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RECONSTRUCTING THE MIND IN NEW SHAPE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HILARY PUTNAM'S APPROACH

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Abstract

In the traditional thinking mind were simply identified with Brain. Brain has a particular size, shape, mass, and spatial location; it is made up of particles, each with a particular size, shape, mass, and spatial location, and each of which contributes in a small way to the brain's overall character. Descartes held that minds and bodies are "*substances*" of distinct kinds that, in the case of living human beings, happen to be intimately related. Berkeley calls them "*ideas*". The canonical history of mind simply omits mention of phenomenology. Phenomenology is often associated today with introspectionist psychology. Properties of brains, however, seem to differ importantly from properties of minds.

Putnam identified mental state types with types of causal or computational function, rather than types of physical state defined, say, by structures of neurons. The computer model of information processing further encouraged a functionalist ontology. He argues that what is true of pictures and words considered as physical signs is also true of mental images and words, and in fact mental entities of all sorts.

KEY-WORDS:--Psycho-physical identity, Functionalism, Phenomenology, computational models, cognition.

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"*The fundamental history of humankind is the history of the mind*"

''—**William Barrett**.

The mind-body problem is a continuing issue in philosophy. This is one of the long-standing metaphysical issues of philosophical and concerns the relationship between that which is mental and that which is physical. The mind is composed of mental fragments, sensations, feelings, thoughts, imaginations, all flowing now in an ordered sequence, now in a chaotic fashion. The contemporary debate on mind-body problem is a philosophical and scientific enquiry.

The Classicals---The Mind‐Body problem has been in existence for several thousand years going back to Plato, Aristotle, The Buddha and many other ancient Greek and Eastern thinkers. In the traditional thinking mind were simply identified with Brain. Brain has a particular size, shape, mass, and spatial location; it is made up of particles, each with a particular size, shape, mass, and spatial location, and each of which contributes in a small way to the brain's overall character.

The classical Greek Philosopher Demoritiouces famously said that there exist just atoms and the void. He did not mean by this to deny the manifest diversity of the world around us.

In the 'organic' world picture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, inorganic things were conceived along the lines of organic things. Everything had its natural place, fitting into the harmonious working of the 'animal' that is the world.

Descartes held that minds and bodies are "*substances*" of distinct kinds that, in the case of living human beings, happen to be intimately related; the mind must be a non-bodily entity: a soul or mental substance. This is called 'substance *Dualism'* or '*Cartesian Dualism'*. The reason for believing it is that we have free will, and this seems to require that the mind is a non-physical thing, since all physical things are subject to the laws of nature.

According to Hume, we cannot sense the soul. Because there is no sense im- pression from which the idea of the soul could have been derived, we have no idea what the word "soul" stands for. The question of the existence of the soul, then, cannot be answered because no one knows what they're talking about when they use the word "soul."

Leibniz, however, doesn't believe that consciousness emerges from complex arrangements of matter. He believes that matter emerges from complex arrangements of consciousness. For him, the basic building blocks of the universe—the stuff out of which everything is made are particles of consciousness ("*Monads*") rather than particles of matter.

The rise of modern physics raised a number of problems for traditional empiricism. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, John Dalton experimentally confirmed what the Greek atomists had suggested over two thousand years before, namely, that physical objects were made out of tiny particles of matter called atoms

Gilbert Ryle came to the conclusion that mental states are behavioral dispositions through a careful analysis of how mental terms are used in ordinary language. We tend to assume that nouns refer to substances. But this is not always the case.

The fundamental question at the heart of the mind-body problem is what is the relation between the conscious mind and the electro-chemical interactions in the body that give rise to it? How do conscious experiences emerge from networks of neurons?

Mind and Phenomenology---Mind has defined itself as the truth of soul and consciousness. The soul is finite, so far as its features are immediate or connatural. Consciousness is finite, in so far as it has an object. Mind is finite, in so far as, though it no longer has an object, it has a mode in its knowledge. Phenomenological approaches to mind relevant to experimental science has been the amazing progress in neuroscience. The machines of PET and MRI, measuring changes in blood flow in local regions of the brain due to neural activity, and EEG and MEG, measuring the electric and magnetic activities related more directly to neural activity in the brain, are allowing an increasingly precise view of the networks active across a range of functions. The science of brain imaging is complex, and is certainly not just a matter of taking a snapshot of what is going on inside the head. But the generation of images of neural processing using non-invasive technology has made possible a variety of experiments that depend on reports about the experience of the experimental subjects. Phenomenology argues that rather than as simulation, we should view such motor resonance as part of an enactivist perception of intentions in the action of others. It emphasis on a very detailed account of the explanandum '*mind'* and on the various problems and paradoxes that may arise in describing it. Self-consciousness is described, the '*mineness'* of self-consciousness and how that relates to the 'what it is likeness' of consciousness. Phenomenological philosophy of mind connects well with all sorts of scientific, i.e. psychological and neuro-scientific, experiments. The *'concrete'* nature of mind involves for the observer the peculiar difficulty that the several grades and special types which develop its intelligible unity in detail are not left standing as so many separate existences confronting its more advanced aspects.

Thought and Experiment--Putnam---Putnam argues against "*Metaphysical Realism*" and in favor of his own "*Internal Realism*." By *'Internal Realism'* Putnam seems to have in mind not just that the truth of sentences or utterances is relative to a language. Putnam has several arguments, actually, but four stand out. First, the "*Model-Theoretic*" argument; second, the argument from the non-objectivity of reference and of the sort of causation involved in contemporary accounts of reference; third, the argument from the unlikelihood of scientific convergence on a finished science that provides an objective and absolute conception of reality; and, finally, the argument from the non absoluteness of object-hood and of existence.
Putnam gives the logical structure of common-sense psychological description itself, as well as its relationship to the traditional philosophical problems of mind–body identity. He would develop the analogy between minds and machines into a full-blown metaphysical description of mind, culminating in the decisive suggestion that our mental states simply are abstract states within our total functional organization. He gave a new, and stronger, argument against the logical behaviorist identification of pains and other mental states with behaviors and behavioral dispositions. He proposes the hypothesis that pain, or state of being in pain, is a functional state of a whole organism. To show that there is no necessary logical link between mental states and behaviors, Putnam suggested the example of a race of people '*Super-Spartans'* who, owing to restrictive social conventions, never describe or otherwise express their feelings of pain. These '*super-Spartans'* would exhibit no pain behavior; yet it is, Putnam argued, still meaningful to say that they feel pain. He still treats states like pains as the causes of the behaviors that express them, and he repeats the suggestion that the grammar of pain-ascriptions is controlled by behavioral criteria that function as '*symptoms'* of an underlying structure. The Turing machine

analogy makes no appearance in the article, and there is no suggestion that mental states like pains are in any sense functional or logical states distinct from underlying physical states. He argues that what is true of pictures and words considered as physical signs is also true of mental images and words, and in fact mental entities of all sorts. The theoretical ground is that to assert that mental states refer intrinsically is to advocate what should be called a magical theory of reference. It is a magical theory of reference because it offers no way to understand how reference is possible, or in virtue of what reference succeeds. It is the antithesis of a scientific account of reference or representation.

He Proposed a Machenical Functionalism--A functional state is a state specified implicitly by its place in a functional description of the organism. To be in mental state M is merely to be in some physiological state that plays role R in the relevant computer. If the organism is in state Si and receives so-and-so sensory input, then with so-and-so probability the organism will go into state Sj and produce so-and-so motor output. He chose "probabilistic automaton" rather than a Turing Machine because human beings are not predicable in the way that a Turing Machine is. There are many probably options for each of our decision.

He generalized the notion of a finite state automaton; a system describable using a finite state machine table with deterministic state transitions, to a probabilistic finite state automaton, in which transitions are probabilistic. The general form of the proposal is that a system is in a certain mental state if it has an appropriate machine table description and appropriate inputs or appropriate states. He treated his proposal as an empirical hypothesis. Putnam's argument can be spelled out as follows:

- If having certain behavioral dispositions were a necessary condition for being in a certain mental state, then it would be impossible to be in that state and not have those dispositions.
- But, as the example of the super-Spartans shows, it is possible to be in pain and not have the behavioral dispositions associated with pain.
- Therefore, having certain behavioral dispositions is not a necessary con- dition for being in a certain mental state.

Putnam's super-Spartans don't exhibit pain behavior because they don't want to. Wanting, however, is a mental state. So the most natural explana- tion of the Spartans' behavior is that it was caused by their mental states. Putnam's super-Spartans may sound familiar to those acquainted with the original Star Trek TV series. They bear a remarkable resemblance to Vulcans, like Mr. Spock, who also suppress pain behavior for ideological reasons. After a particularly bloody war, the Vulcans decided that they would survive as a race only if they learned to control their emotions. So, from that time on, all Vulcans were trained from birth to hide their feelings. They still have feel- ings: they just don't show them. Summarily, Putnam want to say---

- If the identity theory were true, then it would be impossible for anything without a brain to have a mind.
- But, as Lewis's pained Martian and Putnam's conscious computer show, things without brains can have minds.
- So the identity theory is not true; having a brain is not a necessary condition for having a mind.

Some Deductions from the Above---Putnam's super-Spartans thought experiment shows that it is possible to be in a mental state without having any particular behavioral disposition.

According to Putnam, mental states are not material states or states of a nonphysical substance. They are functional states. That is, they are states with a certain function or causal role. The function of a state can be defined in terms of its inputs and outputs. Because computer programs can also be defined in terms of their inputs and outputs, functionalism considers minds to be programs. Mental states may have a causal effect on the physical states that give rise to them. Such a view doesn't deny that physically identical brains are also psychologically identical. It does deny that the person's subsequent mental or physical states can be predicted or explained on the basis of physical properties alone. This view of mental properties offers an attractive way to solve the mind-body problem. Central to Putnam is the idea that states of mind are "*multiply realizable*." Putnam says that mental state is identical to whatever performs the right kind of functional role. Its flexibility with regards to what this thing is what makes the view so appealing in the face of the multiple realizability intuition. To be in a particular mental state is to be in a state that has a certain characteristic role.

Conclusion---'*Mind'* regarded as the immaterial component of our own experience, would never seem to be a concept available for scientific investigation. That is a conclusion to be expected, since we define science as a method to analyze the material world around us and definitely not the non-material world, what ever that is. We can solve the Mind-Body Problem in a simple manner, through a material reductionist method. The mind will never be available for scientific investigation. To resolve this problem we need to expand the notion of Science to include some aspects of personal experience. Only when all of these have been explained satisfactorily at a quantitative level by such a developed model can we begin to be able to justify the claimed final solution to the Mind-Body Problem.

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