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As the title makes clear, José Burgos’ (2015) is an ambitious paper, attempting to tackle a number of positions spanning three centuries or so in the philosophy of mind, and over a century in non-philosophical areas such as behaviourism, cognitive psychology, and other psychological accounts. It tries to draw on and include philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, none of whom is easy, as he acknowledges, each meriting a separate paper.

Burgos’s paper is clear and well argued and achieves what it sets out to do, namely, to show the problems facing the various physicalist and behaviourist positions that he considers. In particular, I admire his painstaking examination of the non-philosophical positions that he discusses. My main aim is not to comment on such positions, though at the end of my discussion I shall offer some brief remarks. I am mainly concerned to raise a few points concerning the discussions Burgos has woven into his account. Three stand out that are of the first importance for metaphysics, which I shall take in turn: Descartes’ dualism; the metaphysics of causality; and Kant’s thesis of the self. I shall finish with some brief general comments on behaviourism.

Descartes’ Dualism

It is an intellectual duty of anyone who embarks on an exposition and discussion of another thinker to start by presenting as clearly as possible the positions and arguments of that thinker. Otherwise, one risks presenting a straw man. The particular case in point here is Descartes’ argument for the Real Distinction between mind and body or corporeality.

First, the title ‘Real Distinction Argument’ is used by Burgos (P. 6) interchangeably with the ‘Argument from Doubt’ (following not Descartes’ own argument, but another writers misconceived version). The so-called ‘Argument from Doubt’ is not Descartes’ argument — it is a misrepresentation by Antoine Arnauld, to which Descartes replied both in the Fourth Set of Replies and in the Preface to the Reader, pointing out that his arguments in Meditations II and in the Discourse were “merely based in an order corresponding to [his] own perception.” (AT VII 8) In other words, his commitments in those passages were epistemic, not metaphysical, and no metaphysical conclusions were drawn. The Real Distinction argument is a metaphysical argument, and is found in Meditations VI (AT VII 78); it is an argument from what is clearly and distinctly understood, that is, it is based “in an order corresponding to the actual truth of the matter” (AT VII 8).

In Meditations II, in his cross-examination of the indubitably true proposition ‘I am, I exist’, Descartes suggests a counterargument: “And yet may it not perhaps be the case that these very things [i.e., the human body]
which I am supposing to be nothing, because they are unknown to me, are in reality identical with the ‘I’ of which I am aware? I do not know, and for the moment I shall not argue the point, since I can make judgements only about things which are known to me.’” (AT VII 27) This crucial passage is ignored by most writers, including Arnauld, and yet it clearly demonstrates the rigorous and painstaking method of scrutiny that Descartes follows throughout his philosophical enquiries, taking nothing for granted. It also clearly demonstrates that Descartes does not argue from ignorance or indeed from doubt, but only from what he can know or clearly understand.\(^1\) For a Real Distinction to be drawn both entities in question must be clearly and distinctly understood, not only one while having doubts about the other.

Unfortunately, philosophers and other writers through the centuries have latched on to Arnauld’s mistaken attribution to Descartes of the so-called argument from doubt because, it seems, it suits their anti-dualist, physicalist positions. Burgos, unlike the writers he discusses, is sensitive to such mistaken attributions; yet despite his acknowledgement he states that he “will stick to the story [he is expanding], as nothing [he] will say hinges on Descartes’ really having held it.” (p. 7) But if nothing hinges on what Descartes actually said, why attribute the argument to Descartes? Why bring in Descartes at all?

Secondly, Descartes’ Dualism, or Metaphysical Distinctness, demonstrates that two or more really distinct substances ontologically or numerically can also be really distinct kinds of substance, that is, metaphysically distinct. Really distinct kinds of substance is what Descartes understands by ‘The Real Distinction between Mind and Body’, between thinking substance and extended substance — their essences are really distinct. This is grounded in or presupposes numerical distinctness or separability and irreducibility. In the Real Distinction argument, what is clearly and distinctly perceived is the distinctness of mind from body and vice versa.

The entities are not distinct “by a fiction or abstraction of the intellect”; rather, each entity “can be known as a distinct thing because it is in reality distinct.” (AT VII 229; emphasis added). This is in fact what ‘real’ means in ‘Real Distinction’ — it is grounded in reality (I return to this below): what is real is true, and what is true is real, in Descartes’ philosophy. It is, therefore, the truth or reality of their distinctness, a metaphysical claim that constrains one’s clear and distinct understanding.

It is evident from Descartes’ arguments, contrary to standard misconceptions, that the Real Distinction does not imply separation or “partition of the world” (as Burgos argues); it only implies separability, as is clearly stated in Descartes’ conclusion of the argument: that the mind “can exist without it [the body]” (AT VII 78; emphasis added) — a mere logical possibility of separation.

Thirdly, Descartes’ Conceivability–Possibility Principle\(^2\) applies only to those matters that can be conceived clearly and distinctly, and this almost entirely restricts it to the realm of notions or the essences of things. Thus his

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\(^1\)See my 2001 and 2013

\(^2\)See my 2013 and especially 2016 forthcoming
argument for the Real Distinction concerns body, not a particular body. This is where modern philosophers, such as David Chalmers, go wrong; it is not at all clear what is involved when Chalmers claims to conceive his zombies, and his argument is open to the criticism that it is merely question begging, requiring one to accept that zombies be possible in order to accept that they can be conceived. As Descartes warns us: “we ought not to use this rule heedlessly, because it is easy for someone to imagine [in contrast to what can be conceived clearly and distinctly] that he properly understands something when in fact he is blinded by some preconception and does not understand it at all.” (Comments on a Certain Broadsheet AT VIIIB 352)

Descartes’ Principle of Clarity and Distinctness means that clear and distinct ideas/perceptions/conceptions/understanding reveal the nature or essences of things; they correspond to and are constrained by such essences — hence, clear and distinct ideas cannot be subject to doubt or to the evil demon hypothesis (while they are attended to), and cannot be contradicted.

Fourthly, for Descartes a person is not a disembodied ego, or a mind (as Burgos (p9 fn9), among many others, states). Nor is a person a merely physically or neurobiologically constituted particular. A person, for Descartes, is a substantial union of a mind and a human body; neither is internal to the other. 3 A substantial union is a primitive, that is, irreducible and unanalysable notion. He denies that a person “is an ens per accidens [and not] a true ens per se [an entity in itself...] the mind is united in a real and substantial manner to the body.” (Letters to Regius December 1641 AT III 460–1; CSMK:200, and January 1642 AT III (508); CSMK:209. See also especially his letters to Princess Elizabeth 28 June 1643 AT III 691; CSMK:226, and 21 May 1643 AT III 665; CSMK:218; Fourth Set of Replies AT VII 227–8) 4

Fifthly, Descartes explains in the Synopsis to the Meditations that his argument for dualism neither includes nor entails the immortality of the soul or mind (it only provides “the hope of an after-life”, a suggestion that he hopes will appease the authorities). Indeed, he argues: “the premisses which lead to the conclusion that the soul is immortal will depend on an account of the whole of physics” (AT VII 13-14), and he offers two reasons for this but not the argument. Furthermore, in his reply to Mersenne, he writes that when the body perishes it is possible that the mind “comes to an end simultaneously with the end of the body’s life.” (Second Set of Replies AT VII 153)

Spinoza. I shall restrict myself to a few remarks regarding Spinoza’s metaphysics. His monism cannot be equated with physicalism or materialism. ‘Monism’ refers to the one infinite substance: God or Nature. God is not identical with nature, nor is God nothing but nature, as some argue. These reductive interpretative claims about Spinoza are not simply false but vitiate the whole of his metaphysics, at the heart of which there is a real, intrinsic duality. Spinoza’s metaphysics depends on a number of important distinctions of which I shall mention only a few.

3Descartes also rejects any notion of introspection, or what he calls “internal sense” (AT VII 76-77), despite attributions to him of a reliance on it.

First, it depends on the real duality between the infinite attribute of thought and the infinite attribute of extension, which are irreducible and incommensurable. They are not aspects of, or descriptions of perceiving, the one substance; his system cannot be described as a double-aspect theory or as property dualism, because the two attributes are neither aspects nor properties. Each attribute constitutes the true nature of the infinite substance, and each is independent of our ways of understanding. There is a strict correspondence, not identification or reduction, between the order and connection of clear and distinct ideas and the order and connection of things, the ideata. (*Ethics* Part II P32)

What Spinoza denies is that we can infer that these two really distinct and irreducible attributes constitute two different substances, as Burgos rightly observes. (p. 8) What it is for one substance to have two metaphysically distinct attributes is a very difficult issue in Spinoza’s metaphysics, which cannot be addressed here, but of which he was fully aware, and which led him to have to deny that God is identical with “a kind of mass or corporeal matter.” (Letter 73: L332=G iv 307/11–14)

Secondly, Spinoza’s metaphysics depends on the distinction between two key concepts. First, *Natura Naturans*: what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e., ontologically and explanatorily independent of anything — Nature as active and the ultimate cause or explanation of everything, namely: “God in so far as he is conceived as a free cause”. Secondly, *Natura Naturata*: what is in another, i.e., dependent ontologically and explanatorily on another — Nature as passive; that is, the totality of modes not considered as isolated individuals, but as following from God, which “can neither be nor be conceived without God.” (*Ethics* Part I P29 Schol.)

Thirdly, Spinoza rules out personal immortality. Nevertheless, unlike Descartes’ commitment only to the possibility of the immortality of the mind, Spinoza, in *Ethics* Part V, makes a number of references to the human mind being eternal, expressed succinctly at V P23: “The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal.” The issues are of course difficult and complex, and cannot be dealt with here.

**The Metaphysics of Causality**

In *Meditations* III Descartes states his *Principle of Causality*, or the *Causal Adequacy Principle* (henceforth CAP) thus: “it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much <reality> in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause.” (AT VII 40)

First, CAP is a substantive metaphysical principle. It makes no assumptions that there are in fact causes and therefore does not beg any questions; rather, the natural light of reason clearly manifests what the relation is between cause and effect, if there are causes or effects: the effect (i) cannot be greater than, (ii) is dependent on, and (iii) cannot be prior to the cause.

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5 The distinction between *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata* can be traced back to the Arabic and Latin translations of the works of Aristotle, and is sometimes associated with *de re* potentiality. Spinoza modifies it, rejecting potentialities.
Secondly, the notion of causality is metaphysically basic, along with the notions of truth and knowledge (scientia). (Seventh Set of Objections with Replies AT VII 548; Letter to Mersenne March 1642 AT III 544; CSMK:211) That is, causality can be given an elucidation, as Descartes does in his CAP, but that it is not analysable or reducible to anything else. This implies that notions such as power, force, contact, impact, transfer of energy, and physical or mechanical interaction, presuppose causality; all such notions can be explained by appealing to causality, but causality cannot be defined, analysed, or explained in terms of them. Even if every physical/physical interaction is an instance of any of these notions (such as mechanical, or transfer of energy), that would not entail that causality itself consists in such notions.

Causality itself is neither mechanical nor non-mechanical, neither physical nor mental; the direction is the other way: mechanical and non-mechanical interaction can appeal to causality. Descartes (and Spinoza and Leibniz both follow him in this) also understands cause as a logico-rational notion in terms of reasons and normative considerations, as in causa sive ratio (Fourth Set of Replies AT VII 236). Furthermore, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz accept formal cause “taking the whole essence of a thing to be its formal cause” following Aristotle’s to ti en einai (the what it is to be). (AT VII 242) Efficient cause and formal cause are different (AT VII 236–7), though both are required for any total explanation, irrespective of the relata. Descartes (unlike Leibniz) rejects Aristotelian substantial forms and accepts substantial activity, demonstrating that bodies can be causes without invoking substantial forms. (Letter to Regius, January 1642 AT III 500; CSMK:207)

Thirdly, Descartes is clear that CAP imposes no demands or limits, a priori or empirical, concerning the nature of the relata — it makes no demands concerning the nature of cause or of the effect, of what can or cannot causally interact. This can be seen most clearly from his replies to Gassendi’s Counter-Objections regarding mind-body relation:

…the whole problem contained in such questions [objections] arises simply from a supposition that is false and cannot in any way be proved, namely that, if the soul and the body are two substances whose nature is different, this prevents them from being able to act on each other (Appendix to Fifth Objections and Replies AT IXA 213).

This flies in the face of those commentators who mistakenly suppose (like Gassendi and Princess Elizabeth, who hold that causality is mechanical and involves impact) that heterogeneous interaction is inconsistent with Descartes’ CAP, and claim that by his own principles interaction between substances of distinct natures, such as mind and body, is precluded. Some even insist that Descartes’ letters to Princess Elizabeth were a desperate attempt to overcome such a problem. As his robust response to Gassendi shows, this is very far from being the case; rather, being more conciliatory with Elizabeth, and greatly valuing her intellectual sharpness, Descartes was trying to demonstrate to her that there was no problem.

Burgos observes that in the Real Distinction Argument there is no mention of causal interaction, and rightly argues that the argument is purely intended to
demonstrate “how mind and body differ intrinsically, not how they relate extrinsically to one another.”  (p. 7) He goes on to refer to Gassendi’s and Princess Elizabeth’s objections that mind-body causal interaction is unintelligible. Burgos, however, argues that it is what he calls ‘mental causation’ which “is logically incompatible with SD [substance dualism].  If the two are combined, as Descartes purportedly did”, with what Burgos calls the dualist causal-interaction-thesis (CITd), “incoherence ensues.”  (p. 8) One solution to this problem, Burgos suggests, is to accept substance dualism and reject CITd, and thereby reject mental causation.  Such a move leads to occasionalism and pre-established harmony.  Burgos concludes that such a move shows that “the Elizabeth-Gassendi criticism is effective only against CITd.  This criticism leaves SD unscathed.”  (p. 8)  I agree with Burgos that the Elizabeth-Gassendi criticisms leave substance dualism unscathed, but I also think that they leave the mind–body relation, as conceived by Descartes, unscathed too. 6 Burgos, however, goes on to argue that such criticisms can “also be addressed by rejecting SD.”  (p. 8)

**Physicalism and the Principle of Causality**

The Principle of Causality is a metaphysical principle, not ex officio a scientific or physical one; it is metaphysically neutral about the nature of its relata.  Yet physicalism ignores the metaphysical neutrality of the principle, and instead draws heavily on an assumption: the physical causal closure or completeness of the world.  This is aimed at denying the argument for mind–body relation and with it, for the physicalist, the argument for Descartes’ dualism.  I shall not discuss the various arguments levied against the physicalists’ assumption; in general, I welcome the ways such arguments undermine it.  Instead, I shall offer an alternative and stronger way at reaching the same outcome.

First, physicalism assumes what has to be proved — namely, that it is certain that the entire universe is physical, that it is physically causally closed, and there can be no doubt about this.  However, the terms ‘universe’ and ‘world’ are not equivalent either extensionally or intensionally to the term ‘physical’ or ‘physical world’.  The same applies to the term ‘natural’; it might be true that physical phenomena are natural, but the converse cannot be assumed to be true without begging the question — not all natural phenomena are physical.  When Descartes, for example, refers to the “natural light of reason” he is not referring to anything physical, anymore than he is concerned with the light of grace or anything supernatural.  Physicalism and scientific inquiry are not exhaustive of the nature and reality of the universe.

Secondly, the causal closure assumption is unsupported by empirical evidence and is not derivable a priori.  It is in fact unscientific and unphilosophical in that it begs the question, not only against the reality of mind or consciousness which is part of the world, but also against certain scientific theories.  For example, it rules out a number of cosmological theories, such as 6

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6I defend this in my 2016 forthcoming.
certain Steady State and Big Bang Theories. Of course, such theories might be rejected on other grounds, but we cannot allow serious theories to be ruled out \textit{a priori} by a (so-called) principle that itself has no proper grounding beyond dogma.

Thirdly, it doesn’t take much reflection to realise that, as Kant succinctly states the problem: “if therefore everything takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature [of physics] there will always be only a relative and never a first beginning, and consequently no \textit{completeness} of the series on the side of the causes that arise the one from the other.” (A445; emphasis mine.) Physicalism faces a dilemma with regard to the explanation of the existence of the world: either there was a first, uncaused event or state, or there was no such first event or state. Both horns violate the causal closure assumption.

This is not to suggest that we need to go beyond the system of the universe to find some transcendent cause; rather, it is a demand for a non-question-begging account that reality is comprehensible within the framework of the rational order of the universe; physicalism cannot draw the bounds of the rational and intelligible.

Burgos argues that what he refers to as mental causation is incompatible with dualism. Indeed, he argues that “mental causation makes mentalism inherently materialistic and, therefore, antidualist.” (pp. 10–11). I am not entirely clear about this but, as I suggested earlier, causality itself is neither mentalistic nor physicalistic. Burgos continues by arguing that combining the idea of mental causation with the “causal closure of nature” provides a “powerful simultaneous protection against PD [property dualism], SD [substance dualism] and idealism.” (p. 11). It appears that Burgos too accepts the question-begging causal closure assumption.

**Kant’s Thesis**

My discussion of Kant’s thesis will be restricted to addressing Burgos’s suggestion that “there are good reasons to believe [Kant] was not a dualist.” (p. 25) Kant is perhaps the dualist \textit{par excellence} throughout his philosophical work. For example:

First, there is the dualism between conceptual scheme and content – the pure \textit{a priori} concepts or categories of the understanding, and intuitions of sensibility –which are utterly heterogeneous.

Secondly, there is the dualism between pure reason and the understanding, whose ideas are very different; the ideas of pure reason can be thought but cannot be known, and are not ideas of the understanding.

Thirdly, there is the dualism between the two employments of reason: theoretical employment in metaphysics and epistemology, and pure practical employment in ethics, and between practical reason and pure practical reason.

Fourthly, there is the dualism between the noumenal world and the phenomenal world (however one might attempt to offer an account of that distinction).

Burgos might concede all this but still insist that Kant is not a dualist in terms of the metaphysics of the self. This, however, cannot be maintained. Even if at the early stages of the Critique of Pure Reason one of Kant’s concerns is the problem of the knowability of the self, nevertheless, there is no
suggestion that the nature of the self might be material or physical. In the Deduction Kant argues that, in so far as the self takes the form of the transcendental unity of apperception (consciousness of an identical ‘I think’), the apperceptive self, it is a condition of knowledge, not an object of knowledge (A402). The reference to an object here is to spatiotemporal objects of possible experience; there is a fundamental disanalogy between the self and objects, and hence Kant denies that the self is any such object.

Furthermore, Kant attributes to the apperceptive self what he calls transcendental properties such as judging, structuring, assenting, or acting in light of reason and reflection. Thinking cannot be conceived of apart from a numerically identical subject, but more substantively, thinking and acting are inseparable from the self. To deny this would be to deny that the self is a self, which is logically and metaphysically self-contradictory.

In a similar way to Descartes, who argues that freedom is a distinctive trait of selfhood, Kant concedes, not only in his work on ethics but also in the latter parts of the First Critique, that this is “evident from the imperatives which in all matters of conduct we impose as rules upon our active powers.” (A547/B575) Responsibility, both moral and epistemic, for Descartes and for Kant, is not simply associated with praise and blame, approval and disapproval from the standpoint of the observer, but arises primarily from the self-conscious first-person perspective of the self; it is not simply something assignable, but something takeable by the self itself.

Kant affirms the knowability of the self from the moral standpoint of pure practical reason through the exercise of freedom. Similarly, in the latter part of the First Critique, in ‘The Antinomy of Pure Reason’, Kant argues that man “who knows all the rest of nature solely through the senses, knows himself also through pure apperception [...] He is thus to himself [...] in respect of certain faculties which cannot be ascribed to sensibility, a pure intelligible object. We entitle these faculties understanding and reason.” (A546/B574; A547/B575) Here, Kant clearly regards any constraints of sensibility (and affection) as irrelevant to the knowability of oneself through pure apperception. If he regards sensibility as irrelevant to the knowability and nature of the self, it would be difficult or impossible for anyone cogently to ascribe to Kant any form of physicalism or functionalism. Kant is offering an insight into a conception of the nature of the self whose faculties are understanding and reason. He refers to acts and inner determinations through which man as “he is to himself” (not as a phenomenon) “knows himself” as a self-active, thinking being (A547/B575) who must be acting under the idea of freedom.8

**Behaviour**

In conclusion, I should like to raise some general points regarding behaviour which figures prominently in Burgos’s paper.

1. Human behaviour (and most likely in varying degrees the behaviour of other sapient beings) is brought about by intention, motivation, desire, hope, and so on, all of which are mental or conscious states, not physical or

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8For fuller discussion see my 2013, especially chapters 2 and 3
functional; such states, however, are irreducible to behaviour. Human actions are in the first instance exercises of agents, and express, or otherwise manifest some relevant knowledge which might involve normative considerations or requirements such that actions are normatively structured. It seems the behaviour analysts conflate actions with movement. The planets move but don’t act. A leaf moves when it is blown by the wind, but doesn’t act. I act when I wink, but not when I blink. There is no expression of intention, directedness, or manifestation of relevant knowledge in mere movement.

2. There is no mystery of how we bring about our actions. We have first-person knowledge and awareness that we think, deliberate, assent or withhold assent, decide and act. From our first-person perspective we do not predict our actions, we decide when and how to act. It can only be a mystery from the standpoint of physicalists and behaviour analysts because from their standpoint it is impossible to give an account of consciousness; this is because consciousness is essentially connected to a first-person point of view, and their positions are purely impersonal, not even third-personal.

3. Burgos, unlike such physicalists and behaviour analysts, uses “an ontological sense of subjectivity”, according to which something is subjective if it merely is or depends upon a particular subject. Given that, as he acknowledges, “mental states depend ontologically on [...] some particular subject”, then mental states are by definition subjective. In defence of his identity thesis, Burgos argues that it does not follow that such states are not physical: “my headache right now at home is the firing of my C fibres right now at home. My headache thus construed is subjective: It exists only as experienced by me here and now.” (pp 22–23)

Yet the problem with such an identity thesis is that what is “experienced by me here and now” is the painfulness of the headache, not any C fibres firing. Both the painfulness and the C fibres firing are dependent on me as the subject, but I cannot infer from that dependence that they are identical without begging the question. The sensation of painfulness itself is present only once I feel that particular pain sensation; “there is nothing [identical or even] similar to that which we perceive of [an agitation of C fibres, even though] the sensation may be produced in us by anything that can set up various motions in the minute part of [our brain].” (Descartes Le Monde AT XI 10) There is interaction, but there is every reason to say that the natures of the two entities are metaphysically distinct: the nature of the pain sensation is its painfulness; the nature of C fibres is their neurobiological agitation and other processes in the nervous system.

4. The claim that brain states constitute mental states is question-begging. We have no a priori reason and no empirical evidence for it. There is evidently interaction (as in fact Descartes argues) and other relations between the two kinds of entity, but interaction is not equivalent to constitution, reduction, or identity.

5. It is odd that writers are still appealing to functionalism despite its inability to account for consciousness, and thus, given the centrality of consciousness to any mind, its inability to account for the mind and its essential properties: first-person awareness (and all that goes with it), intentionality, and phenomenology. Functionalism cannot account for what it
is like to be a particular conscious being that has reason and reflection and can think of itself as itself.

6. The claim that if the mental is internal, then it is publically unobservable, is not true. The mental manifests itself in many different ways. However, it is a mistake to think (as the behaviourists do) that, it leads to an account of the mental in terms of behaviour and of environmental conditions.

7. Our mental states can be manifested in behaviour or actions, but behaviour is at best a criterion, albeit a defeasible one, for ascribing mental states to others; behaviour does not constitute the mind. In our first-person case we do not need behavioural criteria to self-ascribe mental states. There is an asymmetry between first-person ascription and third-person ascription, and between self-identification and other-identification. The first-person point of view is inseparable from the mind or consciousness. The behaviourists and physicalists sever the first-person point of view from the mind or consciousness, presumably because it cannot be studied within their theories. Consequently, whatever it is that they are investigating cannot be the mind, or the mental, or consciousness.

8. Behaviour cannot account for our self-awareness, self-reflection, our soliloquies, our stoic dispositions; it cannot account for our concealing, for example, our unrequited love, our remorse, regret, guilt, shame, and so on. Behaviour cannot account for many of our thoughts generated through our self-initiated activity. As Descartes wrote to Princess Elizabeth, many of the pleasures of the mind require the mind to train itself through regular intellectual practice. Such pleasures can endure without having any behavioural manifestations, even though, as Descartes argues, there is interaction between such pleasures and the brain. But interaction is not equivalent to identity, or to constitution.

José Burgos has produced an interesting and inspiring paper that has stimulated the debate in a very difficult area. It seems to me, however, that it is unlikely that we are going to make much, if any, progress towards understanding such difficult and at the same time extremely important metaphysical problems, if we continue along the current state of philosophy and other interdisciplinary positions. After more than a century of physicalism, in its various guises, we are none the wiser concerning these problems. At most what writers have achieved over the last century are more and more technical cycles and epicycles and eccentrics without much philosophical substance or philosophical reflection.

Descartes’ Dualism, on the other hand, has withstood the test of time. Throughout the last three centuries or so, it has been rejected, misrepresented, dismissed, denied, caricatured, scorned, but it has not been refuted. Isn’t it time we attempted to retrace our steps and tried to get as clear an understanding as possible, if progress is to be made?

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References


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