

DAVID COCKBURN An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind. Hampshire, Wales: Palgrave Press 2001. Pp. xviii + 157. (cloth: ISBN 0-333-78637-8) (paper: ISBN 0-333-96122-6).

The most distinctive feature of this clearly written and engaging book is that throughout its ten chapters, the author simultaneously develops two independent projects. The first project, as the title suggests, is to introduce the novice to some of the traditional issues in the philosophy of mind. To this end, the book is structured around discussions of dualism, physicalism, the problem of other minds, mental causation, personal identity, free will etc. But the book is not just an impersonal survey; the author's second project is to develop his own Wittgensteinian views about the proper methods and subjects of philosophical inquiry. The two projects are interwoven so closely that newcomers to philosophy will probably not detect where Cockburn is describing the major positions in the various areas, and where he is defending his personal viewpoint.

Cockburn presents traditional philosophy of mind as being composed of two camps: Cartesian dualists and physicalists. Although we typically consider these camps to be strongly opposed, Cockburn argues that what they have in common is far more important. They both agree that 'the "mind" ... is something distinct from the bodily being that (brain surgeons aside!) others see or touch' (143). This common assumption has skewed studies in the philosophy of mind. Instead Cockburn urges us to focus on the '*human being*', which is 'that which moves the furniture, comforts my friends, and so on' (143). While Cartesians and physicalists become embroiled in problems concerning the exact nature of the relation of the mind to the external world, the human being approach suggests that we begin theorizing by taking the topic to be the total human being, who is part of 'the social world in which people judge that each other understand something, are in pain, are angry, or are in love' (41). Given this starting point, Cockburn suggests that most of the traditional issues of philosophy of mind disappear.

The reader – novice or trained philosopher – is sure to wonder exactly how Cockburn's view opposes the two traditional camps. Cockburn's answer is the Wittgensteinian (and Humean) claim that 'all justifications must end somewhere' (101). True enough; but the kind of justification one is looking for often depends on the nature of one's project. For example,

compare the point at which the justification of a numerical calculation ends in an engineer's proof with where it ends in the proof by a logician working on the foundations of mathematics. The logician can be thought of as doing a kind of metaphysics, seeking to understand at a very abstract level how the numbers work. In contrast, the engineer's standards are largely epistemological: she seeks only to show that her answer follows from what engineers all know about numbers. Like the logician, traditional philosophers of mind are often doing a kind of metaphysics, seeking to understand mental phenomena at a very fundamental level. On the other hand, Cockburn's human being approach is more of a theory of ordinary epistemology, where answers to questions need only be shown to follow from what we all know (or what all of us do not question that we know, except for skeptics, eliminative materialists etc.). Cockburn focuses on our ordinary epistemic positions, where we require no special justification for holding that there is a physical world, or that other minds exist. From this standpoint, the traditional philosopher's quest for explanations and justifications are unnecessary, for reasons similar to why engineers often don't worry about mathematical logic. But these considerations show only that traditional philosophical activity is undermined only when it is construed as a reconstruction of commonsense epistemology. But few if any traditional philosophers of mind are engaged in such an epistemological project. Instead of explaining what it would be to replace (or supplement) traditional theorizing with the human being approach, the book's chapters often have the following format: the Cartesian and physicalist views about topic X are presented and subjected to some standard criticisms; afterwards, the human being approach to the topic is presented (where the latter position is usually to deny the importance of the topic as philosophers have construed it). If the book is used in the classroom, fruitful discussion should arise about the relation of the human being approach to the two other camps.

Because of the radically different stance the human being approach takes to many philosophical issues, Cockburn's presentations of it frequently open the door to various side issues that are related to the philosophy of mind. For example, at the end of his discussion of other minds, Cockburn appeals to the utility of non-physical descriptions of an event in order to 'raise a doubt about the insistence that we do not, strictly speaking, *see* the joy in another's face, the anger in another's eyes, and so on' (53). Cockburn's idea is something like this: a purely physical description of an event might not clarify other important features of the event, such as that it was an event of Jones's voting for the motion. Since nonphysical vocabulary will be

needed to capture these features of the event, perhaps it is similarly legitimate to say that one (literally) sees the joy in another's face. Cockburn's suggestion makes it natural to enrich a classroom discussion of other minds by raising questions about the kinds of theoretical vocabulary it is legitimate to assume in a given context. Does the fact that folk psychology and the special sciences often produce well-confirmed nomological generalizations thereby legitimate their vocabulary, or must these generalizations be reducible to generalizations in the language of physics? What if such a reduction is not possible? Even if the vocabulary of folk psychology and the special sciences is legitimated, does that thereby legitimate such expressions as 'x sees the joy in y's face' as a primitive predicate of philosophical research? While it is not obvious that Cockburn has successfully cast doubt on whether the notion of seeing joy in another's face needs no further analysis in the philosophical study of the mind, such strong claims may encourage students to reflect on the nature of philosophy and of science.

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