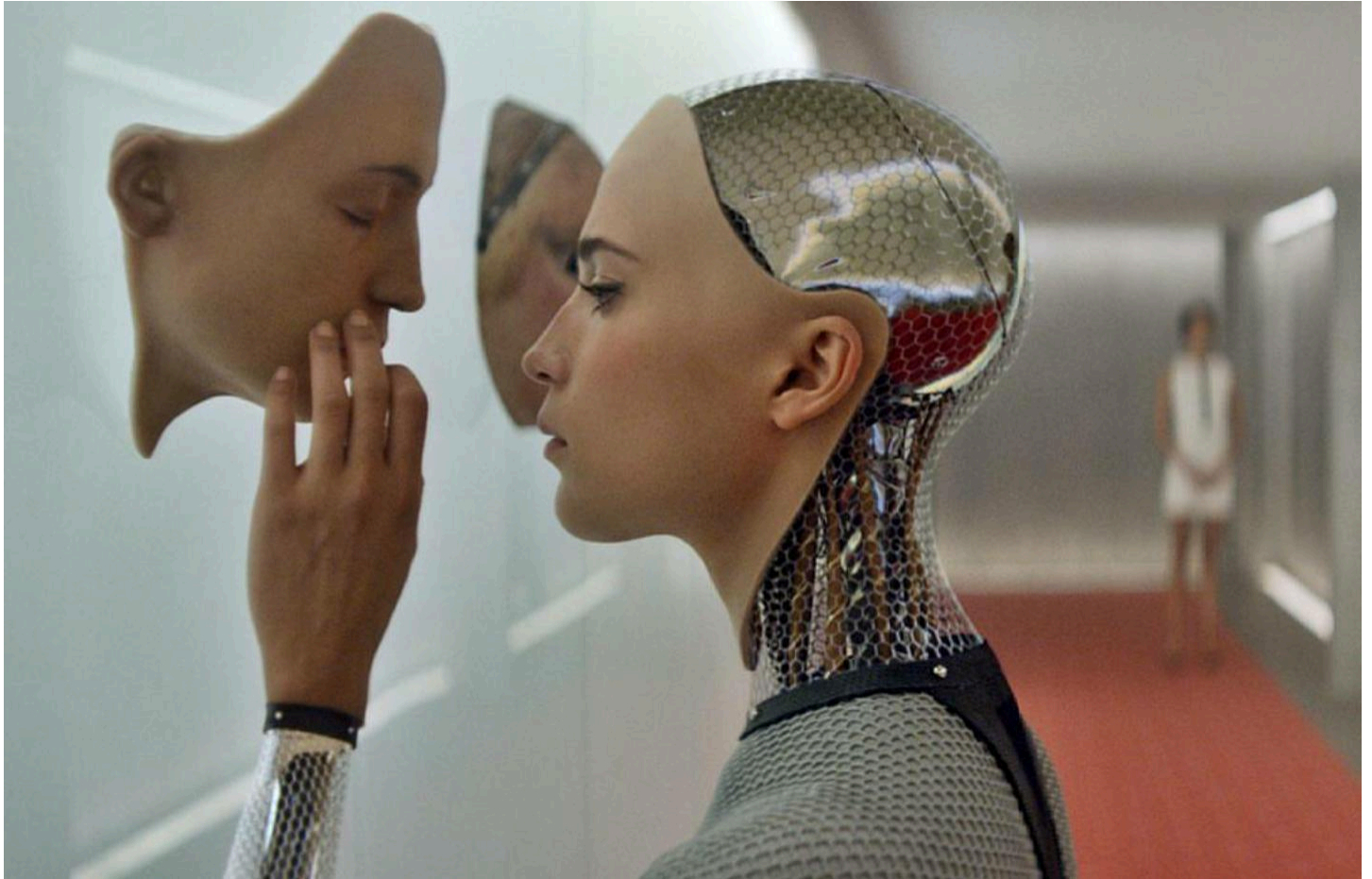


24. Australian Materialism



Explain how Error Theory is an example of moral cognitivism

1. Ordinary language indicates a presumptive belief that objective moral facts exist
2. According to Mackie, this presumptive belief in objective moral facts is correct only if moral facts
 - a. can be something we know.
 - b. can be true or false.
 - c. their truth is independent of what we want or choose.
 - d. are about something mind-independent.
3. **Argument from Queerness:** There are no objective moral values:
 - a. Epistemological queerness: this moral sense is queer thing
 - b. Ontological queerness: the things that this moral sense senses must be queer things.
4. **Argument from Relativity:** The belief that objective moral facts exist is not justified:
 - a. Different cultures have different views about what is morally correct and this is best explained by the hypothesis that there are no moral facts (the argument from relativity).
5. \therefore there are no objective values and the belief that objective moral facts exist is not justified
6. \therefore The presumptive belief that objective moral facts exist is in error
7. \therefore Ordinary language indicates a false belief

- a. This is an example of cognitivism, note that Mackie is not saying that expressions of objective moral facts are meaningless, he is saying that they are false – which indicates that they must be truth-apt

Explain how John Mackie's argument from relativity and his arguments from queerness might be an issue for moral realism

Argument from Relativity (J L Mackie)

1. There is moral relativity among different societies and historical eras.
2. Moral relativity is explained by either but not both of explanations (a) or (b):
 - a. People participate in different ways of life that lead them to believe that distinct moral rules are correct – there are no objective moral facts
 - b. People apply objective moral principles to different circumstances – there are distortions concerning the objective moral facts
3. If (a) explains moral relativity better than (b), then the belief that objective moral facts exist is not justified.
4. Explanation (a) is a better explanation of moral relativity than explanation (b).
5. \therefore The belief that objective moral facts exist is not justified
 - a. Philosophers would say this conclusion is an example of moral anti-realism

Argument from Queerness (J L Mackie)

1. If there are objective moral values, then they are specifically moral entities or relations and we know of their existence by a specifically moral cognitive ability
2. There are no specifically moral entities or relations (or at least they would be metaphysically queer), and we have no specifically moral cognitive ability (or at least they would be epistemologically queer)
3. \therefore There are no objective moral values
 - a. Philosophers would say this conclusion is an example of moral anti-realism

David Chalmers (Property Dualism)

What is property dualism?

- The theory that there is only one kind of substance, physical substance, but two ontologically fundamental kinds of property: physical and mental

Explain the 'philosophical zombies' argument for property dualism (David Chalmers).

1. I can conceive of a zombie world; that is, a world physically identical to ours but in which there is no consciousness
2. If a zombie world is conceivable, then it is metaphysically possible
3. \therefore A zombie world is metaphysically possible (MP P2, P1)
4. If a zombie world is metaphysically possible, then facts about consciousness are facts over and above the physical facts.
5. \therefore Facts about consciousness are facts over and above the physical facts (MP P3, C1)
6. If physicalism is true, then there are no facts about consciousness over and above the physical facts
7. \therefore Physicalism is false (MT P4, C2)

Explain the response to the 'philosophical zombies' argument that a 'philosophical zombie'/a 'zombie' world is not conceivable

- A 'Philosophical zombie'/a 'zombie' world is not conceivable
 - (Wittgenstein) If we imagine someone to be an automaton (zombie) and describe their 'liveliness' as automata, then we will either find our descriptions are meaningless, or we will produce a strange feeling within ourselves (i.e. the meaning of the words changes)
 - (Dennett) We cannot imagine someone to be without an inner consciousness in the same way that we cannot imagine someone who appears to be perfectly healthy not to be healthy.

Explain the response to the 'philosophical zombies' argument that what is conceivable may not be metaphysically possible

- What is conceivable may not be metaphysically possible
 - If we grant the notion that a Zombie world is conceivable, then we also have to grant that other ideas that are conceivable are also metaphysically possible – but this results in definitional changes – e.g. I can conceive of a chocolate tree, but this changes the meaning of 'tree'
 - It is possible to conceive of time travel (e.g. we have plenty of films about it) but this is no guarantee that it is metaphysically possible – is the idea of existing before I existed not logically contradictory?
 - (Arnauld) If I were ignorant of Pythagoras' theorem, then I might conceive of a triangle where $a^2 + b^2$ does not equal c^2 . \therefore But this does not mean that it is metaphysically possible. Similarly, I may simply be wrong with what I conceive to be the case about the mind and the body

Explain the response to the 'philosophical zombies' argument that what is metaphysically possible tells us nothing about the actual world.

- What is metaphysically possible tells us nothing about the actual world
 - Even if something is logically/metaphysically possible, this does not change the state of the actual world. It may be the case that it is metaphysically possible to distinguish consciousness from the physical body, but that does not mean that in this world, it is actually possible.
 - I can distinguish H₂O from water conceptually, but not physically (??)

Frank Jackson (Epiphenomenalism)

Explain the 'knowledge/Mary' argument for property dualism (Frank Jackson).

1. Physicalism states that all propositions concerning the mind can be reduced to physical propositions – thus all propositional knowledge about the mind is, in some senses physical.
2. Mary is in a black and white room where she learns every physical fact about red but never sees it.
3. When she is released from the room and sees red for the first time she gets new nonphysical information.
4. According to physicalism, all information must be about something physical
5. ∴ physicalism is false and there are mental properties.

Explain the response to the 'knowledge' argument that Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain ability knowledge (the 'ability knowledge' response).

- Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain ability knowledge (the 'ability knowledge' response)
- Physicalism states that all propositions concerning the mind can be reduced to physical propositions – thus all propositional knowledge about the mind is, in some senses physical.
- When Mary was released from the room, she did not acquire new 'propositional knowledge' about redness, she acquired new 'ability knowledge' – e.g. the ability to remember the experience of red, to imagine red, to name red.

Explain the response to the 'knowledge' argument that Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain acquaintance knowledge (the 'acquaintance knowledge' response).

- Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain acquaintance knowledge (the 'acquaintance knowledge' response)
- Physicalism states that all propositions concerning the mind can be reduced to physical propositions – thus all propositional knowledge about the mind is, in some senses, physical.
- When Mary was released from the room, she did not acquire new 'propositional knowledge' about redness, she acquired new 'acquaintance knowledge' – e.g. the ability to recognise red.

Explain the response to the 'knowledge' argument that Mary gains new propositional knowledge, but this is knowledge of physical facts that she already knew in a different way (the 'New Knowledge / Old Fact' response).

- Mary gains new propositional knowledge, but this is knowledge of physical facts that she already knew in a different way (the 'New Knowledge / Old Fact' response)
- What Mary gains is not new knowledge, but a new way of understanding an old fact.
- I.e. she learns a first-person subjective presentation of the old facts that she already knew.

Explain the difference between Substance interactionist dualism and property interactionist dualism

- Substance interactionist dualism: The theory that mental and physical events can cause one another even though the mind and body are distinct substances

- Property interactionist dualism: The theory that mental and physical events can cause one another even though mental and physical properties are distinct fundamental properties

Explain how the conceptual interaction problem (as articulated by Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia) might cause a problem for interactionist dualism

- The objection to interactionist dualism that mind and body (or mental and physical properties) cannot interact causally, because they are too different in nature, e.g. the mind is outside space while the body is in space. (According to Descartes) the soul is non-extended and immaterial

Explain how the empirical interaction problem might be a problem for interactionist dualism

1. If A causes B, then energy is transferred from A to B
2. \therefore If the mind could move a body, then the total amount of energy in the universe must increase
3. (Law of conservation) the total amount of energy in a closed system is constant
4. \therefore The mind cannot move a body

What is Epiphenomenalism? (Huxley and Jackson)

- The theory that mental states and events are epiphenomena, by-products, the effects of some physical process, but with no causal influence of their own – often combined with property dualism
- Frank Jackson: Epiphenomenal Qualia
- Jackson argues that physicalism is wrong because of the knowledge argument (the Mary argument).
- He argues that this argument is better than the modal or what's it like arguments.
- He accepts the interaction or causal problem but argues that this is not a problem if we assume that qualia is epiphenomenal

Explain how the challenge posed by introspective self-knowledge might be a problem for epiphenomenalist dualism

1. If epiphenomenalism is true, then mental states cannot cause anything physical
2. In which case mental states cannot cause me to talk about them
3. In which case mental terms cannot refer to mental states
4. In which case epiphenomenalism can have nothing to do with mental states
5. BUT Epiphenomenalism is a description of the role of mental states and their relation to physical states
6. \therefore Epiphenomenalism is false

Explain how the challenge posed by the phenomenology of our mental life (ie as involving causal connections, both psychological and psycho-physical) might be a problem for epiphenomenalist dualism

- Introspection suggests that sensations cause our actions.
- E.g. Whether I feel pain makes a difference to how I act.

Explain how the challenge posed by natural selection/evolution might be a problem for epiphenomenalist dualism

1. If qualia are unable to cause physical events, then they are unlikely to have any value for survival
2. If evolution by natural selection is true, then things that do not have any survival value are unlikely to have evolved
3. \therefore If qualia exist, then they must have some value for survival
4. \therefore qualia must have the ability to cause physical events
 - Either Qualia do not exist, or they must have the ability to cause physical events

Hilary Putnam (Functionalism)

Explain how the distinctness of mental states might be an issue for philosophical behaviourism

1. Philosophical behaviourism is a convincing account of mental predicates, only if it allows for the distinctness of mental states from behaviour
2. Philosophical behaviourism does not allow for such a distinctness

- a. Hilary Putnam's 'Super-spartans': Imagine a race of 'Super-Spartans' who are 'perfect actors', able to suppress all pain behaviour. This shows that there is a difference between the mental predicate and the physical predicate. (He goes further to suggest an X-world where even children do not display pain behaviour, and no one admits to pain ever.)
3. \therefore Philosophical behaviourism is not convincing

Explain how the issues defining mental states satisfactorily due to (a) circularity and (b) the multiple realisability of mental states in behaviour might be a problem for Behaviourism and Brain-Type Identity theory

This is an issue with reductionist physicalism: Each mental predicate (property) is reducible to a physical predicate

1. If reductionist physicalism is correct, then the physical predicates are the necessary and sufficient conditions of a particular mental predicate
2. Physical predicates are not necessary conditions of particular mental predicates
 - a. many different physical predicates can be the conditions of the same mental predicate (multiple realisability)
 - b. I might show that I am angry in a variety of different ways
 - c. It is entirely possible that humans, dogs and aliens feel pain, but as a result of entirely different neuronal patterns
3. Physical predicates are not the sufficient conditions of particular mental predicates
 - a. Many different mental predicates can be the conditions of the same physical predicates (circularity)
 - b. E.g. I might kick a ball because I am trying to practise my shooting or because I am angry – if we think that the mental predicate is the same as the physical predicate, then we are basically saying nothing about the mental predicate at all. i.e. I kicked the ball therefore I have the mental state of kicking the ball (i.e. such reductionism is circular)
4. \therefore Reductionist physicalism is not correct

Functionalism:

- All mental states can be characterised in terms of functional roles which can be multiply realised.
- Mental states are (can be reduced to) functional states. A functional state is a state with certain input and output relations to stimuli, behaviour and/or other mental states.
 - e.g. the state of 'being in pain' describes the functioning of a certain network of neurons caused by a particular stimuli, and which will result in particular behaviour and/or mental states
 - This is much like a Turing Machine or Probabilistic Automaton

Functionalism as defended by Hilary Putnam.

1. Either functionalism, the identity theory, or behaviourism is the preferable theory of mental states.
2. The identity theory is not a preferable theory of mental states (Multiple Realisability)
3. \therefore functionalism is the preferable theory of mental states. [1,2]
4. There exist reasons for adopting functionalism, independent of the problems of the identity theory and behaviourism.
 - a. A theory of mental states which enables a robust research program is to be preferred.
 - b. Functionalism provides a reasonable commonality to identify among organisms – functional states.
 - c. Functionalism successfully prevents a number of questions from being asked (questions which can waste researchers time).
 - d. Functionalism – through its description of organisms’ functional profiles plus identifications of mental states with functional states – promises to provide laws of psychology.
 - e. \therefore functionalism enables the most viable research program.
 - f. \therefore functionalism is preferable.
5. \therefore functionalism is preferable over the identity theory and over behaviourism as a theory of mental states, and there are reasons to adopt it independent of the other theories’ difficulties.

Explain how the fact that no amount of facts about function suffices to explain qualia might be an issue for functionalism

1. Qualia, (intrinsic, non-representational properties of conscious mental states) cannot, by definition, be completely analyzed in terms of their causal roles.
2. Functionalism claims that all mental properties are functional properties which can be completely analyzed in terms of their causal roles.
3. Qualia exist.
 - a. i.e. Jackson’s Mary argument
4. \therefore functionalism is false.

Ned Block (anti-functionalism)

Explain how the possibility of a functional duplicate with different qualia (inverted qualia) might be an issue for functionalism (argued by Ned Block)

1. If two people can be functionally identical, yet have different qualia, functionalism is not robust enough to explain differences in qualia
2. Two people can be functionally identical, yet have different qualia

- a. e.g. Persons A and B are both shown the same colour. Person A, however, experiences an inverted spectrum. Despite this, the responses to, e.g. Orange are the same, but Person A experiences blue.
- 3. ∴ Functionalism is not robust enough to explain individual differences in Qualia

Explain how the possibility of a functional duplicate with no mentality/qualia (Ned Block's China thought experiment) might be an issue for functionalism

- 1. Functionalism is correct, only if the hardware used to fulfil a function is irrelevant
 - a. i.e. If X functions like a mind, then X is a mind
- 2. The hardware employed to fulfil a function is not irrelevant
 - a. Imagine that all the people in China systematically organised themselves to operate just like a brain, with each individual acting as a neuron. So long as the people are performing the proper functional roles, with appropriate causal relationships, according to functionalism, this system would be considered a real mind. But this is absurd.
- 3. ∴ Functionalism is false

Paul and Patricia Churchland (Eliminative Materialism)

Explain eliminative materialism as defended by Patricia and Paul Churchland

Eliminative materialism is the claim that some or all common-sense ("folk-psychological") mental states/properties do not exist and our common-sense understanding is radically mistaken

- 1. (Theory theory) If people want to achieve X, then they will use a theory Y (If A then B) to achieve it
 - a. Lewis calls this everyday theory 'folk psychology' which includes such claims as:
 - i. Qualia exists
 - ii. Mental events (beliefs) cause behaviour
 - iii. Beliefs have intentionality (are about something)
- 2. A theory should be used, only if it is correct
- 3. Folk Psychology is correct, only if:
 - a. It has explanatory power
 - b. It progresses through tests
 - c. It coheres with our other best theories. E.g. Scientific research indicates a strong connection between the mind and brain states and processes, e.g. that behaviour is caused by events in the brain.
- 4. Folk Psychology does not meet these conditions:
 - a. There are many aspects of mental life that folk psychology cannot explain, such as mental illness, the nature of intelligence, sleep, perception and learning.

- b. If we look at the history of folk psychology, it reveals no progress since the ancient Greek authors, 2,500 years ago. By contrast, neuroscientific explanations are constantly growing in scope and power.
 - c. We cannot make folk psychology coherent with other successful scientific theories. In particular, the central idea of 'Intentional content' is highly problematic. We cannot say that a physical state has intentional content, so neuroscience cannot cohere with our Folk Psychology
5. Folk Psychology is wrong
6. \therefore Folk Psychology should be rejected

Explain how our certainty about the existence of our mental states might be an issue for eliminative materialism

- 1. If I can be certain about the existence of my mental states (and I cannot be as certain about anything in the material world), then any theory that denies the existence of mental states must be false
- 2. I can be certain about the existence of my mental states (as per Descartes) - 'I think, therefore I am'
- 3. \therefore Eliminative materialism must be false

Explain how the fact that folk-psychology has good predictive and explanatory power might be an issue for eliminative materialism

- 1. If folk-psychology has better explanatory power than neuroscience, then then it is the best hypothesis (and so it is foolish to jettison folk-psychology for neuroscience)
- 2. Folk-psychology does have better explanatory power in some senses than neuroscience
 - a. We use it everyday to understand one another, but neuroscience is almost useless in that regard. Neuroscience does not help us to understand what we need to say to comfort, persuade, motivate someone else, for example.
 - b. Much of scientific psychology is based upon the existence of Qualia, motivations, and intentionality of experience
- 3. \therefore It is the best hypothesis (and so it is foolish to jettison folk-psychology for neuroscience)

Explain how the fact that the articulation of eliminative materialism as a theory is self-refuting might be an issue for eliminative materialism

- 1. The eliminative materialist thesis is an intentional thought (expresses ideas about things)
- 2. It is coherent to express the eliminative materialist thesis, only if intentional thoughts can be expressed
- 3. According to eliminative materialism, intentional thoughts do not exist (and cannot be expressed)

4. \therefore According to eliminative materialism, the eliminative materialist thesis cannot coherently be expressed.
 - a. Eliminative Materialism concludes that intentional thoughts do not exist by presupposing the existence of intentional thoughts