

## 10.1 Thinking Machines (b) (p. 250)

### *The Ghost in the Machine*

THE DOCTRINE THAT WE'RE irreducibly dual, a combination of mental and physical, has found its way into religion, and maybe into everyday common-sense thought. But it doesn't sit well with most contemporary philosophers and has been given a picturesque derogatory name, "the ghost in the machine."<sup>1</sup>

Here are a couple of problems that have been raised for dualism, the ghostly view:

- Dualism often assumes that mental events cause physical events (e.g., when your mental decision to walk out of the room causes your bodily movement). And that physical events cause mental events (e.g., when light-stimulation in your eyeball causes the mental experience of seeing something). But how can physical events causally interact with mental ones?
- Dualism often assumes that the only mental events you ever experience are your own. All you can ever be aware of in other people is their physical behaviour. Even a brain surgeon can't be aware of anything except the physical in other people. So if dualism is true, then you have no reason whatever to think that there's any mentality anywhere in the universe except inside you. (Remember the zombies: they act just like you do, but have no mentality. Why suppose that you're surrounded by people, not by zombies?)

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert Ryle introduced this in his 1949 book, *The Concept of Mind*.