**10.6.** ***E.O. MA. 01.***
***Elements of ontology: materialistic***. (1997-1998)

***Contemporary materialism***.-- 02.-- Scientism seems to be the only possible basis (axiomatics) for contemporary materialistic thinking. For natural science is postulated as unlimited - it knows no limits and includes all being. Without any valid proof. For how to prove that natural science is the only valid science or form of knowing - cognition? After all, this proof already presupposes a point of view that is ontological,--an ontology that has already been decided.

***1955+.*** Current materialism emerged in the late fifties.-- Rather than give a long theoretical exposition, we dwell on a rather lengthy interview with a notable materialist, Dan. Dennett. He is the representative of the (materialist) philosophy of mind, which relates brain functions -- interpreted in terms of information theory -- on the one hand and human consciousness on the other. That consciousness acts as our "I.

***The philosophy of common sense.***
For this philosophy, it seems obvious that the "I" is a rather autonomous reality that speaks of "my" body but does not identify with it without more. There is therefore at least in all indivisibility and clear distinction between I and body.

***A materialist view.***
For a materialist, this is different or at least a pressing problem, given his reductive philosophy (which seeks to reduce, reduce, the "I" as consciousness to matter). This is then called "the materialist explanation" of the self.

***Psychanalysis and cognitive science***. (03/08).
***The turnaround in the counter model***.
If for S. Freud the 'I' was an obviousness and the un(der)conscious psychic life a reality to be proved, for a cognitivist like Dennett the opposite is true: with the unconscious the informatically conceived cognition has no trouble, but the fact of consciousness - which is undeniable (even in animals) - is difficult to situate within cognitivism: how to reduce consciousness and the I with its strikingly own traits to material processes, even if these are of an informational nature?

To do this, one must strip the conscious self of its most essential and salient traits.

But then does one still explain the conscious self as it is experienced?

In other words: from the cow which - to simplify - is initially reduced by the physicist to a spherical being so that it becomes understandable (geometrically, mechanically made) and manufacturable, to Dennett's consciousness, which is reduced to an informatic mechanism (a machine that processes information) so that it is made understandable and manufacturable in a cognitivist materialist way, there is only a small step called simplification. One strips the object of investigation of all too bothersome features of knowledge, even if these are essential, in order to reduce it to something "explicable" that it is not, except a testimonial rest.

***Note.-- Cognitive psychology***. (04/07).

We provide an introductory overview of the psychology that until the 1960s interpreted soul life as robot (mechanicism), organism (organicism, biologism), person (personalism).

***As an aside***, one sees in those interpretations the ontologies that express themselves in them.

From the 1960s onward, behaviorism is filled with mental processes. What becomes cognition. Immediately the cognitive model arises. Think of the ophthalmologist Donders (1818/1889).

Immediately some cognitive sciences are briefly mentioned (communication theory, computer science, -- generative grammar). Note the Turing machine.

***The intentional posture / pose***. (08).

The mental - according to Dennett - is twofold.

**a.** ***Phenomenal sensations*** (pain, an image in my mind).

**b.** ***Intentional propositional postures (poses).***

Like, "I believe in God"; "that woman excites me".

Behold the 'stances' that are intentional and define mental processes. We translate and by attitude and by pose to raise the problem: how does Dennett distinguish the two from his materialist model?

***Massive and massive evolutionism***. (08/10).

To explain humans as an intentional system ("mind"), Dennett puts evolutionary theory at the center.

Clearly Dennett finds the desired higher viewpoint to make sense of biological, psychological, cosmological, -- ethical and religious realities. Darwin's "great leap forward" causes humanity to be divided into two types: those who can "keep up" and those who are "left behind. In which Dennett sees cause for dangerous conflict.

E.O. MA. 01.2.

He accuses integrisms and fundamentalisms as causing conflict for reasons of misunderstanding regarding Darwinism.

Which, of course, is highly debatable. But, in some circles, there is a prejudice that of all that respects foundations, only wants to see the disadvantages.

***Dennett commits a reasoning error***.

That Darwin and his theory of evolution of life forms sees truth is obvious. But to extend his biological concept of evolution logically to non-biological realities is to confuse total identity with partial identity (analogy).

***Philosophical theology.***

Dennett - with the disdain typical of the modern rationalist - speaks of belief in God as being about naiveté. His notion of the "universe" has no place there.

***Note.--*** This sounds familiar: "I don't believe in God because I believe in (biological) evolution". Without any evidence of the fact that there is inconsistency between God belief and evolutionary theory.

In passing, Dennett questions the hypothesis of, e.g., H. Reeves, that the evolution of the universe shows increasing complexity. Now that the evolutionist-materialist ontology has been outlined, Dennett can move on to the "explanation" - within that framework - of the conscious self. Or rather of "the intentional system".

***Explanation of consciousness*** (10/15).

He begins with the counter model, namely the Cartesian dualism "consciousness/body (machine)". His darwinian ontology leads him to dismiss this dualism as being of the same quality as the middle ages (*note:* rationalists usually see of the middle ages only what can be ridiculed) astrology or alchemy. Something that no Cartesian will accept.

***Dennett's model***.

Man is a robot. Purely material. System of electrochemical nature. But such that already the animals are such robots but different. - Animals and humans have an I, i.e. distinguish between inner and outer world.

***Talinity of the human self***.

Animals have consciousness but no language. They cannot tell histories (in other words, are not narratively gifted). As sweat, we, humans, float out words, narratives, etc. Drawn, man should be represented by a bubble with words in it. Otherwise he is like a bear without fur.

***The linguistic nature of the human*** self is even more so: mechanically-un(der)consciously speaking, language speaks within us. “It comes out, viz. speaking, automatically” without our knowing how our speaking comes about.

Which is a dose of Heathenianism (“Die Sprache spricht”), ("The language speaks"), and structuralism (“The structure determines the use of language”).-- The web of words spins us, - as characters.

***We are nothing but our bodies.***

That body is a narrative gravity center that - like a computer - processes data. Homo ordinator The dance continues: as fictional characters we might be “immortal” but not as immortal souls.

***Note.--*** What is striking, among other things, is that in that Q&A Dennett saves himself with metaphors and metonymies,-- with tropes. Which weakens his argument.

***Man as constructor of his values.*** (14/16).

The previous philosophical psychology is now finished in terms of axiology, a part of classical ontology.

***Reduction of Man***.

“We are just high-tech slugs.

**a.** ***Existence has a meaning (purpose)***

Yet not “pre-existing”. We ourselves - autonomously - construct the meaning of our existence. In itself, the universe - one continually establishes a foregone cosmology from which Dennett takes a higher view - possesses no meaning.

**b.** ***The existence of values***

This, to the exclusion of all that is not human, is the work of man. Nature or universe in itself is utterly amoral and knows no higher values. Violence, betrayal, murder, child murder,-- selfishness all that is in nature. Yet man creates “higher” values which constitute the opposite of the natural behaviors just mentioned.

**c.** ***The existence of a god is superfluous***.

And this is just like the existence of transcendent values or meaning of existence.-- On the contrary, the more we impose our values on ourselves the more we are in full democracy.

Here one sees how Dennett depends on Darwin and especially on Nietzsche. Curious: of the materialist Marx no mention. As materialists, only Nietzsche and Freud are mentioned. But Dennett is American!

Behold the sell-out of the great Western tradition concerning metaphysics!

E.O. MA. 01.4.

***The digital violence (John Searle)***. (17/20).

***A rejoinder.***

Dennett is one of the prominent figures of the digital craze.

We dwell on what J. Searle says on the subject.--First, we situate Searle himself: as a student of John Austin (Oxford), he situates himself in the philosophy of language which opposes the obscure language of a number of ontologists and the pseudo-scientific language of neo-positivists. Begin with the ordinary language of the common mind! That is appropriate.

Thus Austin establishes reality-fixing and reality-changing language. Something that Aristotle already noted. Searle constructs a philosophy of language action. Its basis: intentionality.

**1.** ***The digital violence***. (17/18).

Ai (artificial intelligence)-knowledgeable people often claim that the brain is a computer. Minsky, Dennett, Hofstadter e.g..

**2.** ***Searle's critique.*** (18/19)

**a.** ***All sorts of things*** can be referred to as computers (e.g., as gifted with binary behaviors 0/1).

**b.** ***The Chinese Room***.

If a human being only communicates with a device, then that device can give the impression of being 'intelligent' (because the human being reacts through it). One can program a computer so that it gives off astonishing responses that transcend our everyday knowledge and thus appear 'intelligent'. "Did the man eat the hamburger?" The ai fanatics argue that the device actually understands what it does,-just like a human.

***Searle.***

He hears information in Chinese which he does not understand. In order to react in Chinese, he has an "instruction" (a dictionary, as it were) that allows him to react correctly and thus give the impression that he understands Chinese. Well, he doesn't understand a word of Chinese! -- That is computer intelligence! Turning characters into characters. But understanding the computer does not.

***The confusion of intellectuals.*** (19/20).

According to Searle, the latest ordinators are still just glorified calculators. The human brain remains a mystery to a high degree. All ai supporters notwithstanding.

***Note --*** Searle believes that "brains cause consciousness" albeit with degrees (sleep, strong attention). He is a reductionist: he reduces consciousness to a property of "complex" bodies.

E.O. MA. 02.

***Contemporary materialism.*** (1950)

Those who wish to gain a deeper insight into the "mind/body" problem are referred to *S.E. Cuypers, Dusty Spirits (On Materialism),* in: Tijdschr. v. Phil. 56 (1994): 4 (Dec.), 693/716. Steller discusses the intelligibility (non-contradiction) of the total identification of mind with brain (brain and nerve system). He notes that such a thing only becomes comprehensible if one, as a materialist (eliminative (radical) or reductive (moderate), prioritizes natural science as the only source of insight (scientism).

Steller contrasts this monism (presupposing only one type of reality, the material one) with the (Cartesian or Cartesianizing) dualism that conceives of consciousness as an incorporeal "substance" (reality existing in itself),-- somewhere to be situated within a merely material brain (body) that is equally "substantial.

Current materialism hopes to prove its point in the future. Dualism struggles with the causal processes of consciousness within the body as a machine. He opts for neither materialism nor dualism but for a "descriptive metaphysics" that deepens the insights of "the common (and common) sense" (folk psychology).

According to Cuypers, a.c., 700, current materialism emerged at the end of the fifties: from Australia (D.M. Armstrong) it spread all over the world via the USA.

Armstrong: "The main problem to be solved - in an attempt to work out a scientific (*note:* natural scientific) world-vision - is that of the incorporation (*note:* understand: reduction, reduction) of the subject (*note:* the conscious I with its intentional life) of this world-vision into this world-vision itself.

By treating man (his mental processes included) as a mere physical object subject to precisely the same laws to which all other physical objects are subject, this objective is achieved. (...).

The knower differs from the world he knows only in so far as his physical organization has greater complexity. Man is one with nature". (*D. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind* (1968), London, 1993, 365f.,-- freely translated by Cuypers, a.c., 700).

Dennett illustrates such materialism.

E.O. MA. 03.

***"Homo ordinator" (the philosophizing" of Daniel C. Dennett).***

Explaining' human consciousness (meaning making it comprehensible from a cognitive computer science point of view) does not seem easy to one of the current American thinkers, D.C. Dennett, director of the Center for Cognitive Studies (Tufts University, Boston). Yet he is considered one of the leading lights of "philosophy of mind" in the USA: "philosophy of mind" studies brain functions, artificial intelligence and phenomena of consciousness.

***His works***: *Mind's I, Brainstorms, Elbow Room, Consciousness Explained* (Fr. transl.: *La conscianee expliquée*, Paris, 1993), *Darwin' s Dangerous Idea*, (New York, 1995).

For a situational perspective: *E. Oger/F. Buckens, ed., Thinking in all states* (*Nine profiles of contemporary American philosophers*), Kapellen / Kampen, 1992.

We rely on *J.-Fr. Duval, Daniel C. Dennett éclaire le casse-tête de la conscience humaine* (*Rencontre à Boston avec O.C. Dennett, l' un des spécialistes les plus éminents de la conscience humaine),* (Daniel C. Dennett sheds light on the puzzle of human consciousness (Meeting in Boston with O.C. Dennett, one of the most eminent specialists on human consciousness)), in: Construire (Geneva) 09. 04. 1997, 20 / 25. In a Q&A, Dennett comprehensively reveals the main traits of his 'ordinatorism'.

***Let us begin with his opinion of S. Freud's psychology.***

In what does the obsolescence of Freud 's "I" consist? Dennett's answer. - The problem with Freud is that with him there is a failed marriage between a theory of communication and a theory of energy.

**1.** On the one hand, one finds in his texts a multitude of dynamic metaphors: the Es, the censorship, the life and death drives. In short: boiling forms of pressure, tensions, pressure valves, steam engines, kettles that explode and vessels that leak. A series of very mechanical images. Thanks to Freud, it is possible today to speak of unconscious mental (*note:* the human inner self) activity.

**2.** But today the cognitive sciences have no difficulty in understanding the unconscious and attach much more importance to the opposite phenomenon: they have much more difficulty in explaining the conscious.

***Note*** **--** Indeed: cognitivism starts from something situated outside (human) consciousness: the machine! To "explain" consciousness from there, i.e. to make it comprehensible from the cognitivist axioms, seems something of a tour de force.

E.O. MA. 04.

***Note --*** *C. Sanders / H.F. de Wit / H. Looren de Jong, The cognitive revolution in psychology*, Kampen, 1989, 26, says: "What exactly is to be understood by "cognitive psychology" cannot be said in a few words. (...).

A raging proliferation of theoretical models and highly theory-dependent data". Proponents limit themselves in a first, the main body, to what they call "the mainstream" (distinguished from alternative streams). This main stream is characterized as concerned with: perception (e.g., recognizing a pattern), attention, memory (e.g., ways of internal coding and storage in memory), representations (types of them), language (psycholinguistics), problem solving (thinking, reasoning). Sometimes cognitive development, neurophysiology and computer simulation are added.

***Until the 1960s***

Until then, scientific psychology recognized mechanistic, organistic and personalistic ('humanistic') tendencies according to the fact that the human psyche (and at the same time the whole human being) was interpreted as:

**a.** a mechanically responsive robot (mechanicism),

**b**. an active biological organism (organicism),

**c.** a person acting with insight and responsibility (personalism).

The methods reflected the natural sciences (mechanicism), the life sciences (organicism), the humanities or humanities (personalism).

In the sixties, behaviorism predominated, thinking in a clearly mechanistic way. The scheme "stimulus (stimulus)/response (response)" to the most scientific (physicist) degree possible, dominated the description of behavior with minimization or even radical bracketing of inner life, including human consciousness.

Yet with a Tolman behaviorism (behavioral psychology) by abandoning the "stimulus/response" schema will pave the way for a cognitive psychology.

Man's cognitive life, in the sixties, was interpreted in terms of information processing. As a result, the so strongly eradicated "*mental*" life of man,--at least in some of its elements, was finally introduced into rigorous scientific psychology.

In this regard, what is "information"? Information is all that knowledge - cognition - provides. For example: when I am told that I have passed. Or when I see a landscape. This 'data' (datum, mv.: 'data') is processed by the human being - interpreted as robot, organism or person. Processed in very different ways, for that matter. That processing or cognitive process has suddenly, since 1960+, been central to the human sciences, including spiritual science.

***Note -- The term "model".***

The cognitivist(s) wants to 'explain' the knowing processes - the knowing life. In the style, preferably, of the natural scientist because of their 'exactness'. Well, this is where the shoe pinches.

**1.** "By explaining a natural phenomenon one used to mean - in the past (Beth meant especially antiquity and the Medieval Ages)-:

**a.** that phenomenon (A) **b.** reduce it to a known and familiar fact (B)." (*E.W. Beth, Natural Philosophy*, Gorinchem, 1948, 35). The explanatory model was usually derived from ordinary, general-human experience: for reasons of its obviousness and 'readiness', comprehensibility.

**2.** "An explanation in the sense of a reduction of the known and misunderstood (*note* -- now often called 'original') to the known and familiar, which current physical theories do not provide (...)" (O.c., 41).

This is because the language in which the natural phenomena to be explained in physics are spoken of is very abstract and, in particular, very mathematical and at once non-daily evident. The falling of the stone (A) is represented in a gravitational law formula (B) that does not tell us much in our day-to-day observations - cognition!

***'Model'*** can be defined - in general - as that which provides information about something unknown through, something known. Thus *K. Bertels / D. Nauta, Inleiding tot het modelconcept*, Bussum, 1969, 28.

What exactly is considered a model in professional psychology? *C. Sanders et al, The Cognitive Revolution*, 17, limit the term "model" to mechanical models. Why? Because they:

**a.** be as simple as possible (i.e., reduced to the necessary and sufficient elements, without redundancy (redundant elements)) and

**b.** as empirically-experimental as possible (i.e. amenable to preferably mechanical operations).

E.O. MA. 06.

***An example***.

O,c., 31, C, Sanders et al. say what follows. - The isolation of "mental processes" (understand: what goes on inside man) and the identification of the successive stages of processing "data" - typical of the cognitive method - was committed by F.C. Donders (1818/1889; Dutch ophthalmologist) as follows. The results, achieved by the then, physics, impressed Donders: he in turn wanted to represent inner, 'mental', processes physically, i.e. objectively measuring,

A Pp. posed before a task (*Note.* : situated), i.e., to complete a choice between two or more responses to stimuli, needs a response time, The same Pp. posed before the same task without the choice, needs a response time,-- Well, from the first response time was mathematically subtracted the second response time, by Donders.

In other words: from the longest duration he subtracted the shortest duration.-- In doing so he put first that the phases or stages from which both processes (with choice and without choice) emerge are identical but one.

***Note*** **-** One can see it clearly: the model with which Donders defines the mental process that triggers the stimuli consists of measurable (response) time durations.

Just as a physicist in a laboratory measures a travelled path in terms of seconds as a measurement model. With the difference that Donders measures inner acts, insofar as externalized in (measurable) behavior, and not mere physical processes.

Whether, on the basis of this, one learns much about what goes on in the pp., who is and remains a test subject, is another question. But one does know, something that is really a physical model, i.e. information.

***Note*** **-** We illustrate this last consideration with the help of a scholastic (medieval) distinction. The medieval moralists distinguished between "actus homininis", an act of a human being, as e.g. falling over a stone, and "actus humanus" human act, as e.g. the clown who in his performance willfully falls over a small stone. Measuring in seconds both "acts" in no way draws out the inner difference! The typically human of the clown does not come into its own.

In other words: physical, mechanical, models do provide (physical) information in response to mental acts but perhaps not about mental acts.

In other words, the measured durations are:

**a**. as simple as possible and

**b**. as empirically-experimentally (‘exactly’ say C. Sanders et al.) as possible, but where exactly is the inwardness that is supposed to portray itself in it?

When the personalistic psychologist says that in the first case man falls accidentally,-- unconsciously (unless immediately afterwards), and that in the second case man (clown) falls consciously “to make people laugh,” C. Sanders et al. call that not a “model” (understand: mechanical-physical model) but a “human image” or a “metaphor” (the information of which they do not deny but declare scientifically invalid.

***Decision.--*** The whole discussion hinges on the concept of a model.

***Cognitive sciences***.,-- Dennett mentions, in the Q&A, this term. What could it possibly denote? C. Sanders et al, o.c., 32vv, mention:

**1. *Communication theory*** (in which “the term ‘stimulus’ is replaced by the term ‘information’“),

**2. *Informatics*** (which is related to information theory: after all, the computer or ordinator processes “data” (symbols) and the human brain is translated into terms of computer operation);

**3. *Generative grammar*** (N. Chomsky (1928/...) in which it appears that, when man utters a sentence (“I am tired”), in fact, in the depths of his being, well-defined language structures are speaking, (so that the ‘I’ in that sentence becomes void, as it were, in favor of the grammatical structures). Which does not prevent that, with a finite number of structures (rules), the language faculty in the ‘I’ can ‘generate’ an, endless number of sentences.

Information processing linguistics designates humans, cognitively (and even completely), as Turing machines: the English mathematician Turing nl. designed a machine that could handle symbols (“manipulate” them): read them, process them, and write them again.

Which amounts to a beginning of computer. This computation is called “intelligent” behavior in cognitive circles. One understands: mental behavior, reduced to a finite number of elementary symbol operations such as encoding (converting into a sign system) comparing, storing (memory), retrieving and so on. Or: following an ‘input’ (supply of data) an ‘output’ (behaviour, reaction).

Behold “Dennett’s man”.

E.O. MA. 08.

***The 'intentional' attitude / pose.***

In *Content and Consciousness* (1969) and Brainstorms (1978) as well as in *The Intentional Stance*, Cambr. (Mass.), The MIT Press, 1987, Dennett expertly sets forth his philosophy of the 'mind' (whatever that may be). Cognitive psychology, ai (artificial intelligence) and neurophysiology are there 'mixed' with "folk psychology" and - what is called - "philosophical psychology" (which is content with non-scientific methods).

The mental decays, according to Dennett, into two main types: "phenomenal sensations" (think of pain, of a thought in my mind) and "intentional propositional attitudes/positions" (think of conviction (expressed in the proposition "I believe in God"; think of a desire, expressed in the phrase "That woman excites me").

'Stance' we translate both by attitude and by pose, because one wonders how Dennett from his mechanistic-materialistic perspective (which is no more than just one sample in reality), expressible in third-person psychology ("She says she believes in God" and not "I believe in God"), can distinguish between real faith and unreal faith e.g. (the latter being a mere pose and not a (life) attitude that is 'authentic' (in plain Flemish 'mean').

The behavior of the woman who says "I believe in God" can, -- says Dennett, be hinted at in terms of beliefs and desires (two remnants of ability psychology) and so -- he says -- that woman is an "intentional" system,-- understand: a system with mental life or "mind," spirit.

By the way: for example, monkeys, as higher mammals, are "intentional" systems of lower order than humans. Thus in his Intentional Systems in *Cognitive Ethology*.

So much for an abbreviated introduction to Dennett's theory.

***Evolutionism: massive in content and massive in scope***.

*In Evolution, Error and Intentionality* (eighth chapter in his *The Intentional stance*), Darwinian evolutionary theory is central to making the intentionalism problem solvable.

In the Q&A we are about to begin, Duval asks the question, "Why are Darwin's views 'dangerous'?"

Answer: 'Because they are as dangerous as a sudden and planetary change of the highway code insofar as the entire world population would not respect that code simultaneously.

***Note*** **--** Dennett is constantly reasoning analogically: the new highway code represents the Darwinian revolution! But an analogy is not yet proof,-- logically speaking.

***Dennett*** -- Today -- in most fields: biological, -- psychological, cosmological, -- ethical, religious -- many collisions (*note:* analogous to road collisions) occur that are unremarkable in the eyes of "the profane" (*note:* the enlightened mind that Dennett is, designates those who do not share or at least less massively and massively designate Darwinism as "profane" who are not, like him, "insiders").

This is for the simple reason that - on quite a few points our era refused to take the Darwinian revolution seriously and many leading figures in humanity are not on the same wavelength. In particular: part of the world's population continues to reason in "the old way". Such a thing can give rise to very dangerous conflicts. One example will suffice: the integrisms and the fundamentalisms.

***Note*** **-** Whether integrisms (wanting to preserve cultural heritage intact, with integrity) and fundamentalisms (holding on to time-honored foundations) are the pre-eminent example of conflict causation is a question that cannot be answered as simply as Dennett believes: are anarchists and postmodernists as little conflict-causing because they do not prioritize time-honored foundations?

***By the way:*** the argument of the rationalist enlighteners that integrisms and fundamentalisms constitute "the" danger, is beginning to wear thin because many people are realizing that modernization in all sorts of areas also constitutes a danger: what to think, for example, of this scientific progress that ends in the elimination of jobs, and increases the growing army of unemployed?

***But there is more***.-- Darwin held to evolution in the biological field. There's his authority argument in his field But what if one extends the biological concept of evolution to the ethical and the' religious terrain?' To the rest of the cultural terrain? Do cultural elements evolve in precisely the same way as life forms? Or is there merely an analogy that does not yet constitute strict evidence?

E.O.M.A.10.

***Duval***.-- Your latest book (*Darwin's Dangerous Idea*) begins banally with the title of a traditional American song "Tell me why the stars do shine".

*Dennett.* -- Laughter.-- Because this song, well known to all Americans, is the naive and mean-spirited (*note :* ubiquitous) expression of minimal belief in God. "What makes the stars give off light?". Understood answer:. "Because there is a God". In no way do I want to diminish cultural treasures such as, e.g., folk songs. But - unless one joins Baruch de Spinoza (1632/1777; pantheistic Cartesian) in conflating God with nature - it is clear that - since Darwin - one cannot be satisfied with such a naïve concept of the universe.

***Note*** **-** Dennett, in the pure style of rationalist modern enlightenment, looks down on the naivete of the godly people. "In the name of" a biological theory broadened into a culturological theory.

***Duval on this:*** some astronomers - Hubert Reeves e.g. believe that the evolution of the universe toward increasing complexity (*note:* intricacy, yes, even overcomplication) indicates that the universe could have a meaning.

***Dennett.--*** No! The complexity of the universe is both increasing and decreasing. There are places of greater or lesser complexity according to the components and periods of the universe.-- Yet nothing proves definitively that we are moving in the direction of increasing complexity.

***Note*** **-** who will be able to determine, with complete scientific certainty, how and in what sense our universe, so infinitely extended and showing itself to be more complicated from step to step, evolves? Isn't "science" still in the phase of mere hypotheses? Dennett's dogmatic tone is not consistent with that degree of scientificity.

***The explanation of consciousness.***

***Duval.*** -- In your latest - published in French - book you claim that consciousness can be "explained".

***Dennett.--*** Yes! because there is no reason to think that there is anything incorporeal (immaterial) in us such as a soul, an incorporeal spirit or whatever in that sense

**a.** ***The dualism of R. Descartes*** (1596/1650), i.e. that there is a material body on the one hand and a disembodied soul on the other, is today ("Since Darwin") an idea as outdated as that of astrology or the alchemy of the medieval ages. Such a position is hopeless.

**b. *Dennett's evolutionist "materialism".***

The real problem - Dennett keeps saying - is that we still think as if we had a soul. Because - like Descartes - we don't stop asking ourselves the question, "Who is this 'I' thinking in my head, anyway?"

***Note* -** Here Dennett misunderstands traditional ontology - he is far from alone in this - by pretending that the tradition conceives of the 'I' as a 'creature' somewhere within the organism! The nominalist tradition thinks this way regarding ontology. But that is only one and then a very questionable form of ontology which thinks of the I as 'substantialistic', i.e. as a separate substance or 'being(s)'.

***Dennett.--*** "When one proceeds in this way, one tends to believe that the 'I' is incorporeal."

***Note* -** Which is also a very questionable reasoning. Because there are other arguments for thinking the 'I' and thinking 'incorporeal'. To begin with, to think the notion of a 'model' (that which provides some information) differently, more broadly... than mechanistic-materialistic.

***Dennett.--*** The "I" is not incorporeal. Just as the hardware (*note:* the material elements of an ordinator) is not incorporeal.

***Man as Robot.***

Duval. Are we then just robots, i.e. combinations of electrochemical phenomena?

***Dennett.-***

**a.** Indeed. In this sense we are all robots. Genius robots perhaps but robots nonetheless.

**b.** Because there are different types of robots: the robot 'cat' or the robot 'dolphin' are very different from the robot 'human'. So does the robot 'snail' or the robot 'lobster'.

***Duval.--*** Now don't claim that the crawfish have an "I" like us!

***Dennett.--*** Yet they do! Necessity compels one to believe that they have one, however limited. Anyone can verify how a crayfish in a water receptacle does not confuse its own incisors with those of its peers: 'it is not going to cut into its own body with them! So in the crayfish there is a very subtle distinction between the outside world and the inside world. That distinction is as, subtle as in humans: when our own saliva is inside our mouth, it does not provoke any aversion; but when it is spat out into a glass with the intention of ingesting it again, one experiences a strong revulsion.

***Note -*** That our consciousness is an inner world is certain but it is equally certain that that inner world is radically with the (things of the) outer world! This differs substantially from the inner world of the crayfish if at least one takes a more and different than materialistic view of the notion of the 'model' with which one approaches the self.

***Man in a linguistic "garment.***

***Duval.*** -- So we would be crawfish but a little more evolved.

***Dennett.--*** Our brains are not very different from those of chimpanzees or dolphins. The main difference between us and the crawfish is that they cannot "tell histories." The only difference between the snail or spider and us humans is that our shell or web is made of words.

What happens to us, human beings, in fact, is that we dress not only with shirts, pants, ties, vests and hats but also with words, explanations, statements, promises, etc. Day in and day out we expel - like sweat - a whole linguistic material. Like the snail or the spider who sweats out her drool or weaves her web.

***Note.--*** Here, for the umpteenth time, one sees how Dennett uses the term "dress" analogously with the insinuation that it contains total identity.

***Dennett.--*** The reasons are of a very thoroughly biological nature, namely, our way of weaving around us a network of shields, securing our future, bringing about our plans.

***Note.--*** One sees how Dennett thinks of humans either as robots (mechanistic) or at most as organisms (organicistic). Not as a person (personalistic) unless reducible to robot or organism. Which betrays mechanistic and biologistic materialism.

***Duval.--*** To look at man without taking into account the words "with which he dresses" is to completely misunderstand that man in his true nature?

***Dennett.--Right***! Imagine that you discovered in an encyclopedia the drawing of a bear without fur: you would exclaim, "That doesn't work!"

Well, the same applies to all that is human: when drawing him, one should never forget to assign him - except for the clothes - a bubble above his head with words in it.

***The web of words is spinning us.***
The language speaks within us!

***Duval.--*** Does this mean that in your opinion speaking is as futile an act as for the snail to sweat out its calcium shell?

***Dennett.***--yes! It is equally pointless.

***Note.--*** 'Meaningless' here means "outside the conscious self, mechanically".

***Dennett.--*** Every one of us feels well that "a part of himself" knows it! The best proof is the fact that most of us have no clue about how they get to speak. This is how I, Dennett, am speaking to you at the moment: I (*note:* Dennett uses the word 'I' for himself after all,--because he is still proceeding as if he were an I) do not put down on paper "somewhere in my head" in advance what I am going to say to you! "It comes out by itself" (so they say) without knowing in advance how I am going to articulate my thinking.

***Note.--*** Structuralists and Heideggerians, each in his own way, claim something similar. "Die Sprache spricht" (Heidegger). Some have called this tendency "linguisticism.

***Dennett –*** In other words : one must turn things around! Instead of saying that we spin a web of words around us, it is more 'exact' to claim that it is that web of words that spins us - yes, us! And ... that that web reveals to us who we are.

***"I speak therefore I am".***

***Note -*** This is a variant of Descartes' phrase: "I think. So I am".

***Duval.*** - "I speak. So I am".

***Dennett.--*** Exactly, "loquor. Ego sum". (// Descartest "Cogito. Ergo sum") -- Yet beware: understand this well! We are less the subject of our language use - the one who says "I" - than the "persona" (*op.:* member doll, puppet) that constructs that language use. If you will: we are the product of the words that come out of our mouths: fictional characters.

***"What is called the 'I' is a pure fiction.***

***Duval.*** -- Finally, you claim that every human being is only a narrative (*op.:* story) center of gravity. We have no such thing as a Freudian "I" as has been believed until now.

***Dennett --*** Yes! What is called the "I" is a pure fiction. It is no such thing as a subsystem that one has inside. The term 'I' seems to me to be obsolete. Instead of saying that we have an 'I', we should rather say that our body - we are nothing unless our body - possesses something like a virtual (*note:* the virtual reality proper to equipment) center. It would be more accurate to call it the "narrative center of gravity."

This designation seems interesting to me because it clearly says that that center is not a "thing" but simply a way of organizing data - the data we collect. Just as the ordinator does. -- thus literally Dennett.

***Note --*** One sees Dennett's nominalism regarding 'ontology': the term 'thing' in the sense of a 'substance' amenable to its mechanical-material 'model', betrays it. Not surprisingly, the French speak of 'chosism' here.

***Animal consciousness.***

***Duval.*** -- Your next book talks about the degree of consciousness in animals. What can one already know about that?

***Dennett.*** -- In *Kinds of Minds* I compare the minds of different animals -- bats, harriers, etc. - Their types of consciousness differ considerably from ours. But one can know them by some elements to which we can respond. For example: Do they see only in white and black? Or in colors? What is the acuity of their senses? To which domain, does their preference go? Are they capable of manipulating their own mental states? Do they remember past events? Can they foresee future events? Etc.

**a.** We are only at the beginning of this type of observation.

**b.** But I am going to tell you that it is possible today to know as much about the existence of a bat as it is about being human.

***The information dance continues: immortality.***

***Duval.***--You claim that we are narrative centers of gravity: what prevents us from being immortal like the fictional characters?

***Dennett.--*** In theory: nothing. Thou knowest that the potassium atoms in our body are constantly being replaced by new potassium atoms. From where does the unity come? By the fact that the new atoms dance the same dance as the previous ones.

The dance goes on uninterruptedly. Well, that dance includes information: in it is the unity, the coherence.-- Matter does nothing but change: for a moment it takes a certain form; then it is replaced.

***Duval.--*** So it's on the dance that it comes! Not on the dancers!

***Dennett.--*** In this case: yes! A dance could be immortal because it is information and information can be piled up.

The only problem: the amount of information contained in a single human being is so enormous - it has recently been calculated to get an idea of the amount of information the teletransportation would contain - that the diskette on which that amount of information would be recorded would fill our entire galaxy.

***Man as constructor of his values.***

***Duval.--*** We are just high-tech slugs. Our ideals -- justice, love, fraternity -- are just very human fictions. What to do unless humble?

***Dennett.--*** Feeling happy! Since Darwin, then since Fr. Nietzsche (1844/1900; biologistic cultural critique) one has realized (*note:* who that is, we leave to Dennett) that the meaning of existence (*note:* destination) is not given to us from above (*note:* verticalism) but that it is the task of everyone individually, of us all, to construct that meaning of existence (*note:* horizontalism).

***In itself, the universe possesses no meaning.***

It is up to us - us alone - to create values that we will respect. It must be understood from now on that there is no "ethical imperative" (*note:* an allusion to I. Kant (1724/1804; top figure of the German Aufklärung who founded his rational morality on a moral "command"): neither in the universe nor in nature! Violence, betrayal, murder, infanticide, selfishness,--all that is in nature. Nature is utterly amoral!

***Note -*** With this, owing to his material, at most biological models, Dennett disavows any truly ontological establishment of values. Values that, independent of us, as valid in themselves and for reasons of themselves, regulate our behavior, do not exist.

***The democrat1c establishment of values.***

***Duval.--*** So a god is superfluous?

***Dennett --*** Yes! What need would we have for a God or for transcendent (*note :* pre-existent) values dictated to us by means of some table of commandments (*note.:* an allusion to the table of the ten commandments, given by Yahweh to Moses as the code of conduct of all that are gifted with spirit)?

E.O.M.A.16.

Are values, i.e. rules of conscience that we impose on ourselves, less legitimate because they are not of divine origin? Because they only come from us and depend on us? No! Our task is to create them. And this is all the better: it is more democratic.

***Note*** **-** The question arises on the basis of which material-biological models, i.e., subject-scientific valid information, does Dennet know with such massive and massive certainty that values have no objective pre-existing validity independent of us?

The authority argument which is based on Darwin's (extrapolated) opinion on evolution and on Nietzsche's reduction of traditional metaphysics, has "since Darwin and since Nietzsche" been both accepted, up to the point of fanaticism, and not accepted!

Dennett speaks of humanity as a collective within which, in terms of philosophy, no deviation from Darwin and Nietzsche is tolerated except as "naiveté and not keeping up"! Dennett's notion of "humanity" resembles a single collective robot folding under Darwin and Nietzsche!

***Note*** **-** Dennett as a methodologist and as an ideologue. -- "Only the robot and organism models exist". This axiom governs his thinking and his perception. It is divisible into two partial axioms.

**1. *Robot and organism models exist.***

Which is evident after the eruption of modern natural and life sciences. And valid. As a method.

**2. *Only robot and organism models exist*.**

The term "only" makes the materialist axiom an exclusive axiom. Invalid. For it judges God, the cosmos and man - the themes of modern metaphysics or ontology - only on the basis of models that are irrelevant!

Boundary Crossing. With such models one can only be silent about metaphysics and ontology: "Worüber man nicht reden kann, darüber soll man schweigen" (Worüber man nicht reden kann, darüber soll man schweigen). Otherwise one commits ideology.

These two types of materialism were already clearly distinguished by *Fr. Lange* (1828/1875; *Geschichte des Materialismus*), (History of Materialism).

One sees it: the notion of "model" is decisive.

E.O.M.A.17.

***Digital violence according to John Searle.***

J. Searle (1932/ ...), prof in philosophy of language at University of California, Berkeley (USA), came to lecture in Groningen and Rotterdam in the spring of 1994 on, "Does consciousness exist?" The attendance was very large, of course. Searle is a student of John Austin (1911/1960) at Oxford.

***Note.-- As an aside,*** Austin, averse to the sometimes inauthentic and deliberately obscure language of some metaphysicians, as well as to the often pseudo-scientific jargon of some neo-positivists, began, in any philosophical inquiry, by checking the ordinary language of the matter.

*A Plea for Excuses e.*g. illuminates through the everyday language of people, when they apologize, (the problem of) freedom and unfreedom. Not that he was attending to the opinions of common sense: he was dissecting the language of common sense.

***"How to Do Things with Words"*** shows that "I am on my walk" (constative language use) describes reality while "I promise" (performative language use) affects,-- changes reality.

*J. Searle* conceives of the philosophy of language from the point of view of communication. Thus - in his *Speech Acts* - he sees the sentence as the smallest act of language.

Austin's distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts of language influenced Searle. "If I learn that I am going to incur a punishment (illocutionary: the language act occurs including the result based on agreement), I am notified." "If I am actually going to be punished (perlocutionary act of language including the result based on causation), then I am alerted".

What matters now, after this digression, is that Searle bases his philosophy of language acts on a theory concerning intentionality: "I believe that God exists (intentionality). Therefore I claim that he exists (language act)". It is good to go through such rather simple introduction to better understand what follows.

***The "digital force".*** Connoisseurs on ai (artificial intelligence) often claim that the brain is a computer. Incredibly better and very different from the computers we know. But a computer nonetheless.

Representatives of this tendency are *Marvin Minsky* (The Society of Mind; Minsky (Harvard; M.I.T.), said in Geneva in September 1986 that his philosophy of mind is the result of his acquaintance with S. Freud (1856/1939; psychalysis of the un(der)conscious) and *J. Piaget* (1896/1980; *logic, science theory and child psychology*) on the one hand and on the other hand his dealings with computers), *Daniel Dennett (Brainstorms*), Douglas Hofstadter (Gödel, Escher, Bach).

E.O.M.A.18.

***Searle's critique.***

***Bibl. st.:*** *S. Rozendaal, "I think. So I exist"* (*John Searle , the lone knight of artificial intelligence*), in: *Nature and Technology* 62 (1994): 8, 634/637. We summarize the report.

***Searle.--*** "If they - the ai-knights - say that the brain is a digital computer, I wonder what they mean by the term 'computer'.-- Anything and everything can be a 'computer': a door is digital because 0 when it is closed, and 1 when it is open. Even a piece of chalk is sometimes called a 'computer': when it lies, it is 0 and when it does not lie,

Well then, what does the claim that "our brain is a computer" even suggest?".

***"The Chinese Room"***

We start from the Turing test, a thought experiment of Alan Turing, an English mathematician.-- One puts a device and a human in a room. One can only communicate remotely with the human and the device. The device, insofar as indistinguishable from the human, would rightly be called "intelligent. In the 1970s, the American Roger Schank designed a computer program that could handle the Turing test.

One presented the computer with the following stories.

**A.** ***A man goes to a restaurant and orders a hamburger.***

The served hamburger, however, is blackened: the man furiously storms out of the restaurant without paying or leaving a tip.

**B.** ***A man orders a hamburger in a restaurant.***

The served hamburger totally satisfies him: when he leaves the restaurant, he gives the serving girl a hefty tip.

There is a gap in both stories: whether the man actually ate the hamburger is not mentioned. The computer's intelligence is tested by asking the question, "Did the man eat the hamburger?"

Since Schank had imparted to his computer general knowledge regarding behaviors of people in restoration businesses, the computer was able to answer the question and similar questions correctly.

E.O.M.A.19.

**a.** The fanatical proponents of artificial intelligence claim that Schank's computer actually understood the stories.

**b**. Searle, however, disagreed. In 1980, he proposed the Chinese room. Searle sits in a locked room. He hears Schank's stories in Chinese.

He consults a number of collections of Chinese letters along with an "instruction" set in English that says which letters go with which letters. To these, Searle can give good answers without understanding a single word of the Chinese storytelling.

***Searle.*** - "What happens in that Chinese room is pretty much what a computer does: converts characters into other characters. But this does not imply that the person doing it is 'intelligent', i.e., 'understands what he is doing'. understands what he is doing".

According to Searle, the human brain is the only one of its kind. Consequently: what happens in it is not remotely similar to what happens in a computer.

***The confusion of intellectuals.***

In regard to human consciousness or spirit or 'inspiration' there is "undeniably much confusion" (a.c.,636)

**1.--** ***The improvement of computers.***

Initially, a computer was considered to be a glorified calculator (i.e. logical 'calculation'). Today, those who calculate in this way have the impression that the computer is "an intelligent being", because its operations are beyond the comprehension of us humans. People often attribute our type of intelligence to the computer.

***Searle.--*** It is still a glorified calculator that does increase its performance, but essentially "computing," logical arithmetic, is with characters (converted into characters).

**2.--** ***The human brain is still a mystery.***

We know a lot about machines. But we do not know, for example, exactly how memories are stored: where is the special place in the brain where our first encounter with someone is stored?

Minsky, Dennett, Hofstadter do not resist the temptation to reduce the unknown, the brain, to the known, the computers. They are therefore the antipodes of Searle.

E.O.M.A.20.

In between situates *Roger Penrose* with his bestseller *The Emperor's New Mind*,-- between Hofstacter and Searle.

Consciousness - according to Penrose - obeys natural laws, which have something to do with quantum mechanics.

***As an aside,*** at the beginning of this century, M. Planck (1858/1947; German physicist), Nobel Prize 1918, proposed 'quanta', small energy particles to make e.g. spectrum lines, photoelectric phenomena understandable.

Penrose thinks that we who have consciousness concerning natural laws "have not yet discovered" it.

***Note.--*** That is the stage of mere hypothesis, for what is an explanation by means of as yet undiscovered laws of nature? Not an explanation!

***Searle***. "***Brains cause minds", brains cause consciousness***"--.

Consciousness, according to Searle, is a cognition of a higher-order structure peculiar to our brains. - In it he discovers degrees.

**1.--** During sleep, human consciousness is "low.

***In passing:*** an insight that is centuries old!

**2.--** When man gives very strong attention - is 'lucid' - then consciousness is: 'high'.

***The Cartesian dualism 'solved'.***

Searle considers his discovery to be such an important finding that the contradiction prevalent since R. Descartes between "thought" (understand: the conscious-being within', "le sens intime") and "the body (as machine understand) is thereby resolved.

For Searle's theory is a unity theory. Mind (consciousness) is for him reduced to a property of complex bodies. At least that is how *Searle* 's speaking comes across. In his The *Rediscovery of the Mind,* he writes, "Consciousness is a property of the brain as fluidity is a property of water."

***Note.--*** This is an analogy reasoning: as water stands to fluidity (model) so brain stands to mind (original). What is this other than yet another 'reduction', reduction, of mind and consciousness to non-spirit and non-consciousness which are the presuppositions that determine his thinking in this regard. His axiomatics dominates his interpretation.

Behold, in any case, a (too) brief introduction to the one who for years has been fighting against "the robots" regarding consciousness.