Съзнанието
The Consciousness

СЪЗНАНИЕТО КАТО ЕКСПЛАНАНС

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Резюме. В статията отбелязвам накратко двата основни проблема пред лингвистичния реализъм при употребата на думата „съзнание" и се насочвам към анализ на смислената употреба на тази дума в традицията на Лудвиг Витгенщайн и Гилбърт Райл. Приемам, на базата на всекидневната езикова практика, че „съзнание" е чадърен термин, обхващащ изрази, които описват поведение или нагласи за поведение и се използват не толкова с когнитивни, колкото с комуникативни цели. Посочвам два вида абдукция като източници на въпросните изрази – класическа и семантична абдукция. На базата на абдукцията правя препратка към философия на науката и отново чрез позоваване на всекидневната езикова практика твърдя, че съзнанието не е експланандум (както допуска философията на съзнанието), а експлананс на поведението. Завършвам с аргументация на твърдението, че допускането на преднаучен термин като „съзнание" в ролята на експланандум конституира сериозни проблеми за философията на съзнанието.

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I adopt a form of linguistic anti-realism to mind due to the epistemological and linguistic problems, related to the assumption that the word „mind" refers to an entity, process, property, or relation. These problems can be resumed in the following way: 1) the realism seems to reduce consciousness to an intangible ontological object and thus forces us to affirm unverifiable sentences; 2) due to the reification of the assumed referent of „mind", realism seems to assume, contrary to linguistic practice, that „mind" and related word usages (such as „thinking", „anger", „love", „belief", etc.), refer to something other than behavior. I seek to find a less problematic way to render „mind" in philosophical context.

Thus, in the tradition of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle, I take „mind" as a term that unifies a specific set of linguistic expressions belonging to everyday language. Therefore, I am going to use „mind" and „mental vocabulary" as synonyms. Examples for such expressions are „Peter is angry", „Peter thinks about philosophy of mind", „Peter imagines the building of the university", „Peter loves Mary", etc. We could, of course, supply an endless amount of examples for the usage of mental vocabulary. However, in order to be specific about what

exactly is mental vocabulary, I have to specify what all these usages have in common.

First, based on linguistic usage, all these expressions have communicative rather than cognitive function. This would mean that we employ these terms in order to modify the behavior of our interlocutors rather than understand the mechanism that underlies this behavior. From this it follows that mind stands for non-specialized (and, consequently, superficial) description of behavior. For instance, when I say „John is angry" in a particular situation, I could analyze this sentence to several meaningful assertions, such as „John is about to hit someone", „John is about to have an outburst", „John is about to swear", etc. Thus, the predictive function of mental vocabulary is impaired by its semantic polyvalence and this also testifies for the limited cognitive function of such vocabulary. This cognitive function is also restricted by other factors, such as the absence of unequivocal criterion for ascribing predicates that belong to the mental vocabulary. All this can be summed up by claiming that in comparison with contemporary scientific criteria mind represents irreversibly pre-scientific type of discourse that possesses predominantly communicative value which is common to all instances of mental vocabulary.

Second, all expressions belonging to mentalist vocabulary *seem* to originate from two types of abduction. The first type is classical (or epistemological): one assumes unobservable states, entities, properties, and processes in order to explain observable behavior. For instance, John's anger is assumed as a non-public, non-observable state of John, which explains his behavior (the latter might be shouting cursewords, breaking furniture, etc.). The second type is semantic: since, from grammatical point of view, the components of mental vocabulary correspond to nouns and verbs, speakers have the tendency to assume that just like the noun "table" corresponds to the object before me, in the same way the noun "anger" corresponds to an entity, property, relation, process, or state that belong to a non-public, non-observable reality. Then, while the first common trait to all instances of mental vocabulary – their communicative function – bears witness to the pre-scientific character of this vocabulary, their second shared trait – their abductive character – bears witness to the similarity between mentalist vocabulary and scientific language (as the latter often has abductive character as well).

Therefore, at least to a certain degree, I am justified to analyze mind along the lines of two classical terms from the field of philosophy of science: explanandum and explanans (that is, accordingly, the sum of sentences which describe a phenomenon that we want to explain, and the sum of sentences that we use for an explanation of the phenomenon of question, *as well as for prediction of its parameters in a future point of time*). From the examples of usage of mentalist vocabulary, which we acquire from everyday speech and which I have already presented, it is clear, that mind plays the part of an explanans. We *are* interested in what predicate from the mentalist vocabulary Peter would ascribe to John

in order for us be able to predict, explain and possibly react to John's future behavior. We *are not* interested in the specifics of the abductive entities that have been assumed in the ascription of this predicate since these specifics (if there are any) are irrelevant to the pragmatics of mentalist vocabulary. Succinctly put, in ordinary language mind functions as an explanans and not as an explanandum, and it does it well enough as to serve speakers' goals. The explanandum, or what mind as an explanans explains, is usually human behavior (but there are of course other types of behavior that are also being explained by means of mentalist vocabulary – animal behavior, for instance).

Now, it is of interest that modern philosophy of mind, as far as it claims its subject matter to be mind, takes mind to be an explanandum. A paradigm case of such claim is Thomas Nagel's article from 1974 *What is like to be a bat?*, taken to be an adequate formulation of the so called "hard problem of consciousness". What is mind, what is its structure, what are its functions, how does it produce mental states and experiences, what is their contents, etc., are only part of the questions that philosophy of mind asks nowadays. It is then obvious that philosophy of mind takes interest in the specifics of the very abductive entities assumed for communicative, explanatory, and predictive means, and implicated by the usage of ordinary everyday language.

I claim that such interest constitutes a methodological problem for the philosophy of mind. My argument is that these abductive entities are not only hypothetical to an inappropriate extent, but that they are not entities, processes, states, properties or relations at all; that is, their ontological interpretation based on everyday usage of mental vocabulary is erroneous. Mind as an explanans, as it functions on communicative level during our everyday interactions with others, is nothing more than a set of concise descriptions of sentences which, in their turn, describe behavior or behavioral attitudes. For instance, the word „anger" is a concise description of the conjunction of sentences like „Peter is banging on the table", „Peter is about to start shouting", etc., and is used as their substitute in a particular communicative situation. Therefore, the classical, or epistemological abduction in relation to mental vocabulary becomes obsolete, because the assumed explanations of observable behavior do not have ontological character (and the standard case with abduction involves such ontological character; for instance, the abductive assumption in physics that subatomic particles exist). Instead, these explanations are simply shorter, and, consequently, more convenient linguistic expressions that render coordination of behavior on social level easier, faster, and more economical.

Excluding this type of abduction does not hinder the explanation of the origin of essentialist or naïve realist notions that affirm the ontological character of the assumed referents „behind" the word „mind". Such explanation is still possible on the basis of semantic abduction which, by analogy with other expressions in ordinary language, implies that the economic descriptions of behavior, i.e., the

constituents of mentalist vocabulary, refer to actual extra-linguistic entities. Semantic abduction is critical for clarifying the tendency for reification of assumed referents of mentalist vocabulary, and, ultimately, for explaining the type of naïve realism which plagues both modern and traditional philosophy of mind. This type of abduction needs special treatment within philosophy of language since the problems that follow from it go far beyond naïve realism in philosophy of mind. Such problems also characterize other philosophical, and sometimes even scientific disciplines. In all cases of such problems, however, semantic abduction has the same result: spontaneous and misconceived ascription of ontological status to assumed referents of linguistic usages and expressions based only on their grammatical form (for instance, nouns such as „spirit", „mind", „consciousness", „life", „heat", etc. imply entities, verbs like „thinking", „imagining", „evolving", etc. imply processes, and so on).

If my argument is valid, philosophy of mind becomes problematic in terms of its identity as a discipline. On the one hand, its problems seem now to be relocated in the field of philosophy of language since the main problem of mind turns out to be the problem of the connection between sentences that contain short descriptions of sentences that describe behavior and the very sentences that describe behavior. It is perhaps less misleading to say that according to this perspective philosophy of mind becomes a genre of philosophy of language – a genre that is engaged in investigating the manner in which we employ a specific vocabulary, namely – the mentalist one.

On the other hand, the explanatory and predictive character of mentalist vocabulary in ordinary language would imply that the specifics and, more importantly, the effectiveness of mind as an explanans is a matter that best fits in the interests of philosophy of science. In the context of philosophy of science, a question of considerable interest seems to be: „To what extent does this explanans work successfully in comparison with the explanatory options, offered by disciplines such as behavioral science and neuroscience?". The answer to this question would require, in first place, implementation of clear standards for explanatory and predictive success in relation to behavior as an explanandum. These standards would play the part of requirements to the explanans of behavior and, therefore, would allow for systematic comparison between different types of explanations. Such comparison is already taking place within the discipline that is now called philosophy of mind – for instance the discussion about the explanatory strength and the semantic plausibility of folk psychology, brought forth by the representatives of eliminative materialism. However, the problem is that this comparison is currently undertaken by the representatives of naïve linguistic realism without a clear understanding of the explanatory character of mentalist vocabulary, which predetermines a huge gap in their premises and makes the consensus on an adequate explanans of behavior hard to achieve.

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MIND AS AN EXPLANANS

Abstract. In this paper I sketch out the two fundamental problems before naïve linguistic realism in regards to the usage of the word „mind“ and then I turn to an analysis on the meaningful usage of that word along the lines of the tradition embodied in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle. On the basis of everyday linguistic practice I take „mind“ to be an „umbrella“ term referring to expressions that describe behavior or behavioral attitudes. I claim that these expressions have communicative rather than cognitive value. I distinguish between two kinds of abduction from which these expressions originate – classical (or epistemological) and semantic abduction. I use abduction as a characteristic that describes the origin of „mental“ vocabulary in order to refer to philosophy of science as a discipline that bears relevance to „mind“ in terms of its explanatory specifics. Then I claim that „mind“ is not explanandum (as philosophy of mind seems to render it) but rather an explanans, the real explanandum being behavior. I conclude with an argumentation on the thesis that assuming a proto-theoretical term like „mind“ to be an explanandum constitutes serious problems before the philosophy of mind.

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