



McGill
University

Foundations & Philosophy of Science Unit

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Dear Dr Lewontin

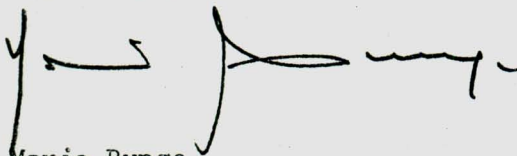
I read with great interest your review of the Bressanone meeting. I was struck by the thesis of "the symmetry of mind and brain as two aspects of the same reality". It would seem that you subscribe to this thesis, for a few lines later you state that "the members of the Bressanone group are undoubtedly right that mind and brain are aspects of the same reality".

This is of course the thesis of the so-called neutral monism, possibly the most obscure of all the philosophies of mind. (Not even Russell, who espoused it in his Analysis of Mind, of 1921, succeeded in explaining neutral monism.) No matter how dialectical it may appear (or perhaps because it lends itself to dialectics), neutral monism is anything but materialist. To a genuine materialist mind is not parallel to brain but a collection of brain functions. He is a reductionist ~~in~~ asserting that mental processes are brain functions; he is not one when he adds that these functions are not cellular but are peculiar to rather large systems of neurons.

read or

All the dialectic ~~a~~ materialist philosophers whom I have ^{read or} heard in recent years seem to be either neutral monists (the double aspect thesis) or dualists (the brain is "the basis" of the mind). I suspect this is because they place dialectics higher than materialism.

Sincerely yours



Mario Bunge

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