



Mind and Body

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *There are some undeniable acts which point to the close relation between mind and body. There are many facts of everyday occurrence which prove that mind and body are closely related. A blow on the head is followed by temporary loss of consciousness. One's general physical condition influences one's mental outlook. On the other hand, prolonged mental worries and anxieties wear down one's physical health.*

The facts of anatomy also point to this relation. A disease of the brain affects of mental life. Various forms of mental life are now known to be localized in different portions of brain. It has been observed that if a particular part of the brain of eliminated by operation, the mental experiences connected with that part becomes eliminated or interfered with. Moreover, comparative anatomy has established that mind grows in capacity as the nervous system becomes more and more complex from the lower to the higher forms of life.

These observation unmistakable points to some form of an intimate relation between mind and the body. But what is the nature of this relation? Several theories have been advanced to describe the nature of this relation, viz., Interactionism, Occasionalism, Pre-established harmony, Parallelism, Epiphenomenalism, Emergent evolution etc.

1. Interactionism

Mind or spirit, being the highest value reached by the process of evolution so far, is different from the body it inhabits. It is, therefore, imperative to examine the relation between mind and body. That there is a very close and intimate connection between the two is obvious. It is common experience that mind influences body and body acts upon mind at every moment of our life. When drunk, one sees two lamp posts instead of one; if there is indigestion you gave nightmare. Hence states of body influence mind. Again if I am angry my face becomes stiff; a pain in the mind produces paleness' of the face. Hence mind affects body. When one is doing mental work the amount of blood-pressure in brain increases. A disease of the brain affects our mental life.

Descartes advocated, in a crude form, *the theory of interaction* between mind and body. Mind and body are two separate and independent substances created by God. Descartes maintained that these two substances interact and there is a *casual relation* between the two. The spiritual substance of mind has definite location in the pineal gland of the brain at which point. Descartes supposed, it exerts influence upon the body and is affected by the brain process. According to interactionism, therefore, bodily or nervous processes are at times supposed to cause mental experience and at other times are caused by them.

That mind and body do interact seems to be a fact of common observation. And yet such interaction is *inconceivable*. If two substances are entirely different and heterogeneous; as supposed by Descartes, how can the one act upon the other casually? Casual connection presuppose qualitative likeness between cause and effect. A nervous process can cause another similar nervous process but not a mental one. You cannot crest an immaterial wish by a stone. Again how can the immaterial, non-spatial soul have a location in the pineal gland? Moreover, such utter dualism *violates the law of conservation of energy*. It is a general conclusion of

science that the total amount of energy in the physical universe remains constant; it can neither increase nor decrease. There may be transformation of one kind of energy into another, as heat is changed into light, but in such transformation, on energy is lost or gained. Now if a brain-process is transformed into a mental one, certain amount of physical energy ends in mental activity and so it apparently vanishes form the physical order. Thus physical energy goes on decreasing. Again if a mental energy can cause a physical movement e.g., movement of hand, some amount of physical energy will be *added* to the physical order, as corresponding to this physical event there was no transformation of physical energy.

The immediate successors of Descartes sought to solve the difficulty of Interaction by the theory of *occasionalism*. According to it mind and body *do not* interact but the action of the one is the *occasion* of divine interference to effect the corresponding change in the other. *I will* to raise my arm; *God* raises it! On the occasion of a sensory stimulation of a nerve God intervenes and produces the corresponding sensation within the mind. Such explanation is by veritable *Deus ex Machina*. This constant intervention of God is no explanation. It is simply concealing the difficulty. Closely related to occasionalism is Leibniz's solution of the problem by the theory of *pre-established harmony*. It holds that God pre-adjusted body and mind in such a manner at the time of creation that they always correspond to each other. Like two perfectly adjusted watches they keep time though there is *no* connection between them. But this is really no improvement upon occasionalism. Leibniz substitutes a single miracle at the time of pre at ion in place of perpetual miracles of .the occasionalists. It is not explained how a rational and wise God can make two such absolutely heterogeneous entities like mind and. body correspond each to each.

The problem of the relation between mind and body has been falsely created by Descartes and his successors. To think that there is an utter dualism and separation between mind and body is to make the solution of the problem

impossible. On such hypothesis; interaction as advocated by Descartes appears to be dogmatic. But it is the philosopher who raises the dust first and then complains that he cannot see. The absolute dualism between mind and body must be avoided if we are to reach any solution of the problem.

2. Parallelism:

To avoid the difficulties of dualism and interactionism, Spinoza advocated the *parallelistic theory* of the mind-body relation. Parallelism denies any causal relation between mind- and body. Mind and body are not two independent substances, but only two attributes of one and the same substance, God. Mind and body or matters are the correlative aspects, internal and external, of the same substance which is neither mental nor material. Because mind and body are two attributes of the same substance, they run parallel to each other. This is Spinoza's, psycho-physical parallelism. According to it, every psychosis has its neurosis. i.e., every mental process or experience has corresponding bodily or nervous process. But these two processes are not causally connected. Causal-connection exists between one mental state and another or between one nervous state and another. Mind and body are causally independent to each other, though they are always and necessarily parallel. In short, the relation between mental and bodily processes is one of concomitance. Every change in one system is accompanied by a corresponding change in the other.

The variety of spinozistic theory of Parallelism is the Double Aspect Theory. This theory denies that there are two realities. It affirms that mind and body are the two aspects of the same reality which is the living organism. As the concave and convex sides of a piece of curved glass & are the two aspects of the same piece of glass, so are also mind and body. Mind and body constitute one single series of event. Mental processes are the subjective aspect while the neural processes are the objective aspect.

But parallelism is simply a statement of fact of invariable concomitance between mental and bodily process. It does not give any reason why there should be such concomitance. The parallelistic theory *fails to explain sudden experiences*. Suppose one is suddenly awakened from a deep reverie by the slamming of a door. On the parallelistic theory one mental state can cause another mental state, but there is no causal connection between mental state and neural suite. So, the sudden awakening should be explained by previous mental state and not by air vibrations caused by slamming of the door. But in this case there is nothing in the previous mental experiences of the individual's deep reverie which can be called the causes of awakening from it. Secondly, parallelism *makes mind biologically useless*. According to the theory of organic evolution, whatever survives in the struggle for existence is of same utility in life. Parallelism holds that mind can in no way influence bodily activities. All bodily actions can be done by the organism without the help of mind. But we have evidences of the increasing importance of mind. Thirdly, parallelism *leads to panpsychism*. Parallelism implies that the mind is present wherever there is bodily activity whether this activity be in organic forms or inorganic compounds. If every bodily process has its corresponding mental process then digestion, which is a bodily process must have also a corresponding mental process. And if we go on in this way it will seem that mind is spread out everywhere. This is panpsychism, and it is absurd.

3. Epiphenomenalism:

Epiphenomenalism is a theory which holds that there is a casual connection between the mental and physical, but it also says that this is a one way relation where the physical effects the mental. This means that the physical always caused mental changes. The physical is the cause of the mental, but not vice-versa. The mental cannot cause any physical change; it is caused by the physical. The physical is always the cause and the mental always the effect. A man cuts his hand and the feeling of pain makes him wince. The epiphenomena list explain this as a series of nerve-events, resulting in the occurrence of a brain state which causes the physical movement we call wince. The feeling of pain is also, according to the epiphenomena list, merely a by-product of a chain of reflexes. According to them, it is only an illusion that mental events have effects. But if this standpoint is accepted, then human affairs must be conceived differently from what they are conceived. All works of art and even discoveries of science would have developed without a single thought behind them. No feeling, thought sensation or any other mental event would be there to explain why the Taj was built. This seems a very difficult position accepts. If phenomenalism is true, then 'The pain made him cry', would be false.

4. Theory of Emergence:

According to the theory of emergence, mind emerges out of brain-organisation much as water emerges out of H₂O. 'Emergence' means the appearance of something 'new' in the evolutionary process. This 'new' emergent is something which cannot be called 'resultant' of the elements through whose combination or organization it arises. The emergent is unpredictable before combination takes place and is different from any of the qualities possessed by the separate elements that enter into combination. Emergence of mind from bodily organization means that mind arises out of bodily organization and yet is something new and unique. It grows out brain-states, but it is something added to the brain-states. The mind is not identical with body. Mind is not also causally connected with body, nor is it parallel with bodily process as something fundamentally different. Mind rather 'emerges' in the course of biological evolution. The mind-body relation is definable in terms of emergence.

5. Identity hypothesis

Double-aspect theory is a kind of identity hypothesis, for; mind and body are identical, according to it. Some forms of materialism and subjective idealism identify mind with body or body with mind. For materialism, body is the only reality and mind as a distinct reality is an illusion. In Idealism or psychical monism, it is the reality of the body that is questioned. But this theory cannot account for the contrast between mind and matter, subject and object, which is essential for knowledge. Mind and body are not felt as identical. Thus the difference between mind and body must be maintained and they should be viewed as systematically related aspects of the same concrete whole.

6. Double aspect theory

This theory was originated by Spinoza and is held by many modern psychologists. The theory attempts to get rid of mind-body problem by denying that there are two realities at all. It affirms that mind and body are two aspects of the same reality, the living organism, like the concave and convex sides of a piece of curved glass. They constitute one single process observable in two different ways. The functions of the living organism, as felt from inside or by introspection are *mental* functions. The same

functions observed from outside *i.e.*, by retrospection, are *bodily* processes. The theory of psychophysical parallelism is closely associated with this doctrine. The difficulties of parallelism cannot be avoided by double-aspect theories. Again this theory has a tendency to identify mind and body. But their difference cannot be denied.

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