

Phil 317: [handout #1]
Kim: *Philosophy of Mind*
Chapter 1

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I. Minds as Souls: Mental Substances

[substance dualism]: The view that each of us is a composite being made of two distinct substances, an immaterial mind and a material body. (e.g. Plato, Descartes)

*** Critique of substance dualism:**

- ___ 1. There is no evidence that anything like souls exist; as a matter of fact, scientific evidence rules out this possibility.
- ___ 2. This theory fails to explain the interaction between the material substance and the immaterial substance: How could a thing with no mass, no force, existing outside physical space, possibly cause anything to move?
- ___ 3. The hypothesis of an immaterial substance in humans violates the principle of evolution.

II. Mental Properties, Events and Processes

'property': a characteristic of the object

___ mental properties: characteristics specified in mental terms (believe, desire, feel, think, etc.)

___ physical properties: characteristics specified in physical terms (mass, length, weight, force, etc.)

'state': an occurrence in the object that has a less sharp temporal confinement (could be a disposition)

'event': an occurrence (usually a change of state) in the object that has a sharp temporal confinement (at time t)

'process': a causally connected series of events and states

[property dualism]: The view that mental properties are *not* identical to physical properties in the sense that there are no systematic correlations between the two sets of properties to facilitate the reduction from the mental properties to the physical properties.

III. The Mind-body Problem

- Q1: How is the mind related to the brain? (Is it identical to the brain? Is it physically connected to the brain?)
- Q2: If someone is looking into my brain, can he tell what I am thinking or feeling at the time?
- Q3: Can physics alone be used to give a full description of our mental life?
- Q4: Does the mind have some intrinsic, irreducible qualities that make it distinct from the brain, or is the mind simply the collective activities of the brain?
- Q5: Can psychology be reduced to, or replaced by, neurobiology?
[For example, is psychotherapy or Prozac the best remedy for depression patients?]
- Q6: How did mind emerge in the history of evolution? Do you think it is the sheer complexity of the brain structure, or a mere accident, that brought intelligence into human lives?

IV. Supervenience, Dependence, and Minimal Physicalism

- [Supervenience]** The mental supervenes on the physical in that any two things exactly alike in all physical properties cannot differ in respect of mental properties. (Physical indiscernibility entails psychological indiscernibility).
- Note:** The physical does not supervene on the mental in that creatures could be psychologically alike and yet physically different, e.g. dogs and cats, mammals and reptiles, humans and Martians, etc.
- [Dependence]** What mental properties an object has depends on, and is determined by, what physical properties it has. (The psychological character of a thing is wholly determined by its physical character.)
see p. 11
- [Minimal Physicalism]** The claim that every property of a thing is either a physical property or is determined by its physical properties and that there is nothing in the world that is not a physical thing.
- (i) Anti-Cartesian: there are no mental substances.**
 - (ii) The mental supervenes on the physical.**
 - (iii) The mental nature of a thing is dependent on, and determined by, the physical nature of this thing.**
- Note:** Later we will see the distinction between **reductive physicalism** and **nonreductive physicalism**.

IV. The Concept of Mentality

The mental includes the following mental phenomena:

- ___ 1. qualitative states -- sensations, emotions: pain, visual/audio perceptions, etc.
- ___ 2. intentional states -- propositional attitude: beliefs, thoughts, hopes, intending, etc.
- (___ 3. dispositions: personality, habit, dispositional beliefs, etc.)

* [Note] Important terms:

'qualitative feel' or 'qualia': the way things look or appear to us; the way we feel

'propositional attitude': having an "attitude" toward a "proposition" (one that is expressible by a content clause)

'content': the mental content of our propositional attitude, usually formulate by the that-clause following a propositional attitude term such as believe or think.

'intentional' or 'intentionality': having an object or content of one's mental state; being *about* something (e.g. feeling sick is not intentional, while thinking about someone is)

'folk psychology': the psychology of propositional attitude; the psychological theorizing that deals with people's beliefs and desires (Note: it is called 'folk' because it is what the common folk believe that psychology should do.)

VI. The Criterion of 'Mentality': How do you judge when some property of yours or something that occurs in you is *mental* ?

1. epistemological criteria:

- ___ An event is mental if the agent has direct and immediate knowledge of it.
- ___ An event is mental if the agent has a private (first-person) knowledge of it.
- ___ An event is mental if the agent has infallible knowledge of it.

2. the criterion of nonspatiality:

- ___ An event is mental if the possession of it does not imply that the agent that has it must be a spatial thing.

3. the criterion of intentionality:

- ___ An event is mental if it is intentional.

Final puzzle:

— Which criterion can we use to judge both qualitative states and intentional states to be *mental* ?