

Philosophy Notes up to Midterm

Constancy and Flux

Theseus` Ship

Is the ship in which Theseus arrives at his destination the same ship on which he departed?

“No: They’re not the same ship.”

Something can’t change and still be the same

Rationale:

- (1) Nothing can change without becoming different than it was
 - (2) But “different” and “same” are opposites
 - (3) Therefore, nothing can change and still be the same
-

“Yes: They are the Same Ship

Rationale:

- (1) Some changes are so small or insignificant that they don’t prevent it from being the same object after it changes: Make the daily changes that small or insignificant
- (2) Then, the ship on Day (1)= Day (2).
And the ship on Day (2)= Day (3)
And the ship on Day (3)= Day (4)
- (3) Identity is transitive (i.e. if A=B and B=C, then A=C)
- (4) So, the ship on Day (1)= ship on Day (n)

Visualizing the Rationale

Day (1)= Day (2)

Day (2)= Day (3)

Day (1) = Day (3)

Day (3)= Day (4)

Day (1) = Day (4)

Day (4)= Day (5)

Day (1) = Day (5)

And so on, until...

Day (1) = Day (n)

The views of Change and Sameness

- (1) **The cannot be reconciled:** if an object changes, then it becomes different in some way, then it isn't the same object
- (2) **They can be reconciled:** Some changes in an object can be so insignificant that they do not prevent it from being the same object after it has undergone such changes

"Now if it should become different by one hair in 10000 years, it will all perish in all of time"

(Melissus, pg. 26)

All "change" is really destruction and creation; so nothing persists through change

The Early Materialists: The Flux

Thales (625-545 B.C.E)

Heraclitus (535-475 B.C.E)

Only matter (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire) and what is composed of matter, exists

Materialism: The Four Elements

Thales (Water)

- Everything is made of water

Philosophers of Nature

There is a single, unified explanation of a great variety of different phenomena

The explanation does not rely on the supernatural (e.g. the Gods)

The explanation can be grasped by the human intellect.

Materialism: The Four Elements Heraclitus(Fire)

Fire

↓↑

Air

↓↑

Water

↓↑

Earth

Creation and Destruction:

(How “new” is the sun every day?)

Heraclitus: “Fire lives in the death of earth and air lives in the death of fire” (19)

So...There is a “different” sun every day, because each day’s sun ceases to exist and a new one is created in its place

Heraclitus: The Logos

Logos

- The root of logic, study of “ “.
- The rational pattern (‘Logic’) in the flux.

Some Materialist themes

- (1) Everything is matter (4 elements)
- (2) Matter is in FLUX (forever transforming from one form to another)
- (3) One form of matter is primary and basic; others are secondary or derivative
- (4) There is an Order or Rational Pattern ("Logos") in transformation of matter

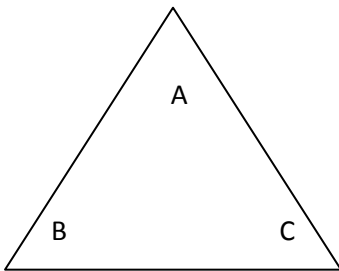
The Idealists: Constancy

Pythagoras (580-496 B.C.E)

Parmenides (540-470 B.C.E)

Zeno (489-430 B.C.E)

Idealism: the changes we perceive are not real



- (i) The sum of the 3 angles of a triangle equals exactly 180°
 - (ii) But no such triangle that we can actually perceive has angles adding up to exactly 180°
 - (iii) So, what we perceive are not real triangles
-

What we perceive are only approximates of real triangles

Pythagoras

- (1) Numbers, and geometric figures, are the only things that are real
- (2) But numbers, figures, and relationships between them are permanent and unchanging
- (3) So, what is real is permanent and unchanging

Parmenides

[A] There are two "paths" we can follow in our investigations

- (1) Path of truth: "It is, and is impossible for it not to be."
- (2) Path of Error: "It is not, and is necessary for it not to be."

I.e. "what is" must exist, and "what is not" cannot exist (nothing can be either created or destroyed)

The Impossibility of Change:

- (1) Change requires that something what it is not
- (2) But, nothing can be what it is not
- (3) So, nothing can change

Zeno: The Impossibility of Motion

- (1) All motion requires travelling from some distance, from a starting point to a destination point.
- (2) On the line between any starting point and any destination point there are on infinite number of line segments which must be traversed.
- (3) So nothing can be travel any distance without traversing an infinite number of line segments.
- (4) When laid end to end, an infinite number of line segments (however short) will be infinite in length.
- (5) But nothing can travel an infinite distance.
- (6) Therefore, all motion is impossible.

Two Metaphysical Traditions

MATERIALISM (Heraclitus)

- Change is real; sameness is illusory
- Reality is known by experience
- All change is creation and destruction

IDEALISM (Parmenides)

- Sameness is real; change is illusory
- Reality is known by reason
- Nothing can be destroyed or created

Both Agreed: Nothing can change and still remain the same

New Materialists: The Atomists

Democritus (460-370 B.C.E)

Atomism:

- (1) All matter consists of simple, invisible parts (atoms') which themselves have no parts
- (2) All change (the flux) consists of re-arrangements and re combinations of parts
- (3) Non-being is real: it is called "The Void."

Change and sameness co-exist: both are real. (This is a materialist reconciliation).

Socrates (470-399 B.C)

“the unexamined life is not worth living”

What is the Essence of Something?

It is the ONE thing that MANY particular things of the same kind have in common, that makes them all things if the same kind, and that can serve as a standard by which to judge in particular cases.

E.g., the essence of beauty is:

- (I) what the many beautiful things have in common;
- (II) that qualifies them to be beautiful;
- (III) and that can be used to judge whether something really is beautiful.

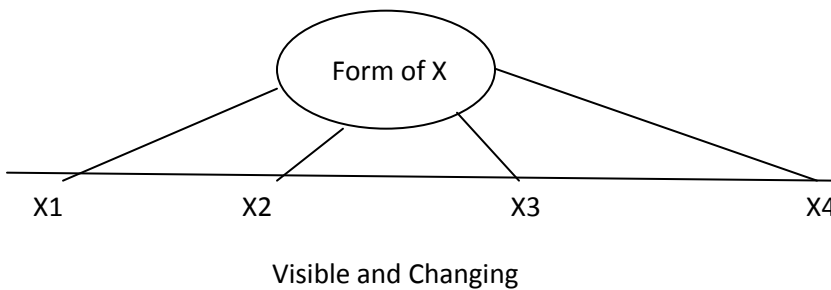
Plato: The essence ('form') of cats

Idealist

Cathood

The New Idealism: Plato's Forms

_Transcendent and Eternal



The Reality of Forms

- (1) If one thing is more beautiful than an other thing, then it is more closely approximates perfect beauty than the other thing does
- (2) But one thing cannot approximate perfect Beauty more closely than another thing unless

Plato's Idealism

Images of Images	Images of Reality	Unchanging Reality
Images of Triangular objects	Traingular objects	Real Triangles
Images of Beautiful Things	Brad Pitt (Beautiful things)	Real Beauty

Allegory of the Cave

Common world is a shadow of real beauty

Change and Identity: A Quick Review

Two Views about Change and Sameness (“Identity”)

[1] Change Requires that something become different than it was; but difference is the opposite of sameness; so nothing can change and still be the same

Nothing stays the same

Materialism (Heraclitus)

Idealism (Parmenides)

Atomism (Democritus)

Plato

[2] Things that can undergo some changes and still remain the same, provided that those are insignificant and gradual

Plato’s Idealism (refer to page before)

Plato on Body and Soul (pg. 34)

“The soul is the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable...”

“...and the body is the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintellectual, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable.”

Diotima

“We...assume that a man is the same person in his old age as his infancy, yet although we call him the same, every bit of him is different, and every day he is becoming a new man, while the old man is ceasing to exist, as you can see from his hair, his flesh, his bones, his blood, and all the rest of his body. ...the same thing happens to the soul...”

The Problem of Personal Identity

A) Changes

- 1) Bodily Changes
- 2) Psychological Changes

B) Sameness

- 1) Qualitative Sameness/ Identity
- 2) Numerical Sameness/ Identity

John Locke on Personal Identity

Persons vs. Human Beings

Identity is Relative to classification

Memory Criterion for Personal Identity

“Man” [Human Being] vs. Person

- (1) **Human Being:** “... is nothing else but an animal of a certain form” (38)
 - (A) Whoever should see a creature of his own shape or make, though it had no more reason all its life than a cat or parrot, would still call him a man [human]....a dull irrational man” (38)
 - (B) “whoever should hear a cat or a parrot discourse, reason, and philosophize, would call or think it nothing but a cat or parrot... a very intelligent rational parrot.” (38)
- (2) **Person:** “... is a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself” (39).

“Consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes everyone to be what he calls self” (39).

Identity is Relative

“The Idea of Identity [is] suited to the idea it is applied to”

“[W]e must consider the idea...it [identity]is applied to...it being one thing to be the same substance another to be the same man, and a third the same person.” (38)

Is X the same as Y? Is X the same _____ as Y?

Locke: The question is incomplete, and cannot be answered until we first clarify what we are asking: is it the same WHAT?

Is X the same parcel of matter as Y?

Is X the same human being as Y?

Is X the same person as Y?

Rapid and Dramatic Change

“As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from an uneasy dream he found himself transformed in his bed into a giant cockroach.” – Franz Kafka: Metamorphosis

After Gregor’s transformation, the result is not the same man, nor the same human being.

And yet, it was Gregor who awoke: “he found himself transformed.”

John Locke on Personal Identity

Even total (and rapid) body changes are possible while remaining the same person:

- Resurrection in a new body is conceivable
- Body exchanges are conceivable [the prince and the cobbler]

“Whatever has the consciousness of the past and present actions, is the same person to whom they belong.” (40).

Memory: “Consciousness Extended Backwards”

Memory is necessary for identity of persons: If I cannot remember doing anything that same past person did, then that past person was not me

Locke’s Answer: NO – I am not the same person

Memory is sufficient for identity of persons:

If I can remember doing something that some past person did, then that person was me

YOU ARE THE SAME PERSON IF YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE SAME AS THAT PERSONS

Thomas Reid (1710-1796)

Critique of Locke

Perfect Vs. Imperfect identity

The self

Reid’s Challenge to Locke’s Belief of Memory

- (1) Alfred (80)= Fred (40) (Because Locke’s memory criterion is satisfied)
- (2) Fred (40)= Freddy (10) (Because Locke’s memory criterion is satisfied)
- (3) So Alfred (80)= Freddy (10) (**transitivity of identity**)
 - But: Alfred can’t remember anything Fred did
- (4) So, Alfred (80)≠ Freddy (10)
 - Therefore, Locke’s memory criterion is not satisfied

Locke’s memory criterion for personal identity

Reid: The “Imperfect Identity” of Bodies

“All bodies are subject to continuous changes” (43)

“Language could not afford a different name for every different state of such a changeable being.” (43)

Identity “has no fixed nature when applied to bodies”; and questions about identity are very often questions about words

Reid on Personal Change

“Consciousness, and every kind of thought, are transient and momentary, and have no continued existence;

And therefore, if personal identity consisted in consciousness, it would certainly follow, that no man is the same person any two days in a row

Divided Selves

Personal Identity: Quick Review

Diotima: (quote on 34)

Locke: “As far as this consciousness can be extended backwards...so far reaches the identity of that person.” (39)

Reid: “My thoughts, and actions, and feelings, change every moment... but that self, or I, to which they belong is permanent... The identity of a person is a perfect identity.” (43)

David Hume on the Self

A Common Philosophical Idea of the self is that:

“We feel its existence and its continued existence; and are certain... both of its perfect identity and simplicity.”(48)

Empiricist

- All knowledge and ideas come from experience

“From what impression [experience] could this be derived?” (48).

“When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other... I never can catch myself at any time” (49).

Hume: The Theatre of the Mind

“The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successfully make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations...”

- (i) To be observed, the Self must appear on Stage
- (ii) To observe, the Self must be in the audience
- (iii) The Self can never (simultaneously) be both observer and observed

Intuition or Prejudice?

Reid: We “...derive our notion of identity from the natural conviction which every man has from the dawn of reason of his own identity and continued existence.....we have an invincible belief that it remains the same when all its thoughts and operations change...”

Hume: “There is no simplicity in it at any one time, nor identity in different [times]; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity...What then gives us so great a propension...to suppose ourselves possessed of an invariable and uninterrupted... (49)

Hume’s Diagnosis

We have a natural propensity to confuse two different things:

- 1) Succession: “several different objects existing in succession and connected together by a close relation.”
- 2) Identity: “an object that remains invariable and interrupted through time.”

“We are apt to imagine something unknown and mysterious, connecting the parts...we are not able to find anything invariable and interrupted to justify our notion of identity.”

“The confusion and mistake makes us substitute the notion of identity, instead of that of related objects.”

“Our mistake...is commonly attended with a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable.”

“the Identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one.” (51)

Hume disagrees with Reid’s conception of the self.

Gilbert Ryle: the Self as Illusion (1949)

““I” is like my own shadow; I can never get away from it.”

[this] seems to endow ‘I’ with a mystifying uniqueness and adhesiveness

“Now” has something of the same besetting feeling.”

Hume: Selves without Sameness

The real Self is “nothing but a bundle of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity” (49)

They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind.” (52)

“The strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.” – Ludwig Wittgenstein

Metaphysical Theories of Selves

Metaphysical Realism: Selves are real; they are distinct from succession of related thoughts, feelings and perceptions [Plato, Roid]

Metaphysical Eliminativism: there are no such things as selves – only successions of related thoughts, feelings, and perceptions exist. (Diotima)

Metaphysical Reductionism: Selves are real – but they are nothing other than (i.e. they consist in) changing successions of related thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. [Hume].

Brain Transplants and Brain Fission

“What’s going to happen to me?” – Derek Parfit (1974)

Stage One: Brain Transplants

Q1: What is going to happen to me if my brain is successfully transplanted into another person’s (brainless) body?

Parfit’s answer: I will be that personally because I’m psychologically continuous with them

Stage Two: Brain Reduction

Q2: What’s going to happen to me if half of my brain is removed and discarded?

Parfit’s Answer: The half-brained person who survives the operation will be me

Stage 3: Brain Reduction plus transplant

Q3: What is going to happen to me if I lose half of my brain, and the remaining half is successfully transplanted into a new body?

Parfit's Conclusion

- 1) There is no true answer to the question "what happens to me?" after brain fission
- 2) My surviving the operation doesn't require that the surviving person be numerically the same person as me.
- 3) My surviving the operation is no different than someone else (who is very like me, but is not me) surviving the operation.
- 4) Even though I have (some) psychological continuity with my past (younger)selves, I am not numerically identical with them. I survive them, but I am not them.

Salman Rushdie's Quote

The integrated self has been replaced by this jostling crowd of 'I's. And yet, unless we are damaged, or deranged, we usually have a relatively clear sense of who we are. I agree with my many selves to call all of them 'me'.

Mind and Body

Some metaphysical theories of mind

Dualism

- 2 kinds of substances
- Interactionist dualism
- Epiphenomenalism

Monism (Materialism)

- Mind-Brain Identity Theory
- Functionalism
- Eliminative Materialism

Why Think we Have Minds?

Each person is directly acquainted with his or her own mental states (i.e. thoughts, desires, etc.)

So, if to have a mind is just to have thoughts, desires, etc., then if we think we have minds, we do have minds.

We are acquainted with the behaviour of other people.

The best (only?) explanation we have of the sophisticated behaviour of other people is that they have minds

Mind/ Body Dualism

The mind is a non-physical substance

The body is a physical substance

Physical Vs. Nonphysical

Material Vs. Immaterial

Corporeal Vs. Incorporeal

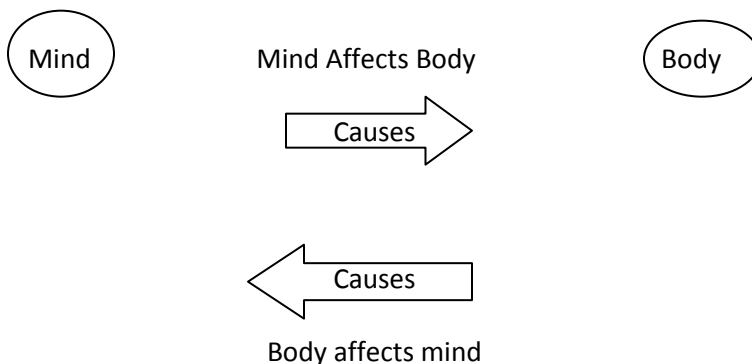
Physical Substances

Physical Substance: Any substance (entity) which conforms to, and can be explained by, strict physical laws

Nonphysical Substance: Any substance (entity) that is not physical

Nonphysical Substances have no physical (strict, law-governed) properties.

Interactionism



Interactionist Dualism

Dualism: Body is Physical, and mind is nonphysical

Interactionism: Mind affects Body, and Body affects mind

Requires: Nonphysical substances can interact with physical substances

A Metaphysical Law

Leibniz's Law

("Indiscernibility of Identicals")

If $A=B$, then if A has a certain property (characteristic) at a given time, B must also have that property (characteristic) at that time

Consequence: If A has some property that B does not have, then A is not the same thing as B

Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

(Quote on 62)

Descartes Argument for the Separation of Mind and Body (64)

- (1) That I exist can be known with complete certainty.
- (2) That any physical object exists cannot be known with complete certainty
- (3) So, I cannot be any physical object.
- (4) So, I must be a nonphysical object.

A Problem with Descartes' Argument?

- (1) That I am an offspring of my biological parents (whoever they are) is something I can know with certainty.
- (2) That I am the offspring of Mr. & Mrs. Jacobsen is not something I can know with certainty.
- (3) So, I cannot be the offspring of Mr. & Mrs. Jacobsen

The Interaction Problem

How entities that are non physical affect can objects that are physical?

How can entities that do not behave in conformity to physical laws affect objects that have to behave in conformity.

The Inconsistent Triad

- (1) Dualism: Body is physical and mind is non physical.
- (2) Interactionism: Mind affects body, and body affects mind.
- (3) Closure of Physical Law: All physical changes or events have a complete physical explanation (the system to which physical laws)

Closure of the Physical Laws

Nothing from outside the physical realm can affect what happens within the physical realm can affect what happens within the physical realm – the realm of physical objects and events is closed to outside interference.

WHY?

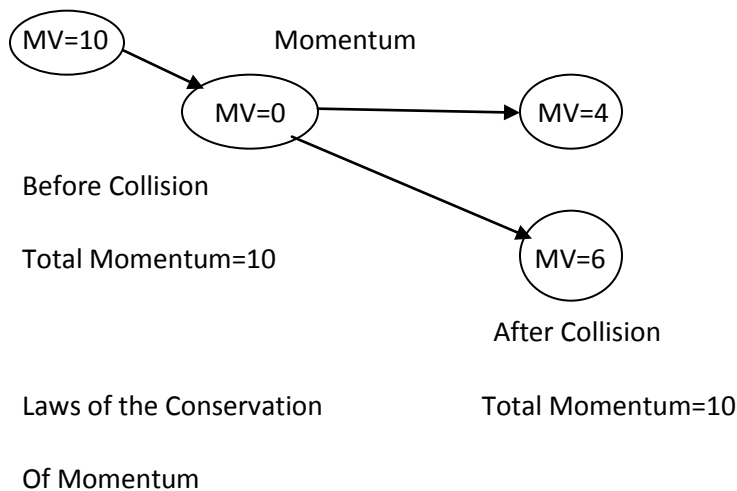
- (1) The “physical realm” is the realm of physical objects – that is, it is the realm of objects that are governed by physical laws;
- (2) But physical laws explain objects and events in terms of physical causes.
- (3) So if anything happening in the physical realm had a non physical cause, it would violate laws.

Examples of interference in the physical realm?

- Divine intervention? (Miracles)
- Telekinesis?
- Interactionist Dualism (another miracle?)

“Closure of Physical Laws”

(The Conversation of Physical Quantities)



The Inconsistent Triad

- (1) Dualism & Interactionism
 - Physical laws are not closed
- (2) Dualism & Closure of Physical Law
 - Mind does not affect the body
- (3) Interactionism & Closure of Physical Law
 - Mind is physical

The Inconsistent Triad

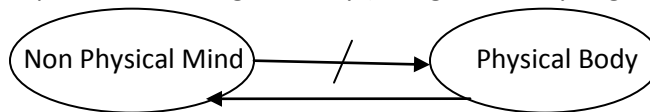
What should we give up?

- (1) Should we give up Interactionism?
 - Then minds can't affect bodies (Epiphenomenalism)
- (2) Should we give up Dualism
 - That requires that minds are physical (Materialism)
- (3) Should we give up belief in the Closure of Physical Law?
 - That would fly in the face of too much evidence.

So the interaction problem appears to leave only Materialism and Epiphenomenalism as viable theories.

Epiphenomenalism

The mind is incapable of affecting the body (though the body might still affect the mind).



Problem: the minds are useless things to have

- Cannot explain anything we do;
- We would all behave exactly as we now do even if we didn't have minds

Two versions of the Materialistic theory of Mind

- (A) Eliminative Materialism: our word "mind" refers to a non physical thing. But there are no non physical things. So the mind does not exist.
- (B) Mind-Brain Identity Theory: Agreed – there are no non physical things. Bt we do have minds, so they must be physical.
 - (1) The mind is (=) the brain;
 - (2) All mental states and events are (=) physical states of the brain or physical events within the brain

A Moral Concern about Materialism

- (1) If persons are only complex physical organisms, they differ only in degree from spiders, rats, and cattle.
- (2) But, then, persons are not special and do not have a unique moral value – they're not worthy of love, respect, praise, and are lacking in any special moral worth.
- (3) But persons are worthy of love, respect, etc., and they do have a special moral worth.
- (4) So persons cannot be merely complex physical organisms

A Theological Objection to Materialism

- (1) If materialism is true, then there is no after death
- (2) But, there is life after death
- (3) So, materialism cannot be true

Minds and Machines

Mind-Brain Correlations

Two things are “perfectly correlated” when:

- Whenever the one occurs, the other also occurs

We have a Mind-Brain correlation when:

- Whenever a certain type of mental state or event occurs, a certain type of brain-state or brain event occurs, and vice versa

An Example of a Mind-Brain Correlation

Whenever we feel amusement, there is an increase in electrochemical activity in the “inferior temporal gyrus”

From “Correlation” to “Identity”

- (1) Feelings of amusement are perfectly correlated with the increased electrochemical activity in the inferior temporal gyrus.
 - Feelings of Amusement and increased electrochemical activity in the inferior temporal gyrus have all the same causes and all the same effects:
 - Both are caused by jokes, people slipping on bananas, etc.;
 - Both cause smiling and laughter
 - So either
- (A) There are always two (perfectly correlated) causes of laughter, or;
- (B) Feelings of amusement just are increased electrochemical activity in the inferior temporal gyrus.
- (2) Feelings of amusement are identical with (=) increased electrochemical activity in the inferior temporal gyrus

Ockham's Razor: Between two equally successful explanations, always choose the simplest one.

Mind-Brain Identity Theory: A Reductionist Form of Materialism

Reductionist Materialism: Every kind of mental state is (=) a kind of the brain.

- Water is H₂O
- Lightning is an atmospheric electrical discharge
- A belief that it is snowing is a particular electrochemical state of the cerebral cortex

Eliminative Materialism

There are no mental states (or minds), only physical states (brains).

Reductive statements:

Water is really H₂O

Cerebral cortex thing

Eliminative Statements:

UFO's really are swamp gas

There are no such things as beliefs, classes, etc.

Some Consequences of a Reductionist form of Materialism

If two people have all the same mental states, then they will have all the same brain-states

If two people have none of the same brain-states, then they have none of the same mental states

Troubles for Reductionist Materialism

(Amuse thing from earlier)

Anything lacking an inferior temporal gyrus would be incapable of feeling amused.

Objection#1: Reductionist Materialism is Chauvinistic

- Could non human animals have minds?
- Could psychologically diverse aliens have minds
- Could future super computers have minds.

Reductive Materialism says "No."

BUT: We can't know the answer to these questions without empirical investigation; to decide without checking is merely "chauvinism."

Objection#2: Multiple Realizability: (The Plasticity of the Brain)

Broca's Area – Responsible for speech production and articulation

Multiple Realizability

The same mental state can be physically constituted ("realized") in the brain in more than one way

So, something that does not have the same sort of brain we have, or whose brain does not function in the same way ours does, can still have other physical states that are beliefs, desires, etc..

Functionalist Theory of Mind

A non reductionist form of the materialist theory of mind that allows for the same types of mental states to have different physical constitutions. (i.e. different physical realization)

Whenever we talk about our mental states, we are actually talking about our brain states, but in a vocabulary that describes their functional role.

Functional Roles (functional identities)

"Professors" (tall, short, male, female, etc...)

"Coffee tables" (glass, plastic, wood, etc...)

"Bait" (cheese, apple, crackers, etc...)

Some important Consequences of the Functionalist Theory of Mind

Whether something has nothing to do with its particular physical composition, but only with its particular physical composition, but only with the functions (jobs, tasks) it performs.

Physically different kinds of things can feel, etc, so long as they do what we do when we think, feel, etc.

i.e. Mental equivalence to us ≠ Physical equivalence to us.

but, Mental equivalence to us = Functional equivalence to us.

Functionalism & Artificial Intelligence

if a machine could be built that does the same jobs, performs the same tasks, etc, that our brains do when we think, feel, etc, then that machine also thinks, feels, etc.

Weak AI: A machine that simulates thinking

Strong AI: A machine that also thinks

Functionalist theories of mind imply strong AI:

Could a Machine Think?

“Machine”:

- An artefact manufactured from inorganic materials

“Think”:

- Whatever it is that we do when we think

Question: How would we tell if we successfully built a super computer capable of thought and understanding?

Keeping The Test Fair

The test must not be too difficult (i.e. many normal people can't pass)

The test must not be too easy

Must not impose requirements that we don't understand well enough to determine if they are met

Must not assume that minds are “all or nothing” (minds might come in different degrees of complexity and sophistication.)

Alan Turing (1912-1954)

The "Imitation Game" (The Turing Test)



Tried to eliminate prejudice against machines

John Searle (1980)

Build a machine that doesn't think but can pass the Turing test.



