# VI*—CONSCIOUS BELIEF

by D. H. Mellor

## I

How is it that I can unhesitatingly answer almost any 'yes or no' question I understand? My answer may be 'I don't know', but how do I know that? My answer when I think I do know may be wrong (or self-deceived: my actions may show that I do not really believe what I think I believe—see IV below), but still I always have an answer. My knowledge of my beliefs and doubts, although fallible, is vast, and immediately available to me as it is to no one else. Why is that?

The short answer is that when a question is put to me I become conscious of my belief, or doubt, on the matter. I take it that is true, so far as it goes. The experience of conscious belief or doubt is familiar enough, as is the fact that it is what enables us to answer questions, and generally to converse. But the question remains: how is it that I so readily become conscious of my own beliefs?

It is not just because my beliefs are mine that they come so readily to my consciousness. I am as little conscious as anyone, or less, of many of my bodily and mental states. My doctor may easily know more of my blood pressure and my colour blindness than I do, or than he knows of his own. I have no 'privileged access' to those states. Why should my beliefs be different?

It is no use building privileged access into the meaning of the word 'belief'. There is too much else to belief besides privileged access. I believe, for instance, that traffic here keeps left in two-way streets, and this belief continually preserves me without my having to be conscious of it. The word 'belief' could be reserved for when I am conscious of it, or for my disposition to become so when the question is put. But what would belief, so construed, have to do with the state of mind that actually guides my steps about the streets? It is my easy and accurate consciousness of that state which needs explaining: making 'belief' imply (accessibility to) consciousness would merely overstate the fact to be explained. So I

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* Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 5/7, Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1, on Monday 9th January 1978, at 7.30 p.m.

shall resist the implication. If beliefs must be capable of becoming conscious (which in fact I deny), that is something to be shown, not stipulated.

I therefore need another word for the new state of mind I come into when a belief of mine becomes a conscious one. Although the term is not ideal, I follow Price (1969, p. 189) and others in calling it 'assent'. (It must be kept in mind that all I shall mean here by 'assent' is the state of mind, not a public display of acquiescence.) There is conscious disbelief—dissent—too, of course, and the various degrees of conscious doubt. But for my present purposes assent can stand in for them too; where the differences matter I shall note them.

Hume took belief to be what I call 'assent', and he took it to be 'something *felt* by the mind' (1739, p. 629). I, like many others, think Hume was wrong on both counts. Assent is not like other feelings; and if it were, calling it one does nothing to explain how it relates to beliefs in their rôle as 'the governign principles of all our actions' (*loc. cit.*). Whatever assent is, I take it to be settled now that belief in general neither is assent nor is explainable in terms of it. The direction of explanation must be the other way. Assent is rather the conscious awareness of one's own belief; the concept of assent presupposes that of belief and is to be explained in terms of it, not *vice versa*.

## II

We need an account of belief, therefore, that does not appeal to the phenomenon of assent. Such an account is offered by the so-called dispositional theory of belief (*e.g.*, Braithwaite 1932–3). The theory's basic idea I take to be right, but the name is most inapt, and it will be important in what follows to see why. Opponents of the theory, which I shall call the 'action theory' of belief, do not deny that belief can be a disposition; only for them it is if anything a disposition, not to action, but to assent. The action theory indeed relates belief to action, but not as a disposition would relate to it. Take solubility as a stock example of a disposition. A soluble object is one that dissolves in water whatever its other properties. The only way to stop an object dissolving in water is to make it insoluble; which is precisely why solubility can be characterised as a disposition to dissolve.

Beliefs are not like that. Believing the pub is open will only take me there if I want a drink. Likewise, wanting a drink will only take

me to a pub that I believe to be open. If belief is a disposition to action, so is desire; and what each disposes to can only be stated in terms of the other. Neither can be characterised just in terms of the actions to which together they give rise. Neither on its own disposes me to act at all.

These facts of course are commonplace. I need them later (V) to distinguish some beliefs from related dispositions to assent. I must add, however, that they do not make me think that inferring a man's beliefs from his actions is an arbitrary process. No doubt a single action could display diverse beliefs, depending on the agent's wants. But alternative explanations of all his actions taken together are harder to find, especially as they must also take into account all that he has seen and heard, and the beliefs he must have acquired in that way. The debate is well worn (*e.g.*, Davidson 1974; Lewis 1974), and I shall not pursue it further. I assume merely that there are facts about what people believe, facts which we often come to know by observing how they act.

I take it, moreover, that while beliefs are not dispositions, they are like dispositions in being real states of people's minds, in the sense (Mellor 1974, pp. 157–8) that changes in them have real causes and effects. In particular, a change of belief—for example, in whether the pub is open—will, against a (temporarily) fixed background of other beliefs and desires, cause action which is thereby explained.

## III

So much for the action theory of belief. It is not my object here to expound or defend it, except by developing it to cover assent. Accounts of assent on action theory amount usually to no more than an opaque and apologetic requirement that propositions, to be believed, must at times be 'entertained' (Braithwaite, p. 30; Price, p. 251). Entertaining a proposition means, in part, identifying it; which, for those of us with a language is typically 'knowing [something of] what it would be like for an indicative sentence *S* to be true' (Price, p. 193). So much is easy to say; what it leaves out is the consciousness involved in assenting to a proposition. But assent is more than belief plus even conscious identification of the proposition believed. In assenting I am conscious not just of the proposition, but of believing it.

Even given belief, therefore, entertainment does not suffice to generate assent. In fact, assent does not need the entertainment of a

proposition; I maintain, indeed, that this form of disinterested hospitality never occurs. Price (p. 191) admits that it is 'a curious question whether there is such a thing as bare or pure entertaining; just "thinking of" a proposition without any further attitude at all, either cognitive or emotional or volitional'. Unlike Price, I find that whatever other attitudes may be absent, I cannot 'think of' a proposition without assent, dissent or conscious doubt. I may not care which attitude I have—my interest in the proposition may have nothing to do with its truth—but I cannot help having one or other of them. If I am right about this, it will be a blessing on at least two counts. First, the existence of propositions for us to entertain is far more doubtful than is the existence of beliefs for us to be conscious of. Secondly, this supposed state of entertaining, just because it is detached from any specific attitude—belief, intention, fear *etc.*—that might show up in action, is hard for an action theory to accommodate.

Fortunately, however, even if 'bare or pure entertaining' does occur, it need not be a constituent of assent. To be conscious of believing $p$, I need not be separately conscious of $p$. My action theory of conscious belief neither appeals to nor explains bare consciousness of propositions, and it is I reckon none the worse for that. I deny Armstrong's (1973, p. 22) claim 'that an account of having a belief before the mind, as a current content of consciousness, does not demand development of the theory of belief but rather of the quite general notion of consciousness'. On the contrary, an action theory of belief can directly account for assent and, by so doing, show just what one central kind of consciousness is.

## IV

My main thesis (T1) is that assenting to a proposition is believing one believes it. Some abbreviation will help to simplify parts of the ensuing discussion. Let '$B$' stand for belief, '$\beth$' for disbelief; and let '$Btap$' mean that at time $t$, $a$ believes $p$. Then '$BtaBt'bp$' means that at $t$, $a$ believes that at $t'$, $b$ believes $p$; and so on. In the case of assent, $t = t'$ and $a = b$. Where only one time, believer or proposition is involved and what it is does not matter, further abbreviation is in order: *e.g.*, to '$BaBbp$' or '$BtBt'p$'. The bare '$BB$' I use to signify any state of believing one believes.

An action theory of assent must of course go on to say what

actions *BB* explains that *B* does not. My second thesis (T2) is that linguistic action—speech and writing—needs *BB*. This does not mean that only linguistic action needs *BB*, nor that *BB* needs linguistic ability. The latter claim is especially contentious. It has indeed been held that all believers must be linguists and, of course, if that is so, so must all who have beliefs about beliefs. And even if dumb animals are granted some beliefs, they may well be denied others, perhaps including all beliefs about beliefs. Bennett (1976, §34) in fact persuades me otherwise, but the question can stay open here.

T1 needs something like T2 to give it content acceptable in an action theory of assent. Still, T1 can be recommended to some extent independently of almost any theory that does not actually try to define belief in terms of assent. Let us therefore see how T1 fares on its own.

There is *prima facie* such a thing as believing one believes something. I have beliefs about all sorts of other things; why not about my own beliefs? You can certainly believe that I believe some proposition $p$; and if you can, why can't I? Of course we need some reason to suppose that my believing I believe $p$ differs from my just believing $p$. Where I believe that someone else believes $p$, or that I believed $p$ yesterday, that there is a difference is obvious. *BaBbp* obviously differs from *Bbp* because it is a state of *a*'s mind rather than of *b*'s. Similarly *BtBt'p* differs from *Bt'p* because it is a state at time *t* rather than *t'*. It is not so clear that there is a difference between *BtaBtap* and *Btap*.

We recognise a difference nonetheless, as our concept of a state of self-deception shows. (I say 'state' advisedly: the activity, setting out to deceive oneself, is much more problematic. See, for example, Champlin (1977). All I mean by 'self-deception' is what the following exemplifies.) A husband, we suppose, can (subconsciously) believe his wife to be unfaithful, while (consciously) believing that he believes nothing of the sort. We see these two beliefs in different aspects of his behaviour. Typically we see the latter in his sincere rationalisations of those actions that to us reveal the former.

I need not labour details. People's actions do sometimes lead us to credit them with $Bp$, $Bqp$ and $qBp$; thus showing that then at least we distinguish *BB* from *B*. The distinction here must, moreover, be amenable to an action account, since it has only actions to

explain. In the nature of the case there is no consciousness to be accounted for: I cannot be conscious at the time of being self-deceived.

It seems to me that I could be deceived about, as well as in, any of my 'external' beliefs (that is, beliefs not about any of my own present states of mind). But whenever the possibility of self-deception is admitted, the states $BBp$ and $Bp$ must likewise be admitted to be distinct. Opportunities for displaying self-deception are, after all, also opportunities for displaying self-knowledge. If one (for example, linguistic) kind of action can manifest $Bqp$ and $qBp$ independently of action manifesting $Bp$, it can likewise independently manifest $BBp$ (and usually of course it does, self-deception being, as we observe, rather rare).

Self-deception may not be limited to external beliefs; but some limit on 'internal' self-deception is called for to forestall an endless regress of beliefs about beliefs, which are manifest neither in action nor to introspection. Suppose $p$ is an external proposition, say that it's raining. My plain $Bp$ makes me drive more carefully for fear of skidding. To my distinct $BBp$ I credit my saying 'It's raining' when I want someone else to learn from me about the weather (see VII below). But I see nothing else for a distinct $BBBp$ to make me do. I might say 'I believe it's raining', but $BBp$ is quite capable—given some more complex wants—of making me say that. I conjecture that we have in fact no more distinct states $BBBp$, $BBBBp$, *etc.*

(Similarly, incidentally, with beliefs about one's present desires and aversions. I can no doubt deceive myself about my present wants (W); that is, I can want something and yet deny sincerely that I do. But no action or introspectible state that I can see reveals a $BBWp$ distinct from $BWp$.)

With some such exceptions, we are undeniably willing to ascribe to people states of mind $BBp$ distinct from mere $Bp$. And if we have such states at all, they surely occur when we assent to propositions. A proposition $p$ is then in mind, consciously distinguished from other propositions—not as in 'pure entertaining', but as what distinguishes belief in $p$ from belief in $q$. Assent is the conscious belief in $p$ that is required for the sincere affirmation of $p$'s truth. In coming to assent to $p$ I have perceived (or in cases of self-deception, misperceived) my belief in $p$: if that does not involve believing one believes $p$, what does? Perception here, as elsewhere, may not be just acquiring or reinforcing beliefs about whatever is perceived, but it is surely at least that. Why, after all, is it pointless to ask me

if I believe $p$ after asking me the question '$p$?' ? Obviously because my first answer also automatically supplies the only answer I could sensibly give to the second question. A 'yes' answer expresses my assent to $p$ and thus that I believe $Bp$ (the answer may be insincere, but then so will that to '$Bp$?' be).

## V

Assenting then undoubtedly entails believing one believes. The converse is less obvious; indeed the self-deceived man seems to show it false. We have supposed him to believe some $p$ and also to believe that he does not do so; we take his combining $Bp$ and $B\neg p$ to be his self-deception. But our jealous husband is not self-deceived only when he has his wife in mind : he thinks he believes she is faithful, we would say, whether he has her in mind or not. If so, however, $B\neg Bp$ can occur without dissent from $p$. But then so presumably can $BBp$ occur without assent to $p$. Self-knowledge can hardly be restricted to periods of conscious belief if self-deception is not.

Self-knowledge (and self-deception) can certainly occur without assent; but they do not amount to belief as the action theory construes it. Self-knowledge (self-deception) is just a disposition to assent to (dissent from) what one believes, and belief according to the action theory is more than a disposition (see II above). This no doubt shows, in common parlance, that action theory is false of some beliefs, but all that shows here is that common parlance needs reform. Whatever we call them, we have three states of mind to account for : (i) plain belief that $p$; (ii) assent to $p$; (iii) the disposition to assent to $p$ that constitutes self-knowledge. Action theory can account for (i); and (ii) relates to the (typically linguistic) action it explains in the same complex, want-dependent way that (i) does (see VII below). (iii) does not : self-knowledge yields assent to what I believe, regardless of my wants. Given action theory accounts of belief and assent, self-knowledge and self-deception can be simply characterised as dispositions. That does not mean they are not real states of mind, whose changes have no causes or effects (see II above; Mellor 1974, pp. 157–8); it does give reason not to call these states 'belief', and nor I do. That makes my statement of T1 agreeably concise; but the substance of T1, in an action theory, will remain whether these mere dispositions are called 'beliefs' or not.

On my action theory construal of belief, then, self-knowledge and self-deception do not show *BBp* occurring without assent. What else could show it? Take the most explicit case of *BBp*. Suppose I am asked, for some external *p* (say that it's raining), not whether *p* but whether I believe *p*. It is made clear that the enquiry really is psychological: my questioner has no interest in the weather, which he knows about; what he wants to know is my belief. I am anxious to oblige, and so I report to him sincerely that I do believe *p*. My answer is prompted by my assent to *Bp* rather than to *p*. On my theory there is indeed no difference between these states, but that assumes what I am here trying to show. On any theory, however, my answer at least expresses my belief that I believe *p*, whatever else it does. Now can I be in this state, of assenting to *Bp* and thus at least believing *Bp* (given that I am not here self-deceived), and yet not be assenting to *p* itself? Given that I have a language, I should have to be able to say sincerely that I believe *p* and yet unable, without more mental research, sincerely to assert that *p*. That is incredible; it is surely not possible to have a conscious belief about whether one believes some proposition without at the same time having the corresponding conscious belief in that proposition itself. And similarly for consciousness of *BBp*, *BBBp*, *etc.*—if these indeed exist as distinct states of mind; which I deny, largely for this reason.

Where *p* is not involved in consciousness, I see no grounds on action theory to ascribe more than the belief that *p* (or lacking that, a disposition to believe *p*) and a disposition to assent to *p*. I have no proof, but I can think of no case that calls for *BBp* without assent to *p*; and so conjecture that *BBp* occurs just when assent to *p* occurs. Seeing no other difference between these states, I venture to explain their coincidence as a consequence of their identity. Hence T1: assenting is believing one believes.

## VI

It may well be objected that this theory leaves out the consciousness it purports to explain. If belief is not conscious unless believed in and assent is a belief, then presumably assent is not conscious unless believed in. But I have suggested that consciousness of assent, *BBBp*, is nothing different from assent itself, which is in turn only a sort of belief that, like all beliefs, is to be explained in terms of actions. Hence, it may be objected, assent comes out

unconscious after all, whereas consciousness was precisely what distinguished assent from plain belief in the first place.

This objection rests partly on a false belief, and partly on two *non sequiturs*. The belief is that the consciousness involved in assent is some kind of feeling or sensation, as the consciousness of pain is. If that were so, an account of assent would indeed have to refer to consciousness, because kinds of consciousness is just what kinds of feelings and sensations are. That this belief is false I shall assume without much argument. The elusiveness of supposed feelings of assent is sufficiently notorious, especially in connection with the idea that its strength measures how strong our conscious beliefs are. 'When we realise that $2+2=4$, we do not sweat with any feeling of supreme intensity' (Kneale 1949, p. 15). Belief, conscious or not, indeed comes by degrees, but not by degrees of feeling. It comes by degrees of subjective probability, of which the action theory—of action under uncertainty—is well developed (Ramsey 1926; Savage 1954; Jeffrey 1965) and certainly has no rival based on feelings. Now the idea of *feeling* assent is surely that assent feels different from dissent and from conscious doubt. But these differences are just what subjective probability explains; and the idea that what these states have in common, namely consciousness, is a feeling has only to be distinguished to be denied.

The *non sequiturs* are

(i) that one has to be conscious of assent if assent is to be consciousness of belief, and

(ii) that to explain consciousness in other terms is to deny it.

(i) I have indeed conjectured that we are never independently conscious of our present assent (since $BBBp$ is no different from $BBp$), although we can of course consciously recollect past assenting ($BBtBBt'p$, where $t>t'$). But whether consciousness of assent occurs or not (whether $BBBp$ ever differs from $BBp$) is a relatively minor question, settled neither way by the thesis T1.

(ii) The main claim is that assent, as consciousness of plain belief, just is believing one believes. If my account of belief, and thus of believing one believes, appealed to this sort of consciousness it would be viciously circular. That it does not do so is a virtue, not a defect. I do not deny a sort of consciousness when I set out to say in other terms just what it is.

## VII

So much for T1. What of T2, that linguistic action needs *BB* rather than just *B*? The case for T2 is very simple; all it needs is a couple of Gricean truisms about language (Grice 1957). Whether a theory of linguistic meaning can be founded on such truisms is another matter; fortunately I need not take sides on that. My first truism is that speakers of a language must be able to communicate. My second is that, in communicating, people mean to induce in their hearers beliefs about what they themselves believe. In particular, when I tell you sincerely that it's raining, I mean at least to convince you that I believe it's raining even if I fail to convince you that it really is. So when *a* tries sincerely to tell *b* that *p*, he means at least to give *b* a correct belief about *a*'s belief that *p*. What makes *b*'s belief correct, of course, is *a*'s having the belief *b* believes he has; so in this case *b*'s having the correct belief is *Bap* & *BbBap*. Thus when *a* believes he has done what he meant to do, he believes that at least he has brought about this state of correct belief in *b*; that is, *Ba(Bap* & *BbBap)*. Now even if *Ba(p&q)* does not always follow from *Bap* and *Baq*, the converse inferences are safe enough; hence, in particular, we have here *BaBap*.

As *a* speaks, of course, he is not yet in the state *Ba(Bap* & *BbBap)*; but that is only because he does not yet know whether his words will have their intended effect on *b*. He does know what he is trying to communicate, that is, what belief of his *b* will have to acquire belief in for the communication to succeed. So, even to try and tell someone sincerely that *p*, I must believe that I believe *p*; the plain *Bp* is not enough.

So communication needs *BB*. That it needs assent I have taken to be a familiar fact, which T1 thus explains and—by the principle of inference to the best explanation (Mellor 1976, pp. 233–4)—is confirmed by. Assent, moreover, is not merely needed for communication; it relates to it just as beliefs relate to the actions they explain. Assenting to *p* is not just a disposition to assert that *p*. My assent to *p* will not make me say anything unless I want to; and it will not make me say that *p* if I want to mislead my hearers. These facts too about assent the action theory and T1 explain, and to that extent they are again confirmed.

## VIII

Our theory of assent allows for lying, therefore, since on it people can if they want say things from which they dissent. Assent on this account thus passes one of Bernard Williams' (1970, p. 145) central tests for being a kind of belief (as opposed to his 'B-states', of a machine that can only 'say' what it 'believes'—'B-states' are mere dispositions to assert). Sincerity and insincerity, however, turn out on this theory to be more complex than is usually supposed. Sincere assertion is not just saying what one believes, as the possibility of self-deception shows. When I am self-deceived, I am disposed to dissent from propositions I in fact believe. If I assert them, I indeed say what I believe, but I cannot, since I dissent from them, be doing so sincerely. Sincere assertion is saying what one assents to, that is what one believes one believes, not just what one believes.

That this is indeed the right conception of sincerity may perhaps be better shown by its capacity to cope with the case of Moore's paradox that self-deception presents. What is wrong with saying '*p* but I don't believe *p*' is not that such a statement cannot be true —obviously it can. Nor is it in this case that the speaker cannot believe it. If our subconsciously jealous husband could bring himself to say 'my wife is unfaithful but I don't believe she is', he would believe everything he said. Still, as Moore (1942, p. 543) puts it, it would be 'a perfectly absurd thing' for him to say. Why? Obviously because he cannot say 'My wife is unfaithful' sincerely, even though he believes she is. He cannot say it sincerely, because he does not assent to it; he does not believe he believes she is unfaithful.

## IX

I return at last to the questions I started with. How do I know so much about my own beliefs? Why, that is, do people's beliefs almost always go with dispositions to assent, and their disbeliefs with dispositions to dissent?

My answers of course will be causal, not conceptual. Belief, on an action theory, guarantees neither consciousness nor self-knowledge. Belief is not self-intimating, as pain is. My beliefs are not always being perceived by me and, when they are, they may be

misperceived. What we want then is an account of the causal mechanism by which my beliefs are revealed to me when I assent to propositions.

When I perceive other people's beliefs (and wants), part at least of the mechanism is that of my outer senses. I see people act, and explain their actions by their beliefs and wants. Often I see the explanation in the action : I see you run for cover in the rain, and in so doing I see where you believe the nearest cover is. But whether I see your beliefs directly, or by inference from what I see you do, I must at least use my eyes. If I see nothing of you, I shall in particular not see what you believe.

Not so with assent. I perceive my own beliefs without using my outer senses. But some perceptual mechanism there must be. Assent does not occur by magic, nor is it an accident that it generally reveals what I believe. So we must have an 'inner sense' (Armstrong 1968, ch. 15), which I take the liberty of calling 'insight'. And just as neurophysiology must account for the workings of the eye and ear, so it must account for the workings of insight.

Many objections have been made to the idea of an inner sense. I accept most of Armstrong's (1968, ch. 15, §II) rejoinders; in what follows, I merely sketch the main parallels with the outer senses. One may object, for example, that insight is not a sense because it delivers no sensations. But the main point of the senses is to deliver perceptions, and insight certainly does that. Anyway insight often does deliver sensations. Feelings of conviction, or other sensations or emotions, often accompany assent even if they do not constitute it. In particular it is no accident that they do so when we see (or hear, or taste or touch) things. Our eyes typically deliver assent, not just belief, along with visual sensations. Insight is part of the normal working of the outer senses too, and involved in producing their sensations.*

Insight is like the outer senses in other ways. Consider how we can direct our senses. I can generally decide what to look at (or listen to, or taste or touch). Similarly I can generally decide what beliefs to be conscious of, that is, what to think about. Of course, there are limits to my decisions in each case. Since what I see is outside me, my surroundings may impede my vision, and it may take

* (For a case in which, as a result of brain damage, eyesight delivers true belief in – capacity to point to – the position of visual stimuli without either assent or visual sensation, see Weiskrantz *et al.* 1974.)

physical effort to get and keep something in view. The objects of my insight being internal, so are the obstacles to my thought. Thus while a stone on my foot may in itself prevent me moving to see someone, it takes the pain in my foot to prevent me thinking of him. In such a case it may take as much mental effort to get and keep that person in mind as it takes physical effort to move the stone.

So I can decide what to think about, just as I can decide what to look at, subject to the different limitations set by the different objects of insight and eyesight. But equally I can no more decide what I think than I can decide what I see. Just as I can decide to look at the table but not what colour I then see, so I can decide to think of the weather but not whether I think it's raining (*cf.* Williams 1970, pp. 148–51). The whole point of insight, as of the outer senses, is to deliver beliefs about its objects, not to leave them for us to decide.

We can of course decide to avoid situations where our senses are apt to deceive us; and this is also true of insight. Just as I decide to try and avoid a badly lit staircase for fear of unconsciously miscounting the steps and tripping, so I decide to try not to think, while jealous, of my jealousy's object. I know that if I do, I am likely to deceive myself—to think things I do not really believe, for example about someone's actions or motives.

Again, I may cultivate or neglect my insight just as I may cultivate or neglect my other senses. And people differ widely in insight, as they do in these other ways. Just as my eyesight is sharper the more objects I can discriminate visually, so my insight is sharper the more beliefs I can discriminate. The sharper my insight, the more precise my perceptions of my own (and other people's) beliefs can be. Dumb animals no doubt have only very imprecise perceptions of their own beliefs; although, like Bennett (1976, §36), I incline to credit them with some. Anyway, even the most adept of linguists has less than perfect insight (just as he has less than perfect eyesight), since no one is conscious of all the logical consequences that distinguish propositions from each other. But insight, like eyesight, can be developed, by learning to discriminate propositions previously confounded. No doubt the resources of our language limit most of us: these resources show what insight I may attain, while my use of language shows what insight I have attained.

Test it as you will, insight proves itself a sense, differing from the others only in consequence of its different objects, as they differ among themselves. It has gone unnoticed only because it is internal. Its mechanism is in the brain. Whether it is in some definite part of the brain is a moot point, but a trifling one. There may be some definite part of the brain responsible for these aspects of self-consciousness, and specifically for our linguistic abilities. If so, the perceptual link between that part and where the plain beliefs are embodied may be as readily picked out as is the optic nerve. But it need not be so; and the existence of insight will not be impugned if it turns out otherwise.

The existence of insight provides the broad answers to my questions (the details are for science to supply). Its mechanism is the mechanism of my privileged access to my own beliefs. I can know so much about my own beliefs because I happen to have an internal sense that informs me of them; it links my consciousness, and no one else's, directly with these states of my mind. The sense is fallible, more or less well developed in different people; and it is of course supplemented by the outer senses. So it can happen that others perceive beliefs of mine which I do not perceive; even without self-deception, you may think of my believing it's raining while I quite unselfconsciously put on my coat. But generally, concerning my beliefs, I know most and I know best; I think, thanks to insight.

## NOTE AND REFERENCES

An earlier version of this paper was prepared during my tenure in 1975 of a Visiting Research Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Australian National University, and has been discussed there and at the Universities of Melbourne, Adelaide, Queensland, Cambridge, Wales and Leeds. I have been much helped in extensively revising it by comments made on these occasions and also by Casimir Lewy, Richard Braithwaite, Thomas Baldwin, Albert Weale, James Cargile, David Armstrong, Jonathan Bennett, John Dupré and Bernard Williams.

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