Undergraduate Review

Volume 2 | Issue 1 Article 6

1988

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In an attempt to account for the nature and operations of our mental states and processes, at least two basic schools of thought have emerged. The account that has been historically entrenched into our patterns of thought is formally known as dualism. While this method of explanation is a comfortable one for us to accept for several reasons, it also happens that it encounters fundamental philosophical difficulties which I presently hold to be insoluble.

Dualism may seem like an attractive theory to us for three reasons, according to Paul Churchland in his book, *Matter and Conciousness*, puubished in 1984 by MIT Press. The first of these, which was alluded to earlier, is the argument from religion. According to Churchland, ". . . if one is to be consistent, to consider disbelieving dualism is to consider disbelieving one's religious heritage" (p. 13). Most religious views posit the existence of a non-physical soul which is the basis of our personhood (if you will). Secondly, there are those who will argue from introspection, and point out that what we perceive when we think is not electrochemical activity, but rather sensations. Our thoughts, then, seem to us to bear little similarity to neurophysiological states, and hence, the argument goes, our mental activity must somehow involve a non-physical type of stuff. Finally, the dualists will call into play the argument from irreducibility. That is, they say, there seems to us to be cases in which our particular mental states could not be adequately explained by a purely physical account. Upon reflection, it is easily seen that our thoughts and emotions contain a unique phenomenological character which (it seems) could not possibly be captured by a purely formal signal. For these reasons, dualism may seem like a plausible approach to explain such things; however, a careful investigation will reveal that this is not really the case.

The first branch of dualism to be examined is substance dualism. On this view, says Churchland, "each mind is a distinct non-physical thing, an individual package of non-physical substance . . . whose identity is separate from any physical body to which it may be temporarily attached" (p. 7). It is this non-physical stuff, the substance dualist claims, that constitutes the essence of our mental activity. However, the substance dualist will also want to maintain that this non-physical substance is somehow causally related in the determination of our observable behavior. At this point, problems arise for the substance dualist. Specifically, he must overcome the long-standing dilemma in philosophy known as the mind-body problem. Put more clearly, the question may be asked: How is it possible that a non-physical substance could exert a causal influence over a physical one? Our current conception of causation is entirely mechanistic, and the substance dualist must somehow provide an explanation of just how this brand of

causation might take place. Unless such a clarification can be brought to light, substance dualism will remain impaired in that respect. In addition to this, Churchland notes an additional problem with this view, which can be summarized as follows: If our unique mental capacities were truly separate and distinct from the physical processes of the brain, one would expect that the deterioration of or damage to the physical brain would be essentially inert with respect to the maintenance and consistency of our unique mental states. And yet science has proven this not to be the case. That is, there are numerous cases in which the input of certain substances into the body will produce certain kinds of mental phenomenon in the recipient which otherwise would not have been obtained. Thus, this non-physical substance must be susceptible to alteration by physical agents. Therefore, the substance dualist's claim that this non-physical substance is separate and distinct from the brain proper is inherently suspect (p. 20).

In an attempt to avoid these problems, the property dualists have advanced a slightly different claim. According to this variation, "... while there is no substance here to be dealt with beyond the physical brain, the brain has a special set of properties possessed by no other type of physical object" (p. 10). The brain, then, has these non-physical problems of believing that so-and-so, of being in pain, and furthermore these properties do not lend themselves to reduction into purely physical processes according to the property dualists (Ibid.).

On the surface, property dualism seems to avoid the problems encountered by substance dualism, for some property dualists maintain that "... while mental phenomena are caused to occur by the various activities of the brain, they do not have any causal effects in turn." By denying that mental phenomena have any causal effect on behavior, the property dualist avoids having to explain the nature of the causal link between non-physical events and physical ones. He thus seemingly circumvents this problem that the substance dualist encountered. Notice, though, that the property dualist is positing the existence of an entirely physical brain that has certain non-physical content which cannot be explained by appeal to physical processes. This does not seem to make sense. If the brain is entirely physical, one would expect that all events occurring within could, at least in principle, be explained using a method entirely mechanistic in kind. But the property dualist says that this is not so. The property dualist's position is therefore internally inconsistent.

In addition to all of this, virtually all forms of dualism will at the outset be forced to overcome the implications of a philosophical principle known formally as Ockham's razor. The principle can be

stated briefly: Do not posit entities beyond necessity. Put differently, if a given phenomenon "X" can be explained equally well by two competing theories, and one entails the existence of a greater number of entities, we should be inclined to accept the theory that supposes a fewer number of entities. The other prevailing view on the nature of mental activity is materialism, and it posits only one entity. Therefore, if we are to accept Ockham's principle, and if the explanatory capacity of both dualism and materialism is presumed to be equal, then we automatically have reason to prefer the latter theory to the former.

In short, it can be seen that if some form of dualism is to be rationally maintained, the aforementioned problems must somehow be resolved. The substance dualist's position commits him to a new notion of causation—one with which we are not presently familiar, and furthermore one for which no empirical evidence can be cited (not even in principle). It is therefore difficult to see just how such a position might gather any convincing evidence that allows us to draw conclusions about its truth or falsity. Generally, when we speak of having evidence in favor of (or against) a certain claim, we speak implicitly about situations and states of affairs which, if apprehended by another rational person, would count as evidence for him (or her) as well. At present, the dualist account does not square very well with our ideas about the evidential relations between certain events. In addition, given the progress that has been made in the neurosciences, would it be more reasonable for us to conclude that eventually they will lead to an entirely mechanical explanation of the nature of mental activity, or to conclude that we must posit non-physical substance in order to do so? In other words, what reasons do we have for thinking that in the long run, a non-physical substance will be necessary to adequately account for our unique characteristics as humans? As modern science continues to progress, these reasons will continue to be eliminated.

Of course, to show dualism to be incorrect, it does not thereby follow necessarily that materialism is correct. However, Ockham's principle suggests that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the simpler theory should prevail. Thus far, no such evidence in favor of the dualist view has yet presented itself.