

H&M, *Beyond Death*



The mind/body problem

- Are we wholly physical beings (*reductive physicalism*) or do we have irreducible mental and physical aspects (*dualism*)?
- If the latter, are we composed of two *substances*, one mental and one physical (*substance dualism*), or are we a single physical substance with irreducible mental *properties* (*property dualism*)?

Key concepts:

- *Substance* = an individual continuant unity of parts, properties, and powers that has a degree of independent existence (e.g., Fido)
- *Property* = a universal, immutable entity that can be *in* or *had by* multiple substances (e.g., caninity, redness, etc.)
- *State* (or ‘state of affairs’) = the existing of a substance, its having a property, or its standing in a relation (e.g., Fido’s lying on the mat)
- *Event* = a change in the existence, properties, or relations of a substance. (e.g., Fido’s jumping off the mat)

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The main options regarding the mind/body problem

- Reductive physicalism: Humans are wholly physical entities: purely physical substances with purely physical properties, capable of changing only in purely physical ways.
 - “No material thing presupposes or has reference to consciousness for it to exist or to be characterized.” (43–44)
 - E.g., pain just is the firing of C-fibers.
- Dualism: Some mental entities (sensations, propositional attitudes, intentions, volitions, conscious states) are *not reducible* to physical entities (events, states, processes, etc.).

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The main options regarding the mind/body problem (cont.)

- Dualism: Some mental entities (sensations, propositional attitudes, intentions, volitions, conscious states) are *not reducible* to physical entities (events, states, processes, etc.).
- Non-reductive physicalism (property dualism): We are physical substances which give rise to irreducibly *mental* states, events, or processes.
 - Mental states, etc. *supervene* upon (are wholly explained by) physical states, etc.
- Substance dualism: Humans are composed of purely physical substance (a physical body or a brain) and a purely mental substance (a mind, self, or soul).
 - Both the mind and the brain can *interact* with each other.

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Against reductive physicalism

- *Indiscernibility of identicals*: If $X = Y$, then X and Y have *exactly the same* objective properties.
- We use this principle to construct arguments as follows:
 1. Some mental entities (states, events, processes) have property P.
 2. No physical entities (states, events, processes) have property P.
 3. P is an objective property.
 4. Therefore, some mental entities are not identical to (and thus not reducible to) physical entities.
- Many substitutions for P have been proposed:
 - Nonspatiality
 - Immediately knowable
 - Privileged private accessibility
 - Incorrigibly knowable
 - Consciousness / subjectively experientible
 - Intentionality
 - Essentially first-personal

Vs. reductive physicalism



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- Dualists only need *one* such argument to succeed in order to refute reductive physicalism.
- Reductive physicalists have to challenge one or more of the premises in each case.

Vs. non-reductive physicalism



Against nonreductive physicalism (aka property dualism)

- The basic argument:
 1. Non-reductive physicalism (NRP) entails epiphenomenalism.
 2. Epiphenomenalism is false.
 3. Therefore, NRP is false.
- Argument for (1):
 - If NRP is true, then all mental entities are *wholly explained* by the physical entities they supervene upon.
 - If a mental entity is wholly explained by a physical entity, then no irreducibly mental entity is part of its explanation.
 - If a mental entity is wholly explained by a physical entity, then it is no part of the explanation for any other entity.
 - Hence, while there are mental entities, there is no irreducible mental-to-mental or mental-to-physical explanation. *That's epiphenomenalism.*

Vs. non-reductive physicalism



Against nonreductive physicalism (aka property dualism)

- The basic argument:
 1. Non-reductive physicalism (NRP) entails epiphenomenalism.
 2. Epiphenomenalism is false.
 3. Therefore, NRP is false.
- Argument for (2):
 - Epiphenomenalism rules out mental causation. Consequently,
 - It rules out free will.
 - It rules out personal agency.
 - It rules out moral responsibility.
 - It rules out rational inferential belief formation. (And thus it rules out the possibility of rationally coming to believe epiphenomenalism in the first place.)