

Mind-Body Identity Theory

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and

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Central Question

- **Is Consciousness a special type of Behaviour?**
- **Behaviourists' thesis**
- **Disposition to behave in a certain way and to exhibit the mental**
- **Mental events are private/ internal to the individual**

D. M. Armstrong

- **Central-State – Identity Theory**
- **Mind/ inner principle causally responsible for causing behaviour**
- **Man is nothing but a physical mechanism**
- **Mental states are nothing but the physical states of central nervous system.**

The Central State Theory

- **Phyisco-Chemical Mechanism**
- **Attributive Theory of the Mind**
- **“This is to identify these inner states with physical chemical states of the brain. This is a contingent and scientific identification, and it yields Central – state Materialism.” (1968 : 91)**

Contingent identification

- **The inner states are physico-chemical states of the brain**
- **It is a contingent and scientific identification**

Is mind an epiphenomenon?

- **Observable facts**
- **Certain physical stimuli **elicit** certain behaviour**
- **Stimulus – Response Theory**

Central state Materialism

- “[It]holds that, when we are aware of mental states, what we are aware of are mere physical states of the brain. But we are not certainly aware of mental states as brain states.” (1968 : 78)
- *Unconscious mental states correspond to the neurophysiological structure of the brain*

U. T. Place's hypothesis

- **“Consciousness is a brain process”**
 - *The British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XLVII, 1956.
 - “Thirty Years on - ‘Is consciousness still a Brain Process?’” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.66, 1988

Place's main concern

- **The question I wish to raise is whether in making this assumption we are inevitably committed to a dualist position in which sensations and mental images from a separate category of processes over and above the physical and physiological processes with which they are known to be correlated. (1956)**

Nature of the Hypothesis

- **“Consciousness is a process in the brain in my view, is neither self contradictory nor self-evident; it is a reasonable scientific hypothesis, in the way, ‘lightening is a motion of electric charges’ is a reasonable scientific hypothesis.” (1956: 43-44)**

Main Arguments

- **Mind-Brain identity is not a logical identity but an empirical theory based on scientific evidences**
- **Brain processes cannot be dismissed on logical grounds.**
- **Inner process does not entail dualism.**

The 'is' of Definition and 'is' of composition

- 1. statements about sensations and mental images are reducible to or analyzable into statements about brain processes
 - **No reductionism**

About Definition

- 2. the identity between statement of consciousness and the statement of brain processes is manifestly false.
 - **What is it failed to achieve?**

Nature of 'is'

- *X is p and nothing else*
- Predication
- *P is q*
- Composition

Analysis - 1

- **Necessary statement**
- *Square is a equilateral rectangle*
- **Contingent statement**
- *Her table is a old packing case*

Semantic Analysis 2

- **Meaning of the terms used**
- “There is a relationship between the meaning of the expression forming the **grammatical predicate** and meaning of the term forming the **grammatical subject**, such that whenever the subject term is applicable the predicate must also be applicable” (1956)

Conclusion

- Meanings of the expression must not be logically unconnected

If they are logically independent

- **Ontological Independence**
- “... if we lived in a world in which all tables without exception were packing cases, the concept of ‘table’ and ‘packing cases’ in our language would not have their present logically independent status.” (1956)

Observation

- **Logical or Ontological dependence**
- **“A cloud is large semi-transparent mass with fleecy texture suspended in the atmosphere whose shape is subject to continual and kaleidoscopic change.”**

Observation of what?

- **Being cloud** & **being what it is constituted of**
- **Mass of tiny particles**
- **Water droplets**
- **Continuous motion**

Observed relationship

- **Invariable association**
- **Observation of microstructure**
- **Cloud** means **a mass of tiny particles of in suspension.**

Two sets of observations

- **Case of Composition**
- Lightning **is** like motion of electric charges
- Lightning **determines** the occurrence of electric charges

- *Movement of the tide* **and** *movement of the moon*

Causal correlation

- **Moon and Tide**
- **There is no direct causal connection is found**
- **Technical scientific observation**
- **Set of connection**
- **Immediate explanation**

Physiological Explanation

- **How does observation/ introspective observation occur in the brain?**
- **Chain of events**
- **Steps in sequence**
- **Basically, how an after image is being projected.**

Sherrington on Nature of Events

- Sir Chales Sherrington (1947) *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Physico-Chemical Events
- Psychological Events

Logical Mistake

- “... is the mistake of supposing that when a subject describes his experience, when he describes how things look, sounds, taste or feel to him, he is describing the literal properties of the objects and events on a particular sort of internal cinema or television screen usually referred to the modern psychological literature as the **phenomenological field.**” (1956)

After image

- After image of anything green does not refer to any green object in the brain
- The subject only provides a description of the object
- Brain processes are not the sort of things to which colour concepts can be applied.

Description

- **Primarily, being conscious of the after image.**
- **Secondarily, inferential description**
- **We infer real properties**

- **Learn to recognize real properties**
- **Learn to describe**

Description

- We describe our conscious experiences not in terms of mythological ‘phenomenal properties’ which are supposed to inhere in the mythological ‘object’ in the mythological ‘phenomenal field’, but reference to actual physical properties of the concrete physical objects, events and processes...” (1956)

Introspective Observation

- There is nothing called introspective subject
- **Conscious experience consists of physico-chemical events (brain processes)**
- **The brain process is causing the subject to describe...**

Nature of Ability

- Individual ability/ capacity
- Language use
- Cognition

- “This ordinary description protocols proceeds by a qualificatory phases like ‘it appears’, ‘seems’, looks,’ ‘feels,’ etc. (1956)

Contemporary Issues in **Philosophy of Mind & Cognition**