Chapter 9  Mind, Matter and Medicine Gone Mad

The Bogle–Chandler murder case mentioned in the previous chapter briefly opened a window not only on the Push, but on the implicit philosophical views of a section of the medical establishment. This arose from the involvement in the case of unknown ‘substances’. At the time, the range of possible undetectable substances that could have caused the deaths without leaving a trace was regarded as too wide for any conclusions to be drawn. Still, the hypothesis that some substance that the couple took killed them seemed very likely, in the absence of any probable theory of another sort. In hindsight, experts thought of one substance in particular which would have evaded the forensic tests of the time, and was commonly available in the scientific circles in which Dr Bogle moved. It was LSD.¹

The wide availability of LSD in some quarters is now little remembered, but the drug was widely promoted by its makers until its sudden withdrawal in 1964 when it was realised how extensive its recreational use had become. Some thought LSD was useful in bringing on the ‘liberation of the Sixties.’² It was also one of the substances used in CIA experiments to try to crack the secrets of Communist brainwashing at the time of the Korean War.³ In the medical profes-

³ Brain-washing: A synthesis of the Communist textbook of psychopolitics, with introduction by Eric Butler, Victorian League of Rights pamphlet
ion the idea emerged that LSD could be the wonder drug that would speed up the painfully slow process of psychoanalysis, breaking down the patient’s defences and allowing him to experience consciously the release ‘consequent upon a temporary disintegration of ego control of repression.” It was widely recommended in the medical literature that the therapist should experience the drug himself, with a series of at least twenty to forty sessions of it. This is one theme of an article that appeared in the same number of the Australian Scientist as an article by Dr Bogle on his work on masers. It was written by W.H. (later Sir William) Trethowan, then Professor of Psychiatry at Sydney University. He wrote:

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of LSD-25 is its ability to produce psychotic symptoms in normal individuals even when administered in minute amounts ... Not unnaturally this discovery led to considerable speculation as to the possibility of some naturally occurring agent, perhaps resembling LSD, as a cause of schizophrenia ... If nothing else, the administration of lysergic acid to experimental subjects has at least allowed psychiatrists to share some of the experiences of their patients.

In raising the question of the mental effects of physical substances, Trethowan was beginning to trespass on old philosophical territory, the problem of the relation of the mind to the body. It is ground that has been subject to a demarcation dispute between philosophers and medical men from time immemorial. We will look shortly at the doctors’ contributions, but let us first consider the philosophers.

‘Central-state materialism’, sometimes known as ‘Australian materialism’ or the ‘identity theory of mind’, became in the 1960s the first home-grown, distinctively Australian philosophical theory to be taken


2 W.H. Trethowan, ‘Drugs which affect the mind’, Australian Scientist 1 (1961): pp. 115–20, at p. 120.
It holds that there is no mind, or any sort of mental entities, over and above the brain and its physical processes. Experiences, hallucinations, after-images, perceived colours, consciousness and so on, it is maintained, have been discovered by science to be identical to certain brain processes. An English commentator remarks superciliously, 'Detractors called it the belief that thinking and physical activity were one and the same, adding that Australia was the only place where it was true.'

In one way, this is an old theory, something like it being assumed by a long line of atheist doctors. Anderson’s philosophy incorporated something of the idea, without arguing at length for it. Anderson did not deny the reality of the internal world — The doctrine of “realms” or “worlds” is itself a phantasy (as Heraclitus was the first to point out); and the supposed hard-headedness of believers in an “external world” (as contrasted with an inner world of thought) is simply theoretical muddlement — but he did believe that the inner and outer worlds were the same kind of (material) thing. Anderson and other precursors of the identity theory did not make very precise what the theory actually was, nor did they argue for it in detail, or reply to the long-standing philosophical objections to it.

Those tasks were first seriously undertaken in the 1956 paper which U.T. Place developed during his time at Adelaide, ‘Is consciousness a brain process?’ Place argued that there was no room in physics for mental entities, such as ‘phenomenal properties’. To suppose there was, he thought, was due to a logical mistake, the ‘phenomenological fallacy’: ‘the mistake of supposing that when the sub-

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ject describes his experience, when he describes how things look, sound, smell, taste or feel to him, he is describing the literal properties of objects and events on a peculiar sort of internal cinema or television screen.’ So there is no logical reason against saying that consciousness can be identified with a physical brain process, if scientific investigation makes that a reasonable conclusion. It is similar to identifying lightning with an electrical discharge in the clouds: one does not know they are the same thing to begin with, but scientific investigation can show that they are.

Place was soon supported by his colleague at Adelaide, J.J.C. Smart, who emphasised how gross an anomaly a mental consciousness would be in a world otherwise physical: ‘There does seem to be, so far as science is concerned, nothing in the world but increasingly complex arrangements of physical constituents. All except in one place: in consciousness.’

Australian materialism culminated in one of the most influential books of Australian philosophy, David Armstrong’s *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*, of 1968. Armstrong accepts the arguments of Place and Smart, but places them in a wider analysis of mental concepts, which emphasises their causal role. A mental state, he argues, is just whatever it is — whether it turns out to be physical or immaterial — that is apt for bringing about certain sorts of behaviour. It is then a scientific question as to what fills that causal role, just as it is a scientific question as to what entities fill the causal role of the gene, that is, the causing of inheritance of characteristics. The gene turned out on scientific evidence to be identifiable as the DNA molecule; similarly, says Armstrong, the total weight of the scientific evidence suggests that the cause of complex adaptive behaviour is the physical states and processes of the brain.

The remainder of the book offers physicalistic analyses of various mental concepts, including some that most materialists have tended to avoid. Consciousness, for example, is said to be the perception or scanning by one mental state of other mental states, thus explaining the feeling of ‘self-awareness’ associated with being conscious. Mental images, whose very existence was denied by some materialists, are said by Armstrong to be mental states similar to those normally found in perception, but not attended by beliefs about the external world.
Not everyone has been so willing to explain away the inner world. There are two approaches to defending the non-physicality of the mental, a purely philosophical one that argues that internal experience is not the sort of thing that could possibly be reduced to something purely physical, and a scientific one that tries to counter the scientific arguments that materialists rely on. Of course, many people have a gut feeling that looking at inner experience scientifically, ‘from the outside’, somehow misses the point, and leaves out the essential thing about the mental. It can be a strong intuition, but how can it be expressed in a communicable way? Argument, in the strict sense, is dif-

ficult, since there is so little to argue from: how could one be closer to conceptual bedrock than in deciding what experience is like? Perhaps the best that can be done is to dramatise intuitions with examples. Frank Jackson, then at Monash and later professor at ANU, invented one of those colourful and simple examples that gain a life of their own in philosophy, and take some of the edge off its abstractness. This is the example of ‘What Mary Knew’:

Mary is a brilliant scientist who is, for whatever reason, forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She specialises in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires, let us suppose, all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like ‘red’, ‘blue’ and so on. She discovers, for example, just which wavelength combinations from the sky stimulate the retina ... What will happen when Mary is released from the black and white room or is given a colour television monitor? Will she learn anything or not? It seems just obvious that she will learn something about the world and our visual experience of it. But then it is inescapable that her previous experience was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. Ergo there is more to have than that, and Physicalism is false.15

If one does find this line of reasoning appealing, one will soon run into difficulties in explaining how mental entities fit into the causal story about perception and behaviour. It is not always clear what causal role is envisaged for purely mental entities by those who believe in them. Armstrong writes: ‘if one accepts an account of mental states in terms of their causal relations to behaviour; and at the same time one agrees that physical operations of the brain are adequate to

bring about all human behaviour; and yet one still wants to resist the identification of mental states and brain states; there seems to be only one position one can adopt. One must say that physical processes in the brain give rise to mental processes of a non-material sort which in turn give rise to behaviour. The mental processes must be inserted into the causal chain at some point, although the chain unfolds in exactly the same way that it would unfold if there was no such insertion. This, he says, is a trivial logical possibility, like the possibility that a DNA molecule acts via an immaterial principle, which has effects identical to the usual chemical effects. There is no reason to believe such an unnecessarily complicated story.

Anti-materialists will reply that the two cases are not similar, since one observes the mind from the inside and DNA from the outside. But that does not provide the causal story that Armstrong is insisting must be provided. Nevertheless, some philosophers have argued that even that anomaly has to be put up with, as the evidence for the unique and non-physical nature of the mind makes it a price well worth paying. On the purely philosophical front, there were such books as Keith Campbell’s *Body and Mind,* which argued that the mind was a kind of ‘epiphenomenon’ of brain activity, caused by it but having no action back on it. The latest and most successful such book is *The Conscious Mind,* by David Chalmers, formerly an Australian mathematician and now a philosopher in Arizona. He argues that causal analyses like Armstrong’s tell us about the psychological aspects of mind, but say nothing about the phenomenal nature of felt qualities: consciousness is exactly what they leave out. ‘We know consciousness far more intimately than we know the rest of the world, but we understand the rest of the world far better than we understand consciousness.’ The phenomenal concept of mind, he says, is that based on the way the mind feels; it is quite different to the psychological concept of mind, based on what it does — so different that it could in principle turn out that the two minds were quite different entities. In support of this he advances such arguments as that from

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What Mary Knew, and that from the possibility that two people should be physically identical but see the colour spectrum in the opposite order, but his favourite argument is from zombies. It is logically possible for there to be zombies — beings physically identical to humans, whose behaviour is also identical, but who have no inner experience: there is nothing ‘it is like to be a zombie’. It follows that phenomenal experience is nothing like a case it is sometimes compared with, life, which was also once thought irreducible to physics: if physical processes explain how living beings grow, reproduce and so on, they have explained life, but if physical processes can explain why animals react as they do to stimuli, there is still something left over, namely, phenomenal experience. Chalmers goes on to develop a theory of mind according to which the laws of nature imply that zombies are naturally impossible (though logically possible): anything that has the same organisation as a human develops the same experiences, as a matter of scientific law. His theory seems to have the odd consequence that my experience of red is not part of the cause of my say-

ing that I am experiencing red. But, as he says himself, you can’t have everything. No theory of mind is plausible all through.

The What Mary Knew and colour spectrum reversal examples can be regarded not as isolated curiosities, but as indications that it may be possible to describe experience from the inside in some detail, without, for the moment, worrying about how it relates to the world outside. Some would argue that this topic belongs to psychology, not philosophy, but since most psychologists are hard-headed and scientific and don’t want it, it remains philosophy at least for the time being. The project of describing ‘pure’ experience, so to speak, is pursued by the school of phenomenology, stemming from Husserl and Heidegger. The school has had a marketing problem in that these founders described inner experience in German, and the translations that have been undertaken have not universally been regarded as meaningful English. The massive task of translating Husserl was attempted by W.R. Boyce Gibson, the Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne University, inspired by his visit to Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg in 1928.\textsuperscript{21} Little was heard of phenomenology in Australia in the mid-century, but it reappeared in the 1960s as one of the multitude of continental trends then imported, and promoted with a great deal of complaining about the hegemony of anglophone analytic philosophising.\textsuperscript{22}


It survives to the present, but it remains a minority position among both philosophers of mind and among psychiatrists, another group who have in a different way sought descriptions of inner experience. Perhaps one of its problems is that it does not postulate hidden causes of mental activity accessible only to professionals. What is the point of being an expert on the mind if one knows no more about it than the novelist in the street?

The idea of concentrating on experience in isolation has suggested some unusual phenomenological approaches to subjects like geography, architecture and town planning. These disciplines deal with the ways humans change the environment in order to change the experiences of other humans, so that an approach that merely studies physical rocks and houses is too narrow and misses the point of the actions on the environment. The feminist geographer Louise Johnson argues that since the ‘lifeworld’ is the way we experience our environment, geographers will have to study it, instead of keeping to ‘scientistic’ perspectives appropriate to subjects like biology. Her article does not include any applications, but what one would be like is indicated by Meaghan Morris’s well-known article on the ‘cultural meaning’ of Sydney Tower. The Tower is just another tall building in a big city, but from the moment of its design, it began to be invested by its promoters and the media with a meaning as ‘Centrepoint’, ‘the Heart of the City’, a symbol of Sydney’s progress and growth, which would make Sydney ‘a world city in the real meaning of the word’. And the people converging on the wonder would then look out to see the city itself converted into spectacle. These ‘features’ of the building exist not as properties of the physical tower, but in the minds of those who think about it. They are not therefore unreal; on the contrary they have the causal power to generate, for example, profits for the


Tower’s owners. Examples like this show that architecture is an ideal case for applied phenomenology, since experiencing architecture is unavoidable, and the failure of architects to consider what their works will be like for the experiencers has led to some unpleasant results.26

It is true that traditional town planning and architecture leave some room for people’s perceptions of the environment they have to live in. Eliciting people’s opinions by questionnaire is a common procedure with any planning decision. But one of the phenomenologists’ points is that a large proportion of ‘perceptions’ are normally beyond the reach of language, being instead coded in some semi-pictorial form at the edge of conscious awareness. As Rolf Harris says:

I’m a very calm man. But the thing that drives me into a rage is walking up or down a set of steps and finding the last one is a couple of inches higher or lower than the rest. It is in the nature of things that one’s body, without conscious direction, immediately adjusts itself to the exact regular height of each riser, and to suddenly, unexpectedly drop an extra inch or so, to be stopped with a sickening, spine-jarring jolt, is nearly as bad as coming to a shattering stop two inches before you expected to. I clench my teeth and imagine the terrible things I would do to the designer or builders of such steps.27

It is the body that adjusts, but the expectation of where the next step will be is a mental entity, even though in the normal course of events one that is not attended to.

These considerations bring us close to the more traditional kind of aesthetics, the philosophy of art. That branch of philosophy has been little studied in Australia, and the most famous item remains John Passmore’s article of the 1950s explaining why aesthetics is boring.28


If there is one art form that cries out for phenomenological treat-
ment, it is television. Watching TV needs a host of mental processes
to be active just at the edge of consciousness. One has a ‘horizon of
expectation’, as the theorists say, about what will happen next. The
notion applies especially well to the formulaic soap operas and game
shows that Australia has exported so successfully: there are strong ex-
pectations as to what the characters will say, what will appear if the
camera moves, what is presumed to have happened off-screen be-
tween scenes. Some characters one is supposed to ‘identify’ with,
some endings are expected, some not. These facts about audiences
will be much better known through introspection than by surveys.
And woe betide any producer who makes a mistake about what the
audience expects.29 Perhaps, too, a closer look inside will reveal some
Freudian items among the mental paraphernalia of the couch potato.
An article in the final number of the late lamented Australian Journal of
Screen Theory connected daytime soaps, not unreasonably, with
Freud’s ‘compulsion to repeat’,30 while the Melbourne psychiatrist
Ronald Conway maintained that the nation’s fascination with Kylie
Minogue’s paint-stripping characterisation of Charlene in Neighbours,
‘an abruptly discourteous, metallic-voiced, bossy, bad-tempered little
broad’, was a symptom of wimpish Australian men’s unhealthy rela-
tionship with their overbearing mothers.31

A phenomenological entity held more or less in common, if it ex-
ists at all, is the Thylacine of the mind, the much hunted but rarely
glimpsed ‘Australian identity’. In his celebrated article introducing the
notion of the Cultural Cringe, A.A. Phillips explained the subtlety of
the inferences to other minds involved in one attempt to bring into
being the Great Australian Identity, though what he writes could as
well apply to many attempts at literary criticism. ‘A Jindyworobak

29 Tony Wilson, Watching Television: Hermeneutics, Reception and Popular
Culture (Cambridge, 1993).
30 J. Davies, ‘The television audience revisited’, Australian Journal of Screen
writer uses the image “galah-breasted dawn”. The picture is both fresh and accurate, and has a sense of immediacy because it comes direct from the writer’s environment; and yet somehow it doesn’t quite come off. The trouble is that we — unhappy Cringers — are too aware of the processes in its creation. We can feel the writer thinking: “No, I mustn’t use one of the images which English language tradition is insinuating into my mind; I must have something Australian: ah, yes —”. What the phrase has gained in immediacy, it has lost in spontaneity.32

In any case, inferring what is in other people’s minds is essential in all walks of life. The old philosophical ‘problem of other minds’ asks how one can tell that other people have a mind at all, when all one can observe is their outward behaviour.33 It is easy for poets, according to A.D. Hope, who wrote, ‘Once we realize that all our perceptions reach the brain in the form of coded information, the idea of looking into someone else’s mind presents no more intrinsic difficulties than the idea of looking into his kitchen’, and ‘[a poem’s] effect is to create states of consciousness that can be directly perceived.’34

At a more day-to-day level, inferring intentions from outward marks is a crucial part of what lawyers do when they read legislation. In the 1970s, the High Court under Garfield Barwick kept to a strictly literal approach to the interpretation of tax law. Artificial tax schemes proliferated. ‘The citizen has every right’, Sir Garfield held, ‘to mould the transaction into which he is about to enter into a form which satisfies the requirement of the statute ... the freedom to

choose the form of transaction into which he shall enter is basic to the maintenance of a free society.’ To the contrary, Lionel Murphy raged, ‘It is universally accepted that in the general language it is wrong to take a sentence or statement out of context and treat it literally so that it has a meaning not intended by the author ... In my opinion, strictly literal interpretation of a Tax Act is an open invitation to artificial and contrived tax avoidance. Progress towards a free society will not be advanced by attributing to parliament meanings which no one believes it intended so that income tax becomes optional for the rich while remaining compulsory for most income earners.’ In the short term, Parliament’s intentions were subverted, but Murphy won in the long run. The crucial section 15AA was added to the Acts Interpretation Act in 1981. It provided:

In the interpretation of a provision of an Act, a construction that would promote the purpose or object underlying the Act (whether that purpose or object is expressly stated in the Act or not) shall be preferred to a construction that would not promote that purpose or object.

In 1984, the revolutionary section 15AB was added, allowing recourse to external evidence such as Hansard as evidence of the legislators’ purposes. Australia’s tax avoidance industry, hitherto a world leader, never recovered from the blow.

Is the inwardness of phenomenology altogether healthy? Wallowing in the world of inner experience is all very well, but like drug-taking, it can lead to one’s becoming excessively cut off from the bracing world of the great outdoors. Overmuch indulgence in the delights of living inside can even lead to the question, *Is there anything out there at all?* If phenomenology is the marijuana of the philosophical world, the heroin that beckons the percentage of hardy souls who are always on the lookout for boundaries to transgress is idealism. Idealism is the doctrine that *all is ideas*: there is no truly physical world out there at all. As we saw in chapter 6, this initially bizarre idea has had a sub-surface presence much more widespread than one would think.

The tendency of medical practitioners to speculate about physical causes of mental effects has been irrepressible, running from phrenology and mesmerism through cranioetry and the effect of lost sexual organs to claims about small parts of the brain even less accessible to empirical study. The attempt to explain the mental, including the spiritual, in terms of the physical is seen at its most entertaining in an article by Trethowan in the Sydney University Arts magazine, later reprinted in his colourful *Uncommon Psychiatric Syndromes*, on the theme that possession by demons must have been caused by psychoactive ingredients in ointments. Despite this, Trethowan’s own view of the relation of mind and body was reasonably balanced. He complains elsewhere

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It is disturbing to observe that a first-year medical student may start his career with a mind more perceptive to the facts of human nature than he will have after completing his preclinical course. As a rule, during this part of his career, he becomes indoctrinated with a scientific attitude largely evolved, not from the study of the behaviour of living organisms interacting with their environment, but from the physical sciences. One result of this is the propagation of the absurd mind-body dualism which so strongly colours the thinking of the average medical practitioner. The essentially materialistic nature of the early years of medical training strongly fosters this dualistic attitude.43

One medical student who did not find anything absurd about mind-body dualism was John Eccles. While studying medicine at Melbourne University, he read the philosophical and psychological literature on the subject, and finding it dogmatic and scientifically ill-informed, resolved to devote his life to research in neuroscience to clear the matter up.44 He is a rare Australian example of a kind of scientist like the founders of quantum theory, common in Europe early in the century, who were inspired to do science by a desire to solve big philosophical questions. After research at Oxford, he feared his career was at an end when it turned out that he had picked the wrong side in the controversy over whether synapses communicate electrically or chemically. Fortunately, he was by this time in New Zealand with Karl Popper, who convinced him that it was a virtue in a scientific theory to be refuted.45 Recovering his equilibrium, he conducted a decade of ground-breaking research at ANU, which resulted in his sharing the 1963 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. He later wrote with Popper a book, The Self and its Brain, arguing against materialist theories of mind.46 This line of reasoning

was not looked on favourably by the central-state materialist philosophers, who had been counting on neuroscience to help them explain the mind away, but it was always possible to attribute views like Eccles’ to the well-known philosophical naivety of scientists. Armstrong spoke of Eccles’ ‘lack of philosophical sophistication’, and regarded his theory of consciousness as merely a re-badging of Armstrong’s own theory that consciousness is no more than one brain process scanning another.

Psychiatry was the medical discipline that raised mind-body problems most urgently. How was it to establish itself as a reputable branch of the medical profession? Perhaps the laconic Australian temperament cannot be expected to support the population of shrinks that New York does, but a 1960 article by Trethowan suggested some more philosophical reasons for the slow emergence of the field. ‘The development of psychiatry in Australia,’ he said, ‘like that of some of the patients whom it endeavours to treat, is still at a somewhat immature stage.’ Part of the problem lay in the narrowly biological training of medical students. ‘It is now to be seen that social isolation, loneliness, the psychological problems of ageing, the stresses and strains of modern living, marital disharmony, the waning of religious interests, psycho-sexual immaturity, uncertainty as to the future and other anxieties of many different kinds are just as much the causes or harbingers of ill-health as are trauma, bacteria and other physically noxious influences.’ A system of medicine based on ‘a philosophy of science and derived from certain physical disciplines’ would not make any progress in these areas, and would cause the paying customers to go to ‘those who are, in other ways, less properly qualified to deal with these matters.’ He meant psychologists as much as alternative healers. To combat such a grave threat to the income of the medical profession, students ought to be trained in the anatomy of personality. While there was, he thought, some truth in the claim that Freudian theory was unscientific, he said, ‘it must be remembered that before Freud much of human behaviour and very many of the symptoms of mental disorder were quite inexplicable other than in terms of morality and degeneracy, both of which have proved to be sterile con-


cepts.’ ‘It seems more often than not that the investigation of man’s
nature is the area of medicine’s main neglect.’

Even an extreme materialist view of human nature does not neces-
sarily result in medical inconveniences, in its place. One of the most
successful outcomes of a rigidly materialistic approach to mental ill-
ness was the Australian discovery of lithium treatment for bipolar dis-
order (manic depression) by John Cade. The discovery took many
years to be accepted, partly at least because it was published in the
Medical Journal of Australia, not a widely-read journal in the centres of
medical power in the United States and Europe.

Then again, one should not necessarily believe everything printed
in the Medical Journal of Australia. In 1973, it published — over the
substantial objections of the only traceable referee — a paper on
‘The control of affective illness by cingulotractotomy’, by Harry
Bailey and co-workers. A certain amount of concern arose from the
fact that this group was performing half the leucotomies in Australia.
It was pointed out that the papers reported an unbelievably high rate
of improvement, failed to compare the treatment to less drastic ones
or to any control group, did not systematically evaluate at progressive
follow-up periods, and operated on homosexuals and people facing
criminal charges in circumstances suggesting consent was not wholly
voluntary.

Bailey represents the downside of the materialist attitude to mind.
A man ‘philosophically and intellectually attracted to a belief that
mental illness involved physical abnormalities', he was excited by the many reports in the 1950s, the time of his graduation, of wonder cures by ECT, deep coma insulin, lobotomies, LSD and the like. Cade suggested lobotomy was actually discovered accidentally by an Australian medical officer at Gallipoli, who observed that a depressed major who survived shooting himself through the frontal lobes with his service revolver was thereafter composed, even complacent. Its medical use dates from the late 1930s, but such brain operations were treatments of last resort and were generally replaced by drug treatments from 1959, except in Bailey’s group.

It was in this atmosphere of a frontier discipline where bold men could make big strides that Bailey travelled overseas in 1954–6 to meet the world experts. In Montreal he had contact with the work of Dr Ewen Cameron, which involved the use of heavy sedation and ECT; a number of Cameron’s experiments were funded by the CIA and given without the patients’ consent, leading to large compensation payouts many years later to some of the surviving victims. In London he visited William Sargant, another world leader in ‘physical psychiatry’. While Sargant thought Cameron’s experiments had gone too far, he was one of the last to continue using induced sleep therapy, and his account of it in his textbook on physical treatments in psychiatry was to play an important role in Bailey’s later defences of his actions. Sargant’s views on the mind are best known from his gripping popular book, Battle for the Mind, which deals with brainwashing, religious and political conversions, the eliciting of confes-

55 Cade, Mending the Mind, p. 57; a similar case in Medical Journal of Australia 44 (1957) vol. 2, pp. 632.
sions under torture, and so on, in terms of brain physiology. Its tenor is well represented by a passage which Sargant quotes with approval from Aldous Huxley’s *Devils of Loudun*:

No man, however highly civilized, can listen for very long to African drumming, or Indian chanting, or Welsh hymn singing, and retain intact his critical and self-conscious personality. It would be interesting to take a group of the most eminent philosophers from the best universities, shut them up in a hot room with Moroccan dervishes or Haitian Voodooists and measure, with a stop-watch, the strength of their psychological resistance to the effects of rhythmic sound. Would the Logical Positivists be able to hold out longer than the Subjective Idealists? Would the Marxists prove tougher than the Thomists or the Vedantists? What a fascinating, what a fruitful field for experiment! Meanwhile, all we can safely predict is that, if exposed long enough to the tom-toms and the singing, every one of our philosophers would end by howling and capering with the savages.  

Across the board, Sargant disparaged ‘generalized philosophies about the need to treat and heal the “whole man”’, and ‘Freudian and other metaphysical beliefs.’ It was time, he thought, for psychiatry to catch up with the rest of medicine, and rely on simple physical treatments like drugs and ECT.

Bailey’s travels took him on to Louisiana, where he observed the pioneering work of Robert G. Heath, who implanted electrodes into the ‘pleasure centres’ of the human brain, and connected the electrodes to a box which the brains’ owners could carry around with them and use to give themselves ‘shots’ of pleasure. It was probably not true, as Bailey later claimed, that Heath’s experiments were done on humans because ‘it was cheaper to use niggers than cats’. These bold researchers found an eager listener in Harry Bailey. Back in Australia, he determined to lead Australian psychiatry out of the wilderness. He is reported to have experimented on himself and others with LSD and a range of other drugs, though the truth of this is hard to establish, and he extracted a very large sum of money from

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the state government to build a Cerebral Surgery Research Unit.\textsuperscript{20} He had established himself as a man at the cutting edge of research. It seemed his rise would be unstoppable, but his career underwent a hiccup when allegations he made against his staff at Callan Park Mental Hospital led to a Royal Commission. Though a few of his complaints were vindicated, he was forced to resign.\textsuperscript{21} He went into private practice, where his ‘research’ proceeded, free from any constraints that a public hospital system might have imposed.

The kind of research he chose to do stemmed from his views on mind and brain. As the later Royal Commission into his activities described them:

Dr Bailey’s idea of mind and brain was very limited. The naivety may not have been unique to him but its extreme manifestations as noted in his lecture and practice must be condemned. His description of electric brain stimulation of the pleasure centres and the experiences of pleasure and orgasm give some understanding of the simplicity in which he believed. His approach ignored completely the richness of the human person and the relationships which surround it. These frequently were reduced to his crude comment that the patient needed a good physical sexual experience; something that he himself provided at times.\textsuperscript{22}

The last sentence refers to another of Bailey’s ‘treatments’, of which the \textit{Medical Journal of Australia} was also happy to publish an account. His article ‘Treatment of the depressed, frigid woman’ describes his procedures at Crown Street Women’s Hospital. He recommends ‘a very direct incisive approach, uncluttered by “hang-ups” in verbalization.’ The treatment itself involves injections of hormones and an intensive course of antidepressants. For patients revealing poor mammary development, implants are in order, the psychological advantages of which are claimed to be ‘extreme’.\textsuperscript{23} Patients recalled that the ‘uncluttered’ approach meant that Bailey would often begin a consultation with ‘How are things in the fucking department?’ One patient at the Royal Commission said that it was not unusual for him to suggest, ‘What you need is a good fuck, and I am just the person


to do it.\textsuperscript{68} Any impression that all this has something to do with ‘the Sixties’ is only strengthened by Bailey’s activities on the editorial board of the sex-oriented journal \textit{Forum}, and his drinking with the Push.\textsuperscript{69}

In the end it was neither for his sex therapy nor his brain excavations that Bailey was finally called to account, but for his deep coma insulin treatment. As with his brain operations, Bailey was using a version of a treatment that had been tried and superseded in Australia years earlier. Full coma insulin treatment for schizophrenia had been used in the 1940s and 1950s, but given up because of the occasional irreversible comas resulting, and because of the availability in the

mid-1950s of suitable drugs. About 1100 patients had deep sleep treatment at Bailey’s Chelmsford Hospital. There were perhaps 30 deaths probably attributable to the therapy from 1964 to 1978.\textsuperscript{70} Many others suffered brain damage or a worsening of their psychiatric conditions.

It took a long time for anyone to complain, but reports slowly leaked out. The evidence of wrongdoing gradually became impossible to ignore, and a Royal Commission was set up. Bailey committed suicide in 1985 as the Royal Commission was closing in, leaving a note saying ‘the forces of madness have won’.\textsuperscript{71}

In the medical arena, the main anti-materialist current of thought was Freudianism. The meaning of Freud’s legacy is not easy to grasp. The matter is confused because Freud himself believed in a materialist theory of mind, and his medical background enabled him to present his theory as ‘hard science’, undoubtedly a factor in its wide acceptance. The second cause of confusion is that Freudianism had an existence outside its use as a therapy, and its meaning in the wider sphere of philosophy, literary criticism, art and so on is only loosely related to actual psychotherapy.

Interest in Freud in Australia began early. Freud himself sent, by invitation, a short introductory paper on his work to the Australasian Medical Congress of 1911;\textsuperscript{72} in his more depressed moments, he had fantasies of emigrating there himself.\textsuperscript{73} A reaction of 1913 already points out that even if Freud is sometimes right about the causation of mental problems by childhood trauma, he ignores the fact that certain well-defined mental illnesses are known to have physical causes.\textsuperscript{74} A heated debate in the Medical Journal of Australia in 1936, prompted by Sydney’s first psychoanalyst that most physical illnesses had psychological causes,\textsuperscript{75} was only the most prominent inci-

\textsuperscript{70} Report, vol. 5 pp. 134–5.
\textsuperscript{72} S. Freud, ‘On psycho-analysis’, Australasian Medical Congress, 9th session, Sydney, 1911 (Sydney, 1913), vol. 2 pp. 839–42; there are accompanying papers by Jung and Havelock Ellis. On Havelock Ellis’s sojourn in Australia, V. Brome, Havelock Ellis: Philosopher of Sex (London, 1979), ch. 2; P. Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis (London, 1980), chs 2–3.
dent in a long-running debate. ‘True’ psychoanalysis — that is, therapy practised by a training analyst in apostolic succession from Freud — did not begin in Australia until the arrival of a Hungarian refugee analyst in 1940, but Freudian methods were already well-known, both inside and outside the medical profession. The first volume of the *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*, of 1923, had five articles on psychoanalysis, on such topics as its relation to traditional psychology, religion, medicine and education. The articles already assume some familiarity with the subject, and, like most writing by other than hard-line Freudians, are very concerned to give a ‘judicious’ assessment: ‘there’s something in it, and it is probably of use when other ideas fail’ could summarise much of the writing on psychoanalysis. Meanwhile, it is very convenient for providing a structure for comment on art, literature, civilization, and so on, without there being any necessity to inquire into the details of the clinical evidence as to whether Dr Freud’s theory is actually true.\footnote{J. Dingle, ‘The entrance of psychoanalysis into Australia’, in *Papers of the Freudian School of Melbourne, 1980* (Bundoora, 1980), pp. 23–38; O. Zentner, ‘Antecedents of a foundation’, *Papers of the Freudian School of Melbourne, 1988*, pp. 1–9; S. Gold, ‘The early history’, *Meanjin* 41 (1982): 342–51; C.L. Geroe, ‘A reluctant immigrant’, *Meanjin* 41 (1982): pp. 352–7; C. Geroe, ‘First annual report of the Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis for the year 1941’, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 11 (1942): pp. 613–5; obituary in *ANZJP* 14 (1980): p. 223.}

Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the early interest in Freud was that a great deal of writing was already taking place on topics to do with the mind, in areas later parcelled out into subdisciplines, of which psychoanalysis was one. (Indeed, since the unity of the mind is one of its prime and most mysterious attributes, it would be of great benefit to recover the unified study of the mind as it existed early in the century, before it became fragmented into the disciplines of experimental psychology, psychoanalysis, neuroscience, philosophy of mind, phenomenology and artificial intelligence; unfortunately, how these points of view may be combined to yield again a coherent picture remains completely obscure.) The range of these early writings is extraordinary. At the more philosophical end, they included, for example, the two massive and famously incomprehensible books on the

\footnote{E.g. E.T. Lovell, ‘Psycho-analysis and art’, *Art in Australia* 3rd series no. 5 (Aug 1923).}

mind by Sir William Mitchell, the Professor of Philosophy and later Vice-Chancellor at Adelaide University and centenarian,” and the book on *The Soul* by David Syme, the proprietor of the Age and a major figure in Victorian politics. At the more medical end of the spectrum, where Freud himself worked, one of many doctors interested in such topics as the use of hypnosis and suggestion and the power of the subconscious was J.W. Springthorpe. Now best known for the elaborate funerary monument he erected to his wife, he was a critic of the details of Freud’s theory. A paper of his of 1922 recalled that he had published on ‘The psychological aspect of the sexual appetite’ in 1884, well before Freud’s contributions to that topic. Nevertheless, he wrote, the blot on Freud’s theory is the claim that all neuroses are the result of infantile sexual repression. The Freudian singling out of the role of the unconscious is probably true in childhood, when higher representations are not yet possible; but to regard this definition as applicable to the adult also is to subordinate facts to fancies, intelligence to instinct and morality to its absence. Such a view also would place eastern civilization in advance of western, which, as Euclid says, is absurd.”

John Anderson admired many aspects of the Freudian theory: its large scale that unified diverse phenomena, its naturalism, its emphasis on the complexity of the mind and its drives, especially drives in con-

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flict." The latter idea, he thought, was not carried far enough: does not the possibility of righteous indignation against an authority figure show that the superego is itself complex? On the other hand, Anderson objected to the internalism of the Freudian theory. Where Freud regarded psychic life as generated by internal drives that have a fixed course of normal development, and then saw the emergence of cooperation between people as a problem, Anderson believed 'Man is not confronted with the task of living with his fellows, but is social all along.' Freud, he said, had no sense of the individual 'as a “vehicle” of social forces, as a member of movements which are just as real, just as definite as he is.'

Interestingly, there is a Freudian theory on why the influence of Anderson and his school was not wide.

John Anderson was the 'ideal father' — the Freudian 'fairy godfather' who absolved many from guilt, not merely by agreeing with their 'revolutionary' thoughts, but by showing that they could be derived by consistent argument ... we find at times a 'backlash' because Anderson (and a consistent application of his theory) did not agree with all the notions and purposes to which these students adhered — and more than a suggestion of that irrational anger that arises when 'imperfections' are found in a 'fairy godfather'. The antagonism of such disappointed neurotics, added to the antagonism John Anderson's beliefs aroused directly in other people, may well have inhibited students of his work who otherwise would have been disposed to follow him more closely.

The writer is John Anderson's son, so he should know. It is widely agreed that his life was made miserable by living in the shadow of the great man. Other devoted disciples likewise felt themselves oppressed by Anderson's opposition to their publishing anything that developed his views.

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The impression gained from Freud that sexual activity is a good in itself, more important than others, was also in line with Andersonianism. In her first publication, a review of a Freudian-inspired book on culture, Ruth Walker maintained that ‘the state of sexual opportunity within a society is itself an index of its cultural position ... just as we recognise a man’s literary activities as having “intrinsic value”, so it may be with his sexual activities.’ Her further view that another index of cultural progress is the ‘penetration of the sacred by the profane’ indicates the conflict then developing between Freud and religion.\(^8\)

Donald Horne put his finger on what Freudianism was for, to the undergraduate of 1939:

I considered myself well on the way to becoming a Freudian. Freud was not a normal part of intellectual discourse in Australia, but John Anderson and his followers had taken him up and there was a lot of talk about psycho-analysis in the Quad, which seemed to provide an opportunity to be bitchy while also being scientific. Once again, people were not what they seemed: look hard enough at them and you would find they would give their real selves away by some word or action, thereby revealing that they really possessed the anal character or showed signs of substitute oral eroticism. Our prime hunt was for signs of repressed homosexuality. After someone read that green was a homosexual’s colour, when we saw anyone in the Quad wearing even the slightest touch of green we would smile knowingly. Although I had hardly any idea what unrepressed homosexuals did with each other, I was afraid that, by some accident of dress or gesture or slip of the tongue, I might be accidentally mistaken for a repressed homosexual.

This gossipy side of Freudianism extended to literature. Literary works were examined as if they were reports of dreams in a psycho-analyst’s notebook. *Kubla Khan* was obviously an intra-uterine phantasy, *Hamlet* a phantasy of the Oedipal situation (we always spelt ‘fantasy’ with a ‘ph’). Again, nothing was what it seemed. In this shadow play of opposites we Freudians alone could see through the screen with our analytic vision to what went on inside.\(^9\)

The pleasures of ‘deconstructing’ (as it would now be called) a literary work by showing it to be surface play of hidden forces, visible only to the critic, were pursued in one of Peter Coleman’s earliest articles, ‘A Freudian view of Hamlet’. His accompanying article ‘I would have Olivier whipped’ enthusiastically attacked Olivier’s film version for botching the Oedipal aspects of Hamlet’s relation with

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Claudius. A.D. Hope was a critic of such attempts, arguing against, for example, the *Kubla Khan* as intra-uterine phantasy theory, which had been put forward by John Passmore.

Ethics as much as aesthetics felt the disembowelling touch of Dr Freud’s scalpel. A 1943 article by Hope in the *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* explained the point exactly. While Hope did not agree with all the details of the Freudian theory, he accepted the central role of the unconscious and believed that an account of the mind based on consciousness and introspection was now as outmoded as Ptolemaic astronomy. This undermined, he said, the theory of G.E. Moore (here close to that of Anderson) that there is an intuition or direct apprehension of goodness. ‘It might be maintained that the quality of good was in fact only a rationalisation by the Ego of its attitude to conflicting demands in the Unconscious mind: what Freud calls “projection”. And it is a fact that the conviction of goodness and badness is a common feature of neurotic compulsions and obsessions, and that when these are removed by analysis the act of object or situation which seemed before obviously qualified as good or bad seems to become quite natural and to lose this quality though the only operative change has affected the patient and not the object.’

In simple terms, this means that Freudianism explains morality away. One sees the point of the remark of Anderson’s predecessor, Sir Francis Anderson, that psychology was ‘eating the morals out of his classes.’

On what it meant for students vis à vis their own lives, Horne writes,

As well as Freudianism, a few of us in the Quad, women and men, also talked some of the language of sexual freedom. This had nothing to do with love, of which we were inclined to be scornful because, like everything else, love wasn’t what it seemed. Nor did it have anything to do with our actual behaviour — with each other, or with anyone else.

Occasionally, women and men together, we might discuss ‘seduction’ ...
We talked about repression as if it had nothing to do with our own situation
and about sexual experiment as if it did.95

The meaning of Freudianism as undergraduate theory-of-everything
is in many ways the direct opposite of its significance to therapists. In particular, if anything like Freud’s picture of the normal
stages of early child development is correct, then growing up in a
more or less normal family is absolutely crucial for later psychic
health.96 Those who took Freudianism to be a licence for sexual experimenta-
tion and the general casting aside of ‘repressions’ in sexual
matters have been among the last to praise settled family life, or pro-
vide it for their children.

Another consequence of Freudians’ all-or-nothing approach has
been an attempt to explain away opinions on philosophical and rel-
gious topics by finding causes for them. Catholics were among the
first to recognise the ambitions of Freudianism in this regard. Not
only did it usurp the role of confession, it purported to offer a com-
plete explanation — if not of the world, then of opinions about the
world.97 Their suspicions were justified. For the Freudian, religion is
indeed an illusion, but — and this is the truly offensive thing for phil-
osophers — no more so than rationality. A typical Freudian writes:

Although psychoanalysis is able to afford no evidence as to the validity or
non-validity of the belief in the existence of the soul after death, it affords
evidence as to the nature of this belief under different circumstances, and
the motives which give rise to it. Working in accordance with the tech-
nique already described, the canon which the analyst applies to such
beliefs when he comes in contact with them in the course of his work is
not ‘whether or not they seem plausible’, but rather ‘whether the manner
in which they are held is favourable to unrestricted mental functioning’.
On this basis he is very often compelled to form an unfavourable opinion
of traditional religious teaching.98

95 Horne, Young Donald, p. 178.
96 See N. McConaghy, ‘Maternal deprivation: Can its ghost be laid?’,
Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 13 (1979): pp. 207–17; with
reply pp. 219–24; A. Manne, ‘Electing a new child’, Quadrant 40 (1-2) (Jan-
299–311; similar in J.J. O’Brien, ‘The Church and hypnotism’, ACR 1
(1895): pp. 37–49, 283–92; P. O’Farrell, Documents in Australian Catholic
244; a modern version in S. Mann, Psychoanalysis and Society (Sydney, 1994),
Obviously, a proper therapeutic neutrality about a patient’s beliefs has here escaped from captivity. It has made the Freudian into a smug Olympian, refusing to inquire into the reasons for a theory (except Freud’s), and looking instead at the motives for belief in it.

The actual question of the credibility of psychoanalysis as a theory is a hard problem in the philosophy of science, because of the complexity of the theory and the special nature of the evidence."

Philosophy concerned with the mind has undergone a revolution in recent years, because of the existence of computers, machines which do a number of mind-like things. At least, that was the plan. The reality has not quite kept up with the vision. It is impressive that a computer can be world chess champion, which might suggest that a machine is thinking, but it is less impressive that the machine can only do so by searching billions of moves a
second, assisted by hints programmed by human chess experts. The inability of artificial intelligence to achieve thinking in anything like a human way, despite more than forty years of intensive research, has revealed that the mind is much harder to understand than any of the simple theories of the 1950s predicted.

One idea as to what went wrong and how to fix it arises from considering the problem of how a robot could reason about the input from its sensors in order to reach decisions on which to act. The main difficulty lies in how to ‘tie’ the symbols with which it computes internally to the flow of input — to give the symbols meaning in terms of the robot’s ‘experience’. The corresponding problem for humans is a long-standing one in philosophy. Sometimes it can seem that for Artificial Intelligence to succeed, it must solve all philosophy’s toughest problems first. One approach is to abandon the usual view of reasoning as a process of computation with symbols, as in a computer, and instead to see minds, whether natural or artificial, as more like continuously variable control mechanisms, of the kind that control chemical plants.

A great deal of interest has been aroused by the ‘artificial insects’ of Rodney Brooks, a South Australian now at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He agrees with philosophical criticisms of AI as not taking sufficient notice of the fact that human intelligence arises from learning in a body. Intelligence, he agrees, ought to be ‘situated’ (in an environment) and ‘embodied’. So he recommends ‘at each step we should build complete intelligent systems that we let loose in the real world with real sensing and real action.’ His artificial insects, which learned how to move in a simple environment without any central ‘mind’, were successful, so much so that Brooks is now collaborating with a leading American philosopher, Dan Dennett, on something


more ambitious — a true humanoid robot that will learn everything from scratch. According to Dennett, they are aiming for a conscious robot. Some may think this is a case of the sales department making promises beyond the capacities of the techies in the back room to fulfil, but in any case results are eagerly awaited.  

In the meantime, the hoped-for ‘cognitive revolution’ in the philosophy of mind remains a good deal less overwhelming than promised. Revolutions in philosophy are like that. After them, everything is much the same as before.
