDowell promotes his position, recall that the main motivation of Parfit's position is its 'anti-Cartesian credentials.'¹⁰⁵ So if it turns out that Parfit's anti-Cartesianism does

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.363.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.363.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.361.

not go to the root, its plausibility will thereby be debased. According to Parfit, and indeed many others¹⁰⁶, the ultimate goal here is to avoid Cartesian immaterialism. Now of course McDowell does not accept the immaterialism, but that doesn't mean that there is no deeper mistake to be avoided. As we have seen in the second episode, the deepest Cartesian mistake is the commitment to the inner space model. This is Cartesian because it asserts that our inner realms can be 'stripped of all objective context[s] by the Method of Doubt.'¹⁰⁷ This method presupposes the absolute metaphysical independence of the inner realm, and this presupposition generates all kinds of problems concerning human subject. If the immaterialism is the deeper problem, its renunciation should give us peace in philosophy. But it doesn't. Blackburn, Kripke, and Parfit reject immaterialism, but their pictures still make intentionality and other kinds of mentality unavailable to us. The deepest Cartesian mistake, to repeat, is the inner space model, which is intimately connected to the narrow assumption. We should notice that the narrow assumption is even stronger than the inner space model, for the former can be refuted by the broadness claim, which is weaker than primeness.¹⁰⁸ In urging reductionism, Parfit retains the real root of Cartesianism, the narrow assumption.

McDowell thinks Locke sometimes lapses into the Cartesian problem too, when he divides a human being 'into merely animal functions on the one hand and operations of "consciousness" on the other,'¹⁰⁹ though he 'carefully distances himself from Descartes.'¹¹⁰ Against this, McDowell thinks that we should not '[disallow] any help in understanding personal identity from the continuity of human (or, if you like, dolphin or Martian) life.'¹¹¹ The parenthesis is crucial. It means that here by 'human' McDowell means human *animal*. This classifies McDowell into the 'animalism' camp, but McDowell is obsessed about the label:

My so-called 'animalism' in nothing but the Lockean conception of what a person is, freed from Locke's extra assumption so that the continuation of a certain individual life can emerge as a condition for a person to continue to exist.¹¹²

Normally, the label 'animalism' is for the thought that repudiates psychological

¹⁰⁶ McDowell mentions G.E.M. Anscombe in this context, but this applies to everyone who rejects Cartesian immaterialism but nevertheless commit the inner space model. I will say more about this later.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.365.

¹⁰⁸ See my opening of the second episode.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.367. See Locke's 3.27.27.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.369. See Locke's 3.27.10-14.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.369.

¹¹² 'Response to Carol Rovane,' in *McDowell and His Critics*, pp.114-20, at p.115.

continuity altogether; hence the sub-title Eric Olson's famous book.¹¹³ McDowell's position, by contrast, regards Locke's basic thinking as central, with the proviso that the 'consciousness' can also be instantiated by a human animal. Therefore his position is also been called 'the hybrid view' or 'the compatibilist position.'¹¹⁴ When we get away from the narrow assumption, we find a way to see how a subjective angel with 'identification-freedom' can be a human being.¹¹⁵ 'The capacity to think, considered as including the capacity to consider oneself as oneself, [is not separable] from the capacities whose actualization constitutes a human life.'¹¹⁶

McDowell deepens his diagnosis by focusing on 'memory,' 'the capacity to retain knowledge of one's own past.'¹¹⁷ Clearly, this is a notion reductionism cannot make use of, so their espousers need to construct a similar but 'more innocent' (from their point of view) notion. The most popular version of their *Ersatz* memory is called 'quasi-memory.'¹¹⁸ 'The only difference,' between real memory and this *Ersatz* one, 'is that there is no requirement that the remembering subject is identical with the subject from whose point of view the past occurrences are recaptured.'¹¹⁹ Given this definition, it follows that 'ordinary memories are quasi-memories that satisfy that extra condition.'¹²⁰ This appears to be innocuous, but we need to dig deeper.

In science fictions, we see scenarios in which memory-copy is often. We need to notice that in those cases the copied memories are merely quasi-memories, for they do not 'constitute *knowledge*'; in effect, quasi-memories are '*illusions* of ordinary memory.'¹²¹ Memories are knowledge, for they are factive. Quasi-memories have 'epistemic potential,' but 'using [them] as a basis for knowledge would require 'consciousness' to draw explicitly on information extraneous to its own contents.' In this sense, 'quasi-memory is intelligible only derivatively.'¹²²

After these elaborations, the problem behind the notion of 'quasi-memory' should be clear: given that memory is a species of knowledge, quasi-memory is the corresponding species of illusion (or even hallucination). The basic spirit of Parfit's maneuver here is the same as that of 'the Argument from Illusion.'¹²³ As McDowell

¹¹³ *The Human Animal: Personal Identity without Psychology* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1999).

¹¹⁴ Harold W. Noonan, *Personal Identity* (Routledge, 2003, second edition), p.205, and Jens Johansson, 'What is Animalism?' *Ratio* 20 (2007), pp.194-205, respectively.

¹¹⁵ In McDowell's own word, 'to maintain a firm and integrated conception of ourselves as rational animals,' p.382.

¹¹⁶ 'Response to Carol Rovane,' p.114.

¹¹⁷ 'Reductionism and the First Person,' p.370. This characterization should be qualified, as McDowell says, memory 'of the appropriate sort.'

¹¹⁸ This is first devised by Sydney Shoemaker, in 'Persons and Their Past,' *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970), pp. 269-85. Also see Parfit's *Reasons and Persons*, pp.220.2.

¹¹⁹ 'Reductionism and the First Person,' p.370.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.370.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.372, the later italics is mine.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp.372-3.

¹²³ After recognizing this, we can compare situations here with my discussions in the second episode.

observes, ‘we may be tempted to think, the concept with fewer requirements must be simpler and therefore independently graspable.’¹²⁴ He continues,

Well, there is no reason to assume that what is left when the requirement is dropped will stand on its own as an adequate explication of a concept. That need not be so, even though the result is admitted to be a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept’s application. It takes more than an arithmetic of subtracting necessary conditions to guarantee us an autonomously intelligible concept.¹²⁵

Again, this is a warning against the temptation to *factorize* things into simpler components. In understanding a given phenomenon, analysis is a good, if not the only, method, but that doesn’t follow that every component after breaking down can stand on its own, ontological speaking. To start with quasi-memory, reductionists need to face the challenge parallel to the one posed by the Gettier-style counterexamples.

In a word, ‘[r]eductionism is wrong, not because personal identity is a further fact, but because there is no conceptually simpler substratum for personal identity to be further to.’¹²⁶ McDowell illustrates this with an example:

Not that a person should be identified with his brain and (the rest of) his body, anymore than a house should be identified with the bricks, and so forth, of which it is composed; but there is no commitment to some peculiar extra ingredient, which would ensure determinateness of identity, in a person’s make-up.¹²⁷

There are some delicacies here. I think McDowell is quite right in urging that personal identity, like house, is not a further entity, and this does not mean that it can be identified with its components. I am hesitant, however, to conclude with McDowell that there is no further fact. Consider the house example; is it wrong to say that being a house is a further fact, further than being composed by those bricks? This concerns our views on the nature of social reality, and I believe considerations in the case of house can shed light on our reflections of personhood. But I shall stop myself at this point.¹²⁸

The investigations on personal identity help us give a more satisfying answer to Dreyfus’s challenge. I *am* this living body, but the ‘am’ here does not stand for strict

Parfit’s commitment to the narrow assumption brings in the inner space model, and thereby brings in the trouble discussed earlier. McDowell says more about this in p.381.

¹²⁴ Ibid., P.373.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.374.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p.378.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp.378-9.

¹²⁸ I will say more about this in my concluding episode.

identity. 'I' is not a further entity, like Cartesian soul, but it is *not* a disembodied intellect either. The satisfying picture should deliver the consequence that we are human animals, not, as Dreyfus's one does, that our bodies are intentional automata.

3. The above discussions bring us into 'the midst of the philosophy of mind.'¹²⁹ One might wonder where McDowell's place in the mind-body problem is. He never devotes to this issue in full length, but I shall connect those suggestive remarks to the present context.¹³⁰ A natural impression is that McDowell's position here is pretty close to Davidson's anomalous monism. McDowell admires Davidson's insistence on the 'constitutive ideal of rationality,' which implies the anomalism of the mental. And this is also congenial to McDowell's insistence on the distinction between the space of reasons and the realm of law. Nevertheless, it should be clear that McDowell would not agree on everything in Davidson's picture, for anomalous monism is a version of mind-brain token identity theory. As the above discussions show, McDowell opposes to strict identity between mind and brain. But now the problem arises: Davidson's version of the identity theory is already a relaxed naturalism. How can McDowell further relax it without lapsing into bad versions of dualism? The question is reminiscent of the leading question dealt with in my first episode. Here that deep question reappears in the context of the mind-body problem.

To understand McDowell's own position, it is helpful to see how he distinguishes himself from Davidson. McDowell has three lines of objection to Davidson's monism; the first is to question the theoretical motivations, the second is to deny one of the premises of Davidson's principal argument, and the third is to point out the problem of the conclusion. McDowell first identifies two motivations, 'the ideal of the unity of science' and 'avoidance of Cartesian dualism.'¹³¹ The first is not available to Davidson, for '[a]nomalism itself, or what sustains it, neutralizes' this putative motivation.'¹³² And Cartesian dualism is irrelevant:

since it is not events but substances that are composed of stuff, one can refuse to accept that all the events there are can be described in 'physical' terms, without thereby committing oneself to a non-'physical' stuff, or compromising the thesis that persons are composed of nothing but matter.¹³³

¹²⁹ *Mind, Value, and Reality*, p.viii.

¹³⁰ See *Mind and World*, pp.74-6, and also 'Functionalism and Anomalous Monism,' in Ernest Lepore and Brian McLaughlin (eds.) *Actions and Events: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985), pp.387-98; reprinted in his *Mind, Value, and Reality*, pp.325-40.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.339.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.339.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.339. McDowell acknowledges his indebtedness to Jennifer Hornsby's 'Which Physical Events are Mental Events?' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 81 (1980-1), pp.73-92; reprinted in her *Simple Mindedness: in Defense of Naïve Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind* (Harvard University

Now to the argument itself. For our purpose, we can focus solely on the premise McDowell aims to dispute, namely ‘the Principle of the Nomological Character of Causality.’¹³⁴ It says that any causal relation is an instantiation of a strict law.¹³⁵ This understanding of causality is distinctively Humean, and Hume’s argument was that ‘since singular causal relations are not given in experience, there is nothing for causation to consist in but a suitable kind of generality.’¹³⁶ McDowell rejects this, for he has a much richer conception of experience. He concludes that the Principle of the Nomological Character of Causality is a ‘fourth dogma of empiricism.’¹³⁷ Without this dogma, Davidson’s event monism does not follow.

Finally, McDowell objects to the intelligibility of the conclusion itself. As I briefly say in my footnote 135, Davidson secures the psycho-physical interactions by locating the causal relations in the physical world. But if we take this idea seriously, we find that mental properties become epiphenomena, for according to the nomological view, they are not in the realm of causality. As McDowell alludes to, ‘[a]ccording to the ontological thesis, the items that instantiate the *sui generis* spontaneity-related concepts have a location in the realm of law. But the concepts are *sui generis* precisely in that it is not by virtue of their location in the realm of law that things instantiate those concepts.’¹³⁸ That is, according to Davidson, mental properties, *qua* mental, are epiphenomena, for *qua* mental they are not in the realm of law. This is contrary to Davidson’s own insistence on the psycho-physical interactions.

In pointing out the irrelevance of the avoidance Cartesian dualism, together with the inadequacy of Davidson’s event monism, as we have seen, McDowell seems to accept substance monism cum *event dualism*: mental events are causally effective, for they enjoys *sui generis* ‘space of reasons causations.’ It is not difficult to understand why he would say this, but I am not in a position to defend it in this essay.¹³⁹

Press, 1997), pp.63-97.

¹³⁴ ‘Functionalism and Anomalous Monism,’ p.340.

¹³⁵ Although I do not go into the details of Davidson’s argument, the basic shape is as follows: any causal relation is under a strict law, but given the anomalism of the mental, there is no psycho-physical strict law. It seems to follow that the mind-body interaction is impossible. To avoid this, Davidson says that physical events can sustain mental properties, and strict laws in the physical realm are not problematic. Hence his event monism cum property dualism.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.340.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.340. Also see the first chapter of Hornsby’s book. McDowell’s further reason to repudiate this conception of causality is that it commits a form of scheme-content dualism, which is under forceful attacks by Davidson himself. I shall postpone this to my next episode.

¹³⁸ *Mind and World*, pp.75-6.

¹³⁹ My inability to dig deeper here is due to the fact that the issues here involve a large-scale revolution in philosophy of science. It seems to me that Paul Pietroski defends a version of this view. See his *Causing Actions* (Oxford University Press, 2000), especially chapter 5, ‘Personal Dualism.’