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# Philosophy of Mind

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Introduction to the Mind-  
Body Problem I

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## Two Motivations for Dualism

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- ❖ External
  - ❖ Theism
- ❖ Internal
  - ❖ The nature of mind is such that it has no home in the natural world.

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## Mind and its Place in Nature

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- ❖ 'A society of minds is not a big mind, but a system of bodies (such as the solar system) is just a big body.' (C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, p. 32)

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## Two Problems

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- ❖ What is such that it is both mental and physical?
- ❖ How is the mental causally efficacious?

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## What is such that it is both mental and physical?

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- ❖ Short Answer:

- ❖ We are.

- ❖ Long Answer:

- ❖ Whatever is such that it may serve as a subject to disparate categories of properties with seemingly incompatible realization requirements.



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# Property Taxonomies

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- ❖ Consider the property of *being even* ( $\phi$ ).
  - ❖ This is evidently a mathematical property.
  - ❖ Necessarily, if  $x$  is  $\phi$  then  $x$  is a number.
- ❖ Consider the property of *being a metabolic process* ( $\psi$ ).
  - ❖ This is evidently a biological property.
  - ❖ Necessarily, if  $x$  is  $\psi$ , then  $x$  is a living being.

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# Disparate Categories, Incompatible Demands

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❖ A simple argument:

1. If  $x$  is  $\phi$ , then  $x$  is a number.
2. If  $x$  is  $\psi$ , then  $x$  is alive.
3. Necessarily, nothing is such that it is both a number and is alive.
4. Hence, there is no  $x$  such that  $(\phi x$  and  $\psi x)$ .

❖ If we grant (3) (and let us), then we are compelled to assent to (4).

❖ Is this a problem?

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# Mental and Physical Properties: a Contrast

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- ❖ The physical:
  - ❖ Not privileged to any subject (amenable to third-person access)
  - ❖ Subject to public confirmation
  - ❖ Quantitative without remainder
- ❖ The mental:
  - ❖ Epistemic
    - ❖ Authoritative
    - ❖ Privileged Access (known non-inferentially by their subjects alone)
  - ❖ Metaphysical
    - ❖ Qualitative: both locally and then again globally



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## Forcing the Contrast

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1. Mental properties have the property of being introspectively accessible to their bearers alone ( $\psi$ ).
2. No physical property has  $\psi$ .
3. LL (or, the indiscernibility of identicals).
4. Hence, no mental property is a physical property.

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## Leibniz's Law

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- ❖ Or, more precisely, the Indiscernibility of Identicals
- ❖ LL:  $x = y$  *only if*  $x$  and  $y$  have all of their properties in common
  - ❖ So, e.g., if the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (CC) = The President of the United States (P), then whatever is true of (CC) is true of (P) and whatever is true of (P) is true of (CC).
  - ❖ Conversely, if the murderer, whoever that may be, has O+ blood, and the butler has B-, then the butler is not the murderer.

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# A Problem?

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- ❖ Well, so far, we may accept that there are bearers of mental properties and bearers of physical properties.
  - ❖ That is not a problem.
- ❖ We may further accept that the bearers of mental and physical properties are disjoint.
  - ❖ That is not a problem.
- ❖ Yet (recall the easy response): we are committed to the view that we are the bearers of both mental and physical properties.
  - ❖ That is a problem.

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# A Mind-Body Problem

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- ❖ We seem committed to the view that mental and physical properties require different sorts of subjects.
- ❖ We seem equally committed to the view that we are ourselves subjects to both sorts of properties.
- ❖ Hence the problem: we think that mental properties must be borne by physical subjects (to wit, ourselves) and yet we cannot regard them as able to be borne by such subjects. Thus we are, and cannot be, the subjects of mental states.
- ❖ N.b.: This is not a problem for your average theist: she actively believes that mental subjects and physical subjects are not only discrete, but necessarily so.



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# Two Solutions to this Mind-Body Problem

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- ❖ Dualism: Properly speaking, there is no single subject of mental and physical properties.
  - ❖ Minds (souls) are subjects of mental properties.
  - ❖ Bodies are subjects of physical properties.
- ❖ Identity Theory: The mind *is* the brain (or, the brain and central nervous system).
  - ❖ Mental properties are identical with physical properties.
  - ❖ There is no categorial difference because, in fact, there is no difference at all; arguments to the contrary are mistaken.



## Two Animals



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# The Identity Theory

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- ❖ The Identity Theory (IT): every mental state is identical with some physical state.
  - ❖ E.g., every pain state is identical with some neural state; every thought is identical with some neural state; and so on.
  - ❖ In some sense, IT seems simple and natural.
    - ❖ Why doubt it?

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## A Plausible Hypothesis

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- ❖ Indeed, one may simply observe that reductive physicalism is the most natural, most plausible hypothesis available: minds are like other parts of the physical world.
- ❖ So, when we approach the mind, we should approach it like any other part of the physical world, namely by means of empirical investigation into its operations and nature.
  - ❖ Just as we discovered that lightning is the same as a discharge of electricity or that water is H<sub>2</sub>O, so we will discover that mental events are neural events.