Descarte's Subversion through Functionalism

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> "Body am I, and soul"—thus speaks the child. …But the awakened and knowing say: body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body.[1]

In 1643, Descartes was asked in a letter from Princess Elisabeth, how a thinking substance can affect a corporeal animal, so as to produce 'voluntary action'.[2] Yablo claims recently, that Descartes' division of the substances has resulted in being the primary motivating force behind the great, longstanding philosophical debates surrounding dualism between the mind and the body.[3] In one instance, Descartes explains that, "I could find none of the functions which, depending on thought, are the only ones that belong to us as men; though I found all these later on, once I had supposed that God created a rational soul and joined it to this body in a particular way which I described."[4] Subsequently, Yablo argues many philosophers have begun to ascribe all mental phenomena as consisting in merely epiphenomena. This movement of epiphenomenalism, as he relates, is generally the idea that mental things are in fact phenomena which share no relation with the world of bodies or the forms of physical causation which take place between them alone.

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[1]Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Arnold. Kaufmann. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. New York: Modern Library, 1995. 35.

[2]Descartes, René. "To Princess Elizabeth, 21 May 1643." *Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol III: The Correspondence*. Cambridge: Cambridge U, 1991. 217.

[3]Yablo, Stephen. "Mental Causation." *The Philosophical Review* 101.2 (1992): 245.

[4]Descartes, Rene, and John Cottingham. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Vol. I. New York: Cambridge UP, 1984. 346.

In his first writing, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, we find the following rules:

3. "As regards any subject we propose to investigate, we must inquire not what other people have thought, or what we ourselves conjecture, but what we can clearly and manifestly perceive by intuition or deduce with certainty. For there is no other way of acquiring knowledge."
4. "Method consists entirely in the order and disposition of the objects towards which our mental vision must be directed if we would find out any truth. We shall comply with it exactly if we reduce involved and obscure propositions step by step to those that are simpler, and then starting with the intuitive apprehension of all those that are absolutely simple, attempt to ascend to the knowledge of all others by precisely similar steps."
5. "If we wish our science to be complete, those matters which promote the end we have in view must one and all be scrutinized by a movement of thought which is continuous and nowhere interrupted; they must also be included in an enumeration which is both adequate and methodical."
6. "Finally we ought to employ all the help of understanding, imagination, sense and memory, first for the purpose of having a distinct intuition of simple propositions; partly also in order to compare the propositions."[5]

So we can see that the mind is divided into components with separate functions of perceptive intuition and deduction among at least several others (for ex. "understanding, imagination, sense and memory"), which passes through certainty on its way to action. Science must be completed by linking together in a continuous chain the apprehended correct functioning of each thing. While the world was ordered by certain laws, Descartes postulated that the parts of it made up of matter could be projected as functions of mechanistic interactions happening among a collection of bodies relative to one another. We can know it because he conceives its extension as, "The property it has of occupying space, not as an accident, but as its true form and essence," meaning it is not a kind of subordinate shadow to another greater part of God.[6]

In *The Treatise on Light*, Descartes provides a description of light which serves to illustrate its function as being separate from its appearance to the eye as a form of sensation, meaning the eye does not pick out the identities of a stable of order of objects, but instead the trace of their movements which we then immediately input as a material into our own further methods.[7] He then provides another example showing that things which produce light for us as picked up through sen-

[5]Descartes and Cottingham. 13-39.
[6]Descartes and Cottingham. 92.
[7]Descartes and Cottingham. 81.

sation also produce heat which is again a functioning of the thing separate but necessarily connected to its producing light.[8] He shows that while even when these qualities may seem like opposites, as with hardness and fluidity, they do not have absolutely distinct natures but are instead verifiable parts of the same interconnected system. One in the same functioning of thought is able to ascertain both apparently opposite qualities by way of the same method, and not for example by way of separate lower material grasping and higher divine order of primary givenness.[9]

The material of objects is a simple substance which ordinarily composes different kinds, as we have come to encounter them by experience, and should not be mystified as the pure and absolute underlying origin of things as the Scholastic philosophers would have done. Therefore, the functioning of mind relates to the matter of world, and is not a part of the (Spinoza/deist) world conjuring up out of itself mind and other new parts.[10] He finally adds everyone believes there is, "size, shape, rest, and a thousand other things," but that some how, "the Philosophers have exempted motion from it, which is the one thing that I most explicitly wish to include." This makes Descartes an early theorist of acceleration looking to explode out of the world in contradistinction with the usual attribution of a drab theory of correspondence to him between mental and physical things. Philosophers have previously confused some of the motions of objects with the complex functions that derive out of those motions.[11] So when they saw a piece of cotton burning they held that the generation of its flame was with respect to its potential for becoming and being heat, and not that the heat of its flame or alternatively any of its other qualities were with respect to its motion.

Aristotle's single abstract rule of one inherent quality being replaced by another in the thing to describe motion, is replaced by several connected more concrete rules which literally describe different kinds of motions through space which always exist on the path of straight lines. Descartes then uses these principles to describe the generation of the world itself and the largescale movements of weather systems, which can all be boiled down to observations of the same forms of movement being done by different kinds of things. But he then suddenly suppressed his own early functionalist

[8] Descartes and Cottingham. 84.
[9] Descartes and Cottingham. 85.
[10] Descartes and Cottingham. 92.
[11] Descartes and Cottingham. 94.

refutation and undermining of papal catholic rule after he heard of Galileo being convicted and fined for his physical realist overturning of the ordering of the solar system. Therefore, I will claim that Descartes embedded his early radical ideas into a functionalist addition to a theology otherwise compatible with the dominant Catholic establishment. Such an account importantly distinguishes between the materialist dualism of Descarte's earliest work and the theist moderation he underwent later on.

Descartes himself was an early defender of rationalist philosophy and a religious mystic who found that a source of light brought the truth through to us of all things. He was working at a time when it began to become realized through the course of scientific experiment that the motions of all observable bodies could be described by one and the same set of mechanical laws. This combination of events forced him into the position of trying to show a new kind of relation that holds between thought and the world. He argues for example that, while there is always an infinite expanse beyond us that can be named as God, we can imagine mathematical infinities which are real parts of it in that they are required for us to function with it.[12] He was discovering that the cartography of the mind included vectorized impulses of motion toward external objects within our surroundings. I will also argue that the primary amendment to Descartes' account has been to shift the focus from unearthing the foundational first principles of the world, to organizing into the most coherent account of our relation to it. Sellars neatly describes the most coherent account as an understanding of, "How things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term."[13] This understanding will necessarily be a moving target and never complete.

However, Descartes was still at risk of being viewed as having removed the anthropomorphic soul inherent to each thing by classical scholastic ontology.

[12]Descartes and Cottingham. 90.

[13]Brassier, Ray. "The View From Nowhere." *Identities, Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 8.2 (2011 Summer): 1.

In the end of *The Man*, shortly before he gave up on his larger project with *The Universe*, he wrote that:

> "When we make the attempt to understand our nature more distinctly, however, we can see that our soul, in so far as it is a substance distinct from body, is known to us solely from the fact that it thinks, that is to say, understands, wills, imagines, remembers, and senses, because all these functions are kinds of thoughts. Also, since the other functions that are attributed to it, such as the movement of the heart and the arteries, the digestion of food in the stomach, and such like, which contain in themselves no thought, are only corporeal movements, and since it is more common for one body to be moved by another body rather than by the soul, we have less reason to attribute them to the soul than to the body."[14]

The Scholastics had each made a sort of assumption that for an eventual sculpture, there were some sort of intelligence in the mass of bronze which demands it follow through a complex process as accorded by a notion of change in the world all the way to its eventual completion. This happens in order that someday it may be fully realized and become its real essence as a statue. Rather, Descartes would simply chalk this sort of event up to the sculptor's beating away at the mass with whatever tool, and that really it has nothing at all to do with the mass bringing about an enacting of its own necessary internal change on itself as a result of its inner essence in any sense as had previously been put forward. Likewise, for Descartes, the human body is produced in a similarly accidental way, as he speculates, "'I suppose the body to be nothing but a statue or machine made of earth."[15] Conversely, this situation could have been revealing of a certain form of the sculptor's intelligence inherent within himself, but this would have to be analyzed further before it could be decided on in a manner clearly and distinctly.

He says that, "It is not conceivable that such a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest of men can do." [16] This is the first of two tests he puts forward that distinguishes intelligence from brute matter, or bare life. Secondarily, and seemingly more broadly and more importantly, he continues: "It is for all practical purposes impossible for a machine to have enough different organs to make it act in all the contingencies of life in the way in which our reason makes us act." So, a

[14]Descartes and Cottingham. 314.
[15]Descartes and Cottingham. 99.
[16]Descartes and Cottingham. 140.

machine may be programmed to do something very well, but it will not have the capacity to correct open-ended errors. He goes on to describe the intelligence of animals other than humans, that, "It is also a very remarkable fact that although many animals show more skill than we do in some of their actions, yet the same animals show none at all in many others; so what they do better does not prove that they have any intelligence."[17] Here he raises a serious issue that he may not have considered. What if there were an animal that exceeded us in all our capacities but were some how actually not intelligent? What then would the mere possibility of such an animal make of the status of intelligence in general? It could seemingly be ejected as a once useful term, losing its status as the most significant of all functions. Furthermore, machines are every day coming closer to giving a meaningful answer in any situation which man is able to, if not in some cases even more so. We will explore the consequences of these changes more later on.

In developing his methodology, Descartes laid the grounds for a recent trend in contemporary philosophy referred to as the functionalist theory of mind. In this sense a mind is described as, or in an even stricter sense only actually is, mental states are identified by what they do rather than by what they are made of. Unlike contemporary functionalism, for Descartes at least, it also held an important substantive relation. And this was a relation of unification, which offers the sense that the purely substantial form of mental "stuff", or souls as it were, exists separated disjointedly in another realm from the body. Toward this end, Descartes explains in a letter to his friend Burman, that, "I am not merely present in my body as a sailor is present in a ship,' but that I am very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it, so that I and the body form a unit."[18] We will examine in this essay the essential character of the merging of Descartes' substance dualism with present developments in functionalist theories of mind. The quotation above makes clear in the beginning, he has already accepted a particular distinction that holds between body and mind, but what kind is this specifically? Under the Cartesian system, it is going to be a series of intermingling processes that occur across the mind-body, body-mind, and body-body relations. It is an interesting aside that Descartes makes no room for the fourth sort of possible interaction. He will basically insist that it

[17]Descartes and Cottingham. 141.
[18]Descartes and Cottingham. 346.

is the matter of an action of God, and not for us to concern ourselves with[19]. One must be led to wonder though, what exactly would mind-mind relations in particular consist in?

In any case, by opening up this discussion with Burman, Descartes is seeking to address the question of what the 'understanding' is, and whether it is different from contemplation.[20] The common sense view of what it is to contemplate something would stand in for only one half of Descartes' account of the understanding. According to him rather, in the first portion, there is an event of perception that takes place, where the senses take on the imprint of an external object. Then, there is the possibility of bringing the object back to the senses, through the power of the imagination. However, this is only done with much greater difficulty than with the ease of which external objects merely are given. The faculty of the understanding exists exactly for realizing this distinction in each thing, and presumably when confronted with more complex entities this could only be done against their essential character with much greater difficulty. As Descartes explains: it is easier to imagine a triangle of three sides than a figure of a thousand[21], but this is only the matter of a merely finite limitation on the human mind – and not one that would qualify the infinite judgment capable of God. And to the extent that deduction of infinity seems possible for human beings in thought, what exactly is it that separates the form of judgment we are capable of comparing with that of God's? At the very least, mathematics becomes limited whenever it takes on the form of quantifying the extension of bodily matter. Against vulgar materialisms that do not admit of this dualism in mathematics, which attempt to explain conceptual numbers merely in terms of quantities of things, he argues of such philosophers that, "The memory of their 'prime matter', which they know to be rather hard to conceive, may divert them from knowledge of the matter of which I am speaking … the whole difficulty they face with their matter arises simply from their wanting to distinguish it from its own quantity and from its external extension –that is, from the property it has of occupying space."[22] Therefore, we must be careful in distinguishing whether a number is being used as a finite measure of body or as an infinite deduction of rational thought.

[19]Descartes and Cottingham. 127.
[20]Descartes and Cottingham. 344.
[21]Descartes and Cottingham. 345.
[22]Descartes and Cottingham. 92.

For Ryle then, picking up on what was still a sprawling debate three hundred years later in 1949, substance dualism primarily entails that, "Every human being is both a body and a mind."[23] Whereas the body occupies space and is subject to all the physical laws, the mind is not at all extended in space or subject to any of the physical laws. In this way, it can never be experienced by other observers in the way that external bodies can directly interact with one another. Every person lives out two separate histories, that of the body which is open to outside observation, and that of one's own mind, which only gets disclosed to the self. Dualism, says Ryle, is founded on a category mistake[24], in that it maintains the mind and body are both unique substances but of a similar type. Instead, just as the body is characterized by numerous interrelated physical processes, such as chemistry, physics, and physiology, so too must the mind be thought of in terms of such complex and interrelated abstractions of nature, rather than as a simple, solitary substance. They do not stand in such a relation such that the mind as a mere individual substance gets immediately related to the plurality of body again as another immediately additional substance. Ultimately however, we are only able to make explanations about the mind through actually observed bodily behaviors it is believed to have intended. Against Ryle, I will argue meanings and actions should in the best case get viewed as speculative, and arriving out of a pluralistic set of traditions.

Descartes also makes clear early on in the *Treatise on Light* that our ideas about the connection between words and the actual identity of things are often confused. He says of words that they, "Signify nothing except by human convention,"[25] and yet at the same time they also manage to, "suffice to make us think of things to which they bear no resemblance." He goes through a series of examples in which it is made more and more obvious that our experience of an event doesn't necessarily pose any resemblance to the actual taking place of the event itself. The lesson of the story is that while we do in fact have some systemic sense of the identity of things, we should not simply take it to be the case that each thing is exactly what it seems to be. In a careful examination, we will come to decide whether a set of things is in fact a robust substance possessing specific attributes

[23]Ryle, Gilbert. *The Concept of Mind*. N.p.: Hutchinson, 1949. 1.
[24]Ryle. 8.
[25]Descartes and Cottingham. 81.

that give it the appearance of its own individual identity as a genus amongst the background of bare matter.

He also explains that the parts that are involved in motion are "Rapid and very violent"[26], that there are many small bodies that "move about independently of one another," the assemblages of which make up one moving object, and that the volition which produces a motion is not the same as the motion itself. So, it should not be understood that a volition is connected with the movement of one thing in a simplified manner, in exactly the direction as specified by that volition. There are other many complex motions related to each volition of movement that cannot be disambiguated from it without depreciating the complete explanation of events. Most distinctly, a simple behaviorist account of volitions could not be inclusive of the actual chaotic motions of the particles that make up a body's movement in one direction.

Under Descartes' system, we must posit yet another dualism holding between two distinct senses of nature, as he explains: " 'But I am well aware that 'nature' as I have just used it has a very different significance from 'nature' in the other sense." [27] Descartes must distinguish between two natures because he has realized that nature is only a representation but that it also occurs within another broader 'nature' at large. The two cannot simply be identified with one another nor completely distinguished but in fact in some obscure sense manage to coincide. He goes further to say that, "As I have just used it, 'nature' is simply a label which depends on my thought; it is quite extraneous to the things to which it is applied, and depends simply on my comparison between the idea of a sick man and a badly-made clock, and the idea of a healthy man and a well-made clock." Therefore, the representation of nature is useful exactly for determining what parts of it are badly functioning from our own perspective, so that we might be able to do something about it. Lastly, he says, "But by 'nature' in the other sense I understand something which is really to be found in the things themselves; in this sense, therefore, the term contains something of the truth." The behaviorist account fails to make room for any nature more real than that which we simply name some thing or another as such, it can speak of only one kind of nature which it does not believe to

[26]Descartes and Cottingham. 83.
[27]Descartes and Cottingham. 59.

be a nature at all.

In *The Meditations*, Descartes states, "A given motion in the brain must always produce the same sensation in the mind".[28] The identity is merely conventional, it is not necessary, it is that one always happens to coincide with the other. We must be careful in our reading of *The Meditations* as the deliberate point was to subject literally everything to the method of doubt, but this is not the way we should normally go about living our lives in the world. The aim of the *The Meditations* is to discover with certainty the starting point of knowledge and to prove that this method could be applied to the discovery and explanations of nature Moreover, Descartes cautions us about the nature of error: "But since the pressure of things to be done does not always allow us to stop and make such a meticulous check, it must be admitted that in this human life we are often liable to make mistakes about particular things, and we must acknowledge the weakness of our nature."[29] Thinking is done at times for short durations in order to attempt to check whether our perceptions were correct, it is possible for it to fail in this endeavor and it does so very often. Thinking does not grant us access to a separate realm of Platonic ideas, but rather, directly to thinking and material substance.

Tanney describes the painful tension created by dualist and physicalist theories: "The embodied human mind must therefore dedicate a good deal of its cognitive labor to monitoring and protecting its body if it is to remain united to it … This is where the senses come in. They provide the mind with an unabashedly self-interested, even narcissistic, view of the corporeal world: they 'show us external bodies [not] exactly as they are, but only insofar as they are related to us and can benefit or harm Us."[30] Such common contemporary neuroscientific accounts of sufficiently self-subsisting individualistic perceptive capacities all end up being nihilistic in their descriptions of a meaningless circularity in life. She adds that unfortunately, "This is a serious concession on Descartes' rationalism: the senses rarely get the epistemic upper hand in Descartes, and yet here he says they do. Descartes realizes that mind and body must somehow be related in a way that goes

[28]Descartes, Rene, and John Cottingham. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Vol. II. New York: Cambridge UP, 1984. 61.

[29]Descartes and Cottingham. Vol. II. 62.

[30]Tanney, Julia. Rethinking Ryle: A Critical Discussion of The Concept of Mind. New Dualism, 2009. 18.

beyond mere aggregation to yield a genuine human being, even if the intellect can't quite wrap itself around the idea."

By contrast, some ambitious accounts of contemporary functionalism attempt to uphold such self-redeeming notions as novelty, complexity, and to be blunt, the very classical faculty of reason itself. Fodor argues, "As the operative notion of mental structure gets richer, it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine identifying the ontogeny of such structures with the registration of environmental regularities."[31] Substance dualism too alleges itself as holding out a place for reason, but it is one that in every place gets by predicated a purely simplistic, vicious urge for self-persistence, whether for oneself or for others, and so it almost always ends up having to subordinate itself to the better judgment and wisdom of God.

Whereas for the functionalist, the reason of a young pool shark might allow him to outwit an overconfident old-hand. And to what end? He may win the game and the money up for stakes, but unbeknownst to himself and likely made much more aware to his older counterpart as a matter of accumulated experience, the games themselves press ever onward. Fodor argues that there is no simple path for the young player toward becoming better, since, "What the computational associationist offers instead is the possibility of mental structures of arbitrary complexity; he thus has a sort of guaranty that his associationism will never force him to accept an unduly impoverished notion of mental organization. But he pays a price: traditional associationist accounts of ontogeny can no longer be relied upon."[32] What this seems to imply is that different structures of sufficient complexity will be beyond the capacity of certain capacities for understanding to acquire by any means of simple repetition of rote behavior. There is at the same time, however, no apparent specific and necessary hierarchy of functions to be acquired. It only consists in of what is apparently of some use to oneself or more accurately to one's local community of alike actors at any given time.

Though in a rigorously defended substance dualism, one level may be said to supervene on another at least in some part, by contrast for functionalism, this does not entail the lower level

[31] Fodor, Jerry A. *The Modularity of Mind: An Essay on Faculty Psychology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1983. 34.
[32] Fodor. 34.

itself will fail to supervene over any other existing levels in some other fashion. Descartes offers his own argument for such an intuitionism about differing levels of substance, "It seems to me that trying to use one's imagination in order to understand these ideas is like trying to use one's eyes in order to hear sounds or smell odours."[33] Likewise, there could be whole multitudes of dimensions, beings, substances, etc. that are simply beyond our human capacity of comprehension. Accordingly, there could be a whole multitude of supervenience relations operating on one another and accruing various amounts of power that lead to their active interplay. One response to the justification regress problem is to deny its significance entirely.

We only hold the perceptual system to be generally reliable because its past reliability offers justification for this belief, and all of our other beliefs seem to be causally related to it in certain ways. It does not seem like we could even hold the perceptual system as being generally reliable if it weren't for its relation with certain other rational structures present before the mind, as on its own we realize we are subject to entirely passive impressions. It is only through the patterns and regularities which we happen to observe in nature that allow us to derive any significance out of our perceptions, and were it subject to random static noise it seems unlikely we could form any foundational perceptual beliefs out of it at all. Coherentism holds justification for such perceptual beliefs in exact relation with justification for any other sort of belief in that they are all subject to a nonlinear process of justification in relation to the rest of the entire set of their coherent beliefs. In this way, the regress argument dissolves altogether, as justification for any individual belief is always determined through a single measure of its relation with the rest of the set as a whole.

Coherentism holds that a belief is justified only if it belongs to the coherent set of beliefs. Unlike Foundationalims, no member of this set is taken to be justified prior to any other, instead they all equitably offer justification for one another in so far as they together form the most coherent set of beliefs. The problem for the Foundationalist is that they have difficulty providing a reason for determining which beliefs they choose to hold as being foundational, as this would seem to entail performing some sort of justificatory process. It always seems appropriate to ask for the justifica-

[33]Descartes, Rene, and John Cottingham. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Vol. I. New York: Cambridge UP, 1984. 129.

tion behind a claim, even those of which Foundationalism claims are self-justifying. Coherentists argue that there are no such basic, non-inferential truths at all, and that every belief is justified through the degree of coherence it shares with the rest of one's entire belief system. In this way, even one's most basic perceptual beliefs would still be justified through their functional relation with the general reliability of all our past experiences, among the other relations it shares with the rest of one's beliefs.

From a perspective outside of a Coherentist theory of justification it seems that we could form coherent sets of belief which entail interrelations that work very well to justify one another, but which share no relation with the world whatsoever. We might have a proposition P which supports a proposition Q and vice versa, but neither of which are grounded in reality in any way. If this is the case, then what worth could such a theory of justification behind potentially absurd sets of arbitrarily self-consistent beliefs hold? Foundationalism argues that Coherentism always relies on just this sort of fallacious circular reasoning in order to justify its beliefs. Coherentism responds that the most coherent set of beliefs will always cohere best with the world, as this is entailed by one's conception of the world being made up specifically of the most coherent set of beliefs in the first place. Justification under Coherentism does not revolve in a circular pattern, but is rather a holistic process which takes into account the entire set of beliefs as a whole in determining an individual belief's degree of justification immediately.

Tanney says accordingly that, "Functionalism, coupled with a minimal commitment to physicalism, is the most widely held view today, but how it resolves the mind–body problem is still in need of clarification."[34] We might find Descartes' quote from the beginning of *The Discourse* valuable here that he himself will only be searching for, "'Differences of degree only between the accidents, and not between the forms (or natures)."[35] Whatever functionally holds by intuition, even if by mere accident - which today we find to be the underlying nature of all causality, will be the very study of our investigations. The forms, or natures, or a minimal commitment to physicalism, are to be merely assumed as given – if they ever are. Tanney denies that Ryle was merely

[34]Tanney 18.
[35]Descartes and Cottingham. Vol. I. 112.

pushing for a vulgar behavioralism, holding rather that he follows in a tradition of a criticism of commonly shared notions of meaning that was also at the same time under attack by Wittgenstein, among others. She argues that functionalist accounts have saved theories of mind from the mores of eliminativism and fictionalism that plague other prominent sorts of theories of mind. I take issue with her account here, due both to the admitted strengths of eliminativist accounts, and furthermore that I personally find that functionalist and fictionalist theories are able to be reconciled with one another. Her problem seems to be that an insufficient account of identity theory would immediately ruin all apparently operating functions. I would counter that fictionalism should only manifest from an analysis made on the apparent identities of whole, complex assemblages of interoperating faculties that we come into contact with. Physicalism is not just an exacting description of each and every existing individual atomic particle traveling through space in a chaotic manner that actually make up the set of existing physical bodies.

The shared project of the majority of those who have worked on the mind–body problem over the past few decades has been to find a way of accommodating the mental within a principled physicalist scheme, while at the same time preserving it as something distinctive—that is, without losing what we value, or find special, in our nature as creatures with minds. Churchland argues that,

> "Global excellence of theory is measured by straightforwardly pragmatic virtues: maximal explanatory cohesiveness vis-à-vis maximal empirical heterogeneity purchased via minimal conceptual expenditure. One theory is 'better' than another if it affords greater theoretical cohesiveness along with greater explanatory unity while using fewer conceptual means to synthesize a wider assortment of data."[36]

But Brassier responds that, "The trouble then is that in arguing that simplicity, unity, and coherence are constitutive functional features of the brain's neuroanatomy, Churchland is but one slippery step away from claiming that brains represent the world correctly as a matter of evolutionary necessity." Once we realize that no more validity can be afforded to any virtues that purport to uphold the foundation of science than any others, we lose what little traction science held over identity even as a mere form of probably erroneous intuitions of finite perception.

[36]Brassier, Ray. *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 21.

Bakker follows up this argument with even more severity:

> "The problem, in other words, is that even if we are somehow a special product of brain function, we have no reason to suppose that emergence will confirm our traditional, metacognitive sense of 'how it's gotta be.' 'Happy emergence' is a possibility, sure … There's far, far more ways for our conceits to be contradicted than confirmed, which is likely why science has proven to be such a party crasher over the centuries."[37]

Descartes argues that mind and body cannot merely be broken up into individual parts to have reached a sufficient conclusion of what things there are in the situation that constitute them. The collection of the ship and the body can fairly be broken up into discrete, identifiable parts. But we now understand that dualism is only an apparently often reoccurring conceptual problem for human things, which constitute a small portion of the world. Whatever the mind is, must be functional, at the very least in the first place in order for it to pick itself out as being essentially what it is. In the other case, it would fail in this simple task, and should always end up picking out something else other than was attempting to be picked out entirely. Of course, in an attempt at a complete understanding of supervenience relations, we could search our way 'up' the chain, but it is potentially endless, and it is also significantly equivalent with following our way 'down' the chain. Today in science, it is seen as equally viable to look for lower beings as it is to search for higher ones. This means we must be careful in designing our research programs as from the outset they have often seemed improbable, and had only been matched up with distantly intangible goods.

[37] Bakker, Richard Scott. "Brassier's Divided Soul." *Three Pound Brain*. N.p., 08 Jan. 2013. Web. <https://rsbakker.wordpress.com/2013/01/08/brassiers-divided-soul/>.