

## Section 6

### New Perspectives on Non-Physicalist Theories of the Mind

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#### **Abstract:**

Recent discussions of the mind-body problem have been dominated by a small number of arguments and a narrow range of ontological options and outmoded ontological categories: dualism, physicalism, substance etc. Although some form of physicalism is orthodox in many areas of the philosophy of mind, what physicalism exactly is remains unclear, and the arguments for it are often sketchy or based on implausible assumptions. This symposium will provide an overview of some new ways of looking at the mind from a non-physicalist point of view, focussing (inter alia) on emotions, perception, the causal nature of the mind, and panpsychism.

#### **Titles and Abstracts of the talks**

1.

Maarten Steenhagen: Mere appearances and the qualitative character of experience  
It is standardly accepted that conscious experience has a qualitative character. A subject of conscious experience can typically know what the character of that experience 'is like'. This means that a subject of such an experience can have knowledge of the qualitative nature of that character. But what does a subject of experience have knowledge of when it has knowledge of the qualitative nature of the character of experience? We can distinguish two options. Either this is the physical world, or it is not. In this paper I will suppose it is the physical world: When a subject of conscious experience has knowledge of the qualitative nature of the character of its experience, that subject has knowledge of the physical world. I will first bring out that this implies that at least some aspects of the physical world are themselves qualitative in nature. I will then argue that it also implies that there is no conceptual room for 'mere appearances' or hallucinations. This presents a dilemma: either we reject the supposition, and instead accept that a subject of experience has knowledge of something other than the physical world when it has knowledge of the qualitative nature of the character of experience, or we accept that there are no 'mere appearances' so that also in hallucinations and dreams we can come to have knowledge of the physical world.

2.

Raamy Majeed: Psychologism About Emotions

In *Aspects of Psychologism* (2014) Tim Crane takes psychologism to be the view that "phenomenological and empirical data have to be taken together with the conceptual data to derive the whole picture of a single subject-matter: the mind". This paper aims to demonstrate how (i) the last three decades of emotion research in philosophy, cognitive psychology and neuroscience, taken collectively, can be viewed as an exemplar of this

approach, and (ii) the recognition of this overall methodology tells against reductive tendencies in current philosophical approaches to the nature of emotions.

3.

Alexander Greenberg: Causation as a Cloak for Ignorance

Donald Davidson claimed that "unavoidable mention of causality is a cloak for ignorance." By this he meant that whenever we use essentially causal concepts we do so because we lack knowledge of the fundamental underlying physical laws, which do not themselves feature essentially causal concepts. Thinking of causal concepts as necessarily non-fundamental in this way can seem very strange from the point of view of the philosophical debate about physicalism. The causal argument for physicalism and the exclusion problem for non-reductive physicalism, for example, both presuppose that it make sense to speak of physical causes. But if the fundamental physical laws do not feature causal concepts, then speaking of physical causes might seem somewhat misplaced. I discuss what follows if we take seriously the idea that mention of causation is a cloak for ignorance, and ask whether or not it should lead us to rethink how we argue for or against physicalism.

4.

Laura Gow: Panpsychism and the Denial of Radical Emergence

Panpsychism has recently enjoyed a resurgence of popularity, and initially seems to be a promising form of monism. The idea that the fundamental constituents of matter are experiential is rather counter-intuitive, but this is tempered by two considerations: first, we can be certain that experience exists, indeed, this is 'the most certainly known general natural fact' (Strawson), and second, physics does not seem able to tell us anything about the fundamental nature of matter beyond its dispositional and structural properties (Russell). Of course, these considerations are by no means conclusive – they are entirely compatible with standard physicalism, for example. The panpsychist's argument against standard physicalism involves claiming that the latter view is committed to an unacceptable, 'radical' emergence – specifically, the radical emergence of the experiential from the non-experiential. I argue that the panpsychist is also committed to a form of radical emergence. Panpsychists maintain that although tables and chairs (and so on) are composed of micro-experiential entities, they do not enjoy 'macro-level' experience, as we do. Consequently, panpsychists are committed to the radical emergence of the (macro) non-experiential from the experiential.