



## A Remembrance of an Event

*Foreword to "The Two Factor Theory of the Mind–Brain Relation"  
by Ullin T. Place*

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The birth of the New Physicalism in Adelaide, South Australia in 1954 was a painful one with many false starts and near miscarriages. Changing the metaphor, I was the devil's advocate and Jack Smart was providing Ullin with moral support. Ullin was prodigious, Yorkshire stubborn and honest. In the morning I would be criticizing his overnight version. At noon, there would be another version and my criticism. At day's end, there would be still another version *and* my criticism. The next morning . . . . The final product was his and we agreed to differ. I never troubled to publish my side because that seemed too anti-climactic. I would have if Ullin had remained in Adelaide.

There were, of course, progenitors. Ryle had an influence but his anathema for science kept him from the depths. I remember frequent expressions of disdain for his relative Martin Ryle, the great Cambridge astrophysicist – 'stargazer' and 'looks at stars'. The greater influence, however was Ullin's Oxford teacher, the brilliant philosopher-psychologist, B. A. Farrell. Farrell wrote the article "Experience" (1950) that is one of the greatest philosophical articles of the 20th century. It has been used by many and mentioned by few. He put forward a clear and full Physicalism following hints from J. B. Watson and E. G. Boring that the notion of behaviour could usefully, if cautiously, be extended to brain activity. He used the "transparency argument" against the notion of qualities of raw feels that Ullin later developed in his article.

Farrell raised and carefully discussed the questions "What is it like to be a bat?" and "What is it like to be a Martian?" as challenges for his own Physicalist views.

This was the fertile background for Ullin – of a minority of Oxford philosophers, such as Farrell and William Kneale, who, against the timid majority, were unafraid to be ontologically serious and rigorous.

In 1957, on a sabbatical to Oxford, Jack Smart was vigorously airing Ullin's Physicalism and an Oxford philosopher was heard to murmur to another, "A touch of the sun perhaps?"