
UNIT 1 MIND AND BODY IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to map the thought pattern of philosophers. It is a task and a puzzle in understanding the mind/body problem throughout history of human thought. This unit tries to present how this problem was addressed in the ancient Western and Indian philosophy and an attempt was made to find acceptable solution.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The mind-body problem is a philosophical problem addressed by the fields of metaphysics and philosophy of mind. This problem poses three questions which insistently press themselves upon us. 1. What is the nature of the mind, of mental states and events generally? 2. What is the nature of body, of physical states and events? 3. Can mental phenomena exist independently of physical phenomena, or do they depend upon them for their existence? If physical states do indeed give rise to mental states, how can this occur, since the mental and physical seem so different from each other?

The reason for this problem is the fact that mental phenomena appear to be qualitatively and substantially different from the physical bodies on which they appear to depend. There are a few major theories on the resolution of the problem. For example, dualism is a theory that has at its basis two radically distinct concepts or principles. Psychophysical dualism deals with the view that human beings are made up of two radically distinct constituents namely body, constituted by matter like other natural objects and an immaterial mind or soul. There is another theory namely monism which in general affirms the unity or the uniqueness of its subject matter. It asserts that mind and body are, in reality, just one substance.

But this unit makes an attempt to present how mind and body were treated in the ancient western philosophy. The philosophy of the ancient times developed the conceptual basis and the central formulations of the questions for the entire subsequent European philosophy. The main questions discussed in this period were cosmological problems. Besides what is the basic or primordial

stuff from which the different things in the world are made up of? What is the difference between dust and oneself? They also raised a question about the relation between mind and body. Let us also remember that the ancient thinkers were pioneers, venturing on a new territory. They did not have the centuries of experience and trial and error that we have to fall back upon. Indeed, sometimes the very freshness and simplicity of their vision can be a lesson to us it is the foundation of all true philosophy. To know the actual meaning of mystery behind the natural world, and to go into the internal nature of human beings from external appearance of the universe were the silent features found in the history of ancient philosophy. They also turned their attention from cosmos to human mind and human body. They treated soul as a synonym for spirit, mind or self.

1.2 PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

The pre-Socratic philosophers or the early Greek philosophers were the first and free thinkers indulged in free enquiry. They were not trammelled by any supernatural reference. Some of them were deemed anti-religious. They did not give due importance to body. They considered soul as superior and treated body as inferior with material elements. For example, Ionian school insisted on the element of becoming relying on senses. One of its members Anaximenes of Miletus (588-524 BC) explained that the human soul is composed of air and it is likely that believed the entire *kosmos* (world) to be alive, with air functioning as its soul.

By laying stress on certain inner experiences and intuitive truths revealed only to the initiated, Pythagorean school seems to have represented a soul-directed subjectivism. Pythagoras of Samos (580-500 B.C) was an early Greek sage and religious innovator. He holds that human life and conduct is to be guided by a moral sense and discipline. Life on earth is only a passing phase in a long journey. Soul is immortal and it exists after death. It was there before birth. Body is the tomb of the soul and it leads a prisoner's life. Life on earth is a time for preparing for the next life. One must triumph over the passion of life by disciplines of soul.

Another pre-Socratic school flourishing at the time in Greece was Eleatic school. The thinkers of this school preferred to make use of their reason, rather than rely on the data of their senses. Hence they are called rationalists. They tend to assert that Being alone is real, that Becoming is illusory. For example, Xenophanes (570-480 BC) who was Greek poet, religious thinker and reputed precursor of the Eleatic school of philosophy, stressed unity rather than diversity and viewed the separate existences of material things as apparent rather than real. He also rejected the doctrine of transmigration of souls.

There was one more school whose philosophical stand point explains reality in terms of discrete, unconnected and irreducible entities or elements. Those who took this stand are called Pluralists or Atomists because they accepted Plurality of primary principles. Apparently a firm believer in the transmigration of souls, Empedocles (490-430 B.C), a Greek philosopher, statesman, poet, religious teacher, and physiologist declared that those who have sinned must wander through many mortal bodies and be tossed from one of the four elements to another. Escape from such punishment requires purification, particularly abstention from the flesh of animals, whose souls may once have inhabited human bodies.

Democritus (460-360 B.C), a Greek philosopher and a central figure in the development of the atomic theory of the universe attributed his theory of atoms to epistemology, ethics and metaphysics. For him, even the soul is nothing but aggregate of atoms. However, the soul consists of those atoms which have the essence of fire. These fiery atoms are the finest,

smoothest and most mobile. These atoms are distributed throughout the whole universe including animals, plants and other things, but these fiery atoms are found in the largest number in humans. Hence he terms nature and fire divine.

1.3 PLATO-ARTISTOTLE

Plato, the first great systematic philosopher of ancient Greece, laid the philosophical foundations of Western culture. Building on the life and thought of Socrates, Plato developed a profound and wide-ranging system of philosophy. His thought has logical, epistemological and metaphysical aspects; but its underlying motivation is ethical. Thus the core of Plato's philosophy is a rationalistic ethics.

Plato holds that reality is not of one piece like either flux or permanence but two fold (dualistic). There are two kinds of reality. First, the physical spatio – temporal reality perceived by senses: A changing reality in constant flux. This is material and physical. Second, the Spiritual Reality of our ideas and thought – contents: universally true, unchanging, eternal. This is the world of reason, a spiritual realm. Hence, two worlds exist: the material world of the senses, the empirical, temporal reality in constant change. It is a shadowy dark inferior type of reality: Matter. In contrast, there is the world of ideas, of stable, universal, eternal realities: Spirit

Applying this two world theory, Plato conceives a human person as empirical belonging to both worlds. He/she is a dual being composed of a material body and a spiritual eternal soul. But the true reality of human is his soul alone which is not only immortal but eternal. Soul is utterly superior to body and the body is nothing else but its shadow. Further Plato tells us that soul is immortal and imperishable and will certainly live after death. Each soul has to face judgment. The wicked ones who have cultivated gluttony or selfishness will assume the form of donkeys and other animals. However those who have lived in purity will enjoy the company of gods. Though Plato laid foundation in the dualism he has not clarified the relationship between Soul and Body. Their nature is quite opposed. The Soul is immortal, the body is perishable. The Soul is simple; the body is composite of the four elements of fire, air, earth, and water. Due to some mysterious fault, soul became embodied and imprisoned in the body. This embodiment is the cause of all human miseries, for; through it the pure souls lost their original perfection. Physical death is human salvation and the recovery of original state of perfection in the contemplation of ideas.

The Two Horses

Soul has three parts: 1. Rational part resides in the soul. 2. The spirited part or irascible courageous part (*thymos*) in heart. 3. Appetite part (*epithaimai*) resides in the abdomen. Plato noticed the evident fact of conflict within the depths of human. In the *Phaedrus*, he gave his classic comparison of the charioteer who struggles to control two troublesome steeds who tend to pull in different ways. The charioteer is the rational element in human. It struggles to bring about a harmony between the opposing pulls of the spiritual and appetitive elements in human, the two horses. The spiritual element is really a good horse; it is docile and obedient to the reason and would lead it straight up to the Good. But the appetitive element is unbridled and unruly and can only be driven by the whip.

The Immortality of the Human Soul

This is the cardinal doctrine of Platonist anthropology. If the body is prison of the Soul, then death is the moment of its joyful release. His famous dialogue, *Phaedo* contains the proofs in favour of the immortality of the human soul. Epistemologically speaking the soul has

contemplated eternal ideas. The soul cannot be produced by composition or destroyed by disintegration as it is the source of its own motion. The soul is eternal and moral from the superiority and dignity of the soul: it must survive the body. It has got both pre-existence, post existence as well. The soul is the only entity which moves by itself and moves all other things.

Aristotle

Aristotle's achievement in the history and development of Western thought are both stunning and unrivalled. More than just a philosopher, he was a scientist, astronomer, political theorist and the inventor of what is now called symbolic or formal logic. In contrast to Plato's dualist concept of human, Aristotle holds that human is a living substance, an animal composed of matter and form that is body and soul. The soul is seen as the form of the body. The soul is not a separate spiritual entity but the principle of life. He defines it as "the entelechy of a natural body endowed with the capacity of life" or as "the first entelechy of natural organic body." Being the act of the body, the soul is at the same time form, principle of movement, and end. The body is for the soul, and every organ has its purpose, that purpose being an activity.

It is non-sensical to conceive of the soul as being separate from the body. If there is no soul, there is no body and vice-versa. The body and soul are one single composite of matter and form. The composite substance, says Aristotle, is a natural body endowed with life, the principle of this life being called the soul. Body cannot be soul, for body is not life but what has life. The human soul is not separable and therefore the idea of the human soul's immortality is meaningless. The soul is thus the realisation of the body and is inseparable for it. The soul is thus the cause and principle of the living body, a) as a source of movement, b) as final cause and c) as the real substance of animate bodies. Hence Aristotle's anthropology is neither dualistic nor monistic (man is only matter or only spirit), but *hylomorphic* (one substance composed of inseparable materials and spiritual principles).

Altogether, Aristotle allows a much closer union between soul and body than did the Platonists: the tendency to look on the body as the tomb of the soul is not that of Aristotle. Rather is it for the good of the soul to be united with the body, since only so can it exercise its faculties. Aristotle insisted that the Platonic school failed to give any satisfactory explanation of the soul's union with the body.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How did Ionian School consider the relation between Soul and Body?

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2) Who are the Pluralists exposing the place of soul and body in Human nature?

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3) What is the cardinal doctrine of Platonist Anthropology?

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4) Why is Aristotelian Anthropology called Hylomorphic?

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1.4 POST-ARISTOTELIANS

The Hellenistic period is usually accepted as having begun with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C, and to have ended with the establishment in power of Augustus Caesar in 30 B.C. in Rome. Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C) was encouraged at an early age by his parents, King Philip II and Olympia's, to carry out their plan of uniting the Greek states under Macedonia (in northern Greece) and to carry out further conquests of nearly territory. Alexander conquered and united the Greek city states while still in his teens, and then moved on to the conquest of a great empire in Europe, Asia and North Africa. He established local government and broke down the barriers between Greek and barbarian. He founded new cities and promoted education. He strove to unite all races and factions into one Greek cosmopolitan people. Greek ideas and Hellenic forms in art, literature and Philosophy, modified by oriental and Egyptian influence became widespread throughout these areas during the last three centuries B.C.

The period has become known as the Hellenistic period, the age of classical civilization. The Hellenistic period was a time of political, social and religious upheaval. It was for this reason that philosophy now took on a new practical importance. Philosophers concentrated on the individual, on character, ethics, codes of conduct and personal behaviour. Popular philosophy was called on to satisfy the religious and moral needs of individuals seeking personal salvation and sure standards for life and conduct.

Poseidonius of Apamea

Of all the post-Aristotelean philosophers, Poseidonius was the one who has dealt with the relation between mind or soul and body. He is a Greek Stoic philosopher, politician and astronomer. Although his philosophy was monistic, he admitted a dualism, apparently under the influence of Platonism. There are two divisions of the Cosmos, the supra-lunar world which is heavenly and 'imperishable' and the infra-lunar world which is earthly and perishable. The former sustains the latter through the forces which it imparts. These two worlds are, however, bound together in human who is the bond between them. Composed of body and spirit, he/she stands on the borderline between the perishable and the imperishable or the earthly and the heavenly. Just as man or woman from the corporeal viewpoint is the highest grade, so, conversely, from the spiritual viewpoint, he/she is the lowest grade. He makes the soul a fiery and so material like the body- he then proceeds to emphasise the dualism of soul and body in manner reminiscent of Plato. Thus the body is a hindrance to the soul, impeding the free development of its knowledge.

1.5 PLOTINUS

He is ancient philosopher, the centre of an influential circle of intellectuals and man of letters in 3rd-century Rome, who is regarded by modern scholars as the founder of the Neoplatonic School of philosophy. It is the dominant philosophical movement of the Graeco-Roman world in late antiquity, and the most significant thinker of the movement. He is sometimes described as the last great pagan philosopher. He is historically important as an influence in moulding the Christianity of the Middle Ages and of Catholic theology. Plotinus' Vision of philosophy was

that philosophy is a kind of religion of interiority or religious wisdom, the aim of which was salvation. But salvation implies a detailed picture of Reality.

According to Plotinus the Reality is made up of four grades (levels). Or, to put it more accurately, the Real is the One (*Monos*) and it communicates itself by emanation into the Intelligence (*Nous*), this in turn into the Soul (*Psyche*) which, finally emanates Matter, the lowest grade or level of reality.

The first emanation from the One is Thought or Mind which is intuition or immediate apprehension, having a twofold object, (a) the One, (b) itself. In *Nous* exist the Ideas, not only of classes but also of individuals, though the whole multitude of Ideas is contained indivisibly in *Nous*. It enjoys that eternity which time does but mimic. It knows all things together, having neither past nor future but seeing all in an eternal present. From *Nous*, which is Beauty, proceeds Soul, corresponding to the World-Soul. This World-Soul is incorporeal and indivisible, but it forms the connecting-link between the super-sensual world and the sensual world, and so looks not only upwards to the *Nous* but also downwards towards the world of nature.

Individual human souls proceed from the World-Soul, and, like the World-Soul, they are subdivided into two elements a higher element which belongs to the sphere of *Nous*, and a lower element, which is directly connected with the body. The soul pre-existed before its union with the body, which is represented as a fall, and survives the death of the body, though apparently without memory of the period of earthly existence. Below the sphere of Soul is the material world. It forms the lowest stage of the universe and is the antithesis to the One. Plotinus combined Platonic conception of matter and also adopted the Aristotelian conception of matter explaining that matter is partially illuminated by its information and does not exist separately in the concrete as complete darkness, the principle of not-being.

In his psychology, Plotinus assigns three parts to the individual soul. The highest of these is uncontaminated by matter and remains rooted in the intelligible world, but in so far as the soul enters in the real union with the body, to form the *compositum*, it is contaminated by matter, and so there follows the necessity of an ethical ascent, as union with the One as the ultimate goal. Secondly the soul must rise above-perception, turning towards *Nous* and occupying herself with philosophy and science. This is a higher stage which carries the soul beyond discursive thought to union with *Nous*. In this union the soul retains her self-consciousness. But all these stages are but a preparation for the final stage, that of mystical union with God or the One in an ecstasy characterised by the absence of all duality.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How does Plotinus connect body and soul to the two world theory?

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2) Explain Briefly the doctrine of Plotinus?

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1.6 ANCIENT INDIAN THINKERS

Eastern traditions such as Buddhism do not hold to the dualistic mind/body model but do assert that the mind and body are separate entities. Buddhism in particular does not hold to the notion of a soul, or atman. Some forms of Buddhism assert that a very subtle level of mind leaves the body at the time of death and goes to a new life. According to Buddhist scholar Dharmakirti, the definition of mind is that which is clarity and cognizes. In this definition, 'clarity' refers to the nature of mind, and 'cognizes' to the function of mind. Mind is clarity because it always lacks form and because it possesses the actual power to perceive objects. Mind cognizes because its function is to know or perceive objects. In Ornament of the Seven Sets, Buddhist scholar Khedrubje says that thought, awareness, mind and cognizer are synonyms Buddha explained that although mind lacks form, it can nevertheless be related to form. Thus, our mind is related to our body and is "located" at different places throughout the body. This is to be understood in the context of how the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness are generated. There are many different types of mind—sense awarenesses, mental awarenesses, gross minds, subtle minds, and very subtle minds—and they are all formless (lacking shape, color, sound, smell, taste or tactile properties) and they all function to cognize or know. There is no such thing as a mind without an object known by that mind. Even though none of these minds is form, they can be related to form is the essence of what Buddha said.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

The unit has explained the different views of the ancient philosophers. Aristotle approaches the problems of philosophy in a scientific frame of mind. He makes experience to be the true source of all our knowledge, intellectual as well as sensible. "There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses" is a fundamental principle with him. It needs to be emphasized here that although Aristotle studied under Plato, he fundamentally disagreed with his teacher on just about everything. He could not bring himself to think of the world in abstract terms the way Plato did; above all else, Aristotle believed that the world could be understood at a fundamental level through the detailed observation and cataloging of phenomenon. That is, knowledge (which is what the word science means) is fundamentally empirical. The mind does not, as Plato imagined, bring out of a previous existence the recollection of certain ideas, of which it is reminded at sight of the phenomenon. It brings to bear on the phenomenon a power peculiar to the mind, by virtue of which it renders intelligible essences which are imperceptible to the senses, because hidden under the non-essential qualities. The Universal does not exist apart from the particular, as Plato taught, but in particular things; The Universal as such, in its full-blown intelligibility, is the work of the mind, and exists in the mind alone though it has a foundation in the potentially universal essence which exists independently of the mind and outside the mind.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Monos: Real is the One according to Plotinus

Atman: Self of the individual.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 MIND AND BODY IN MEDIEVAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

A human being is a conscious, experiencing subject and a possessor of a variety of mental states like hearing, seeing, feeling an ache or pain, remembering, thinking and wondering. He or she becomes the centre of a universe of experiences. Even animals, birds, fish, insects and possibly even mollusks also have mental lives, however underdeveloped and rudimentary some of these minds might be. This characterisation is called mental phenomena. At the same time, a human person possesses another phenomenon which is called physical. He or she possesses human nature, behaviour of physical bodies, processes and events. Obviously there is plenty we do not yet know about the ultimate nature of physical reality, but it seems reasonable to say that we have a better grasp of what is going on when physical occurrences take place than when mental events happen. For example, scientific investigation is uncovering more and more about the processes that take place in our bodies and brains and although our understanding is far from complete, we do at least have a good idea of what further kinds of detail we need to discover and how to set about this task. This task and puzzle leads to the mind/body problem. This unit tries to present how this problem was addressed in the medieval western philosophy and an attempt was made to find acceptable solution.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Medieval philosophy is nothing but the philosophic thought and systems which were elaborated between 400–1400 AD roughly the period between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance. Medieval philosophers are called the Christian thinkers who left an enduring legacy of Platonistic metaphysical and theological speculation. The philosophical discussions and disputes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries record later medieval thinkers' sustained efforts to understand the new Aristotelian material and assimilate it into a unified philosophical system. Although most of the greatest thinkers of the period were highly trained theologians, their work

addresses perennial philosophical issues and takes a genuinely philosophical approach to understanding the world. Even their discussion of specifically theological issues is typically philosophical, permeated with philosophical ideas, rigorous argument and sophisticated logical and conceptual analysis. The enterprise of philosophical theology is one of medieval philosophy's greatest achievements. Medieval philosophers understood the nature of human beings in terms of the metaphysics of form and matter, identifying the human rational soul, the seat of the capacities specific to human beings, with form. All medieval philosophers, therefore, held broadly dualist positions according to which the soul and body are fundamentally distinct. But only some were also substance dualists holding in addition that the soul and body are themselves substances.

2.2 THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

The Patristic era begins immediately after the death of the last Apostle John, which marked the end of the Apostolic era. The term 'patristic philosophy' covers all of these activities by the 'fathers' (*patres*) of the Church. Obviously this term was at first attributed by some Christians to their bishop and which soon was extended to all bishops. Around 4th cent, the term "Father" began to be applied to men, who, even if they were not bishops, distinguished themselves because of their doctrinal authority. Later, the criteria were established for the use of the term "Father". There were four: purity of doctrine, sanctity of life, approval of the Church and antiquity (they belonged to the 1st centuries). Later the title was attributed to all ancient ecclesiastical authors without even excluding the figures of some heretics whose knowledge is indispensable to understand the history of Christian Tradition. This period refers to any of the great bishops and other eminent Christian teachers of the early centuries whose writings remained as a court of appeal for their successors, especially in reference to controversial points of faith or practice.

As the first group of those Christian writers whose works contain philosophical elements one can count the early apologists who were particularly concerned to defend the Christian faith against pagan attack. Some of them have also treated the problem of mind and body in their philosophical analyses. For instance Athenagoras (133 – 190) a Christian apologist a philosopher and a convert to Christianity had a primary purpose to defend his theological premises. He utilised philosophical arguments and themes in his pursuit of that purpose. In his attempt to prove the reasonable character of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, he made clear his conviction, as against the Platonic view, that the body belongs to the integral person, that the person is not simply a soul using a body.

There was a group of Latin Apologists who defended Christian faith from different heresies of those days. One of the most important fathers is Tertullian (160 – 220 AD), a prolific early Christian author, "the father of Latin Christianity". Speaking of the human soul, he says that it must be a bodily substance since it can suffer. However, he speaks ambiguously even on the nature of soul, and in his Apology, he gives as a reason for the resurrection of the bodies of the wicked that "the soul is not capable of suffering without the solid substance, that is, the flesh".

He held that the soul was not pre-existent, as Plato affirmed, nor subject to reincarnation, as the Pythagoreans held. In each individual it is a new product, proceeding equally with the body from the parents like a kind of sprout, and not created later and associated with the body. This position is called traducianism in opposition to creationism, or the idea that each soul is a fresh creation

of God. For Tertullian the soul is, however, a distinct entity and a certain corporeity and as such it may be tormented in Hell.

He affirmed that the soul's sinfulness is easily explained by its Traducian origin. It is in bondage to Satan (whose works it renounces in baptism), but has seeds of good, and when awakened, it passes to health and at once calls upon God and is naturally Christian. It exists in all people alike; it is a culprit and yet an unconscious witness by its impulse to worship, its fear of demons, and its musings on death to the power, benignity, and judgment of God as revealed in the Christian's Scriptures.

The origin of the soul by God's direct creation, in opposition to any form of traducianism, was clearly affirmed by an early Christian author Lactantius (250-325 AD). The Greek Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were occupied mainly with theological questions. There had been various eminent figures in this period. One of the most important fathers is St Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 AD). He was the most learned of the Greek Fathers and one of the most interesting from the philosophic standpoint. He held that the soul, which is not confined to any one portion of the body, is a 'created essence, a living essence that has the power of giving life and perceiving sensible objects, so long as the bodily instruments endure.' As simple and uncompounded, the soul has the power of surviving the body, with which, however, it will in the end be reunited. The soul is thus spiritual and incorporeal, but how is it different from body, for body, i.e. a concrete material object, is composed of qualities which in themselves are incorporeal. He holds that the union of qualities like colour, solidity, quantity, weight, results in body, whereas their dissolution spells the perishing of the body.

It is noteworthy that St Gregory of Nyssa was the first real founder of systematic mystical theology. His scheme of the soul's ascent certainly bears some resemblance to that of Plotinus, but at the same time, it is thoroughly Christocentric. The advance of the soul is the work of the Divine Logos, Christ. Moreover, his ideal is not that of a solitary union with God, but rather of a realisation of the *Pleroma* (generally refers to the totality of divine powers) of Christ: the advance of one soul brings grace and blessing to others and the indwelling of God in the individual affects the whole Body. .

2.3. AUGUSTINE ON MIND AND BODY

Also called Saint Augustine of Hippo, original Latin name *Aurelius Augustinus*, bishop of Hippo from 396 to 430, is one of the Latin Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and perhaps the most significant Christian thinker after Paul. Augustine's adaptation of classical thought to Christian teaching created a theological system of great power and lasting influence.

Human person is seen by Augustine, after the biblical view, as the peak of material creation. He/she consists of body and immortal soul. He is quite clear about the fact that human does consist of soul and body, as when he says that 'a soul in possession of a body does not constitute two persons but one person.' The Platonic view of human still has its repercussions on him for, if he does not quite see the body as the immortal soul's prison, he will call it the soul's instrument. He defines man as "a rational soul using a moral and earthly body". So man is a union of soul and body. The soul, being superior to the body, cannot be acted on by the body, but it perceives the changes in the body due to an external stimulus. This union is not the result of sin. The soul is a simple, immaterial or spiritual substance, entirely distinct in essence from the body. Soul is life principle, directing and forming the body, but how it acts on the body is a mystery.

Augustine clearly held that the soul is created by God, but does not seem to have made up his mind as to the precise time and mode of its origin. He rejects the doctrine of the soul's pre-existence developed by Plato. He refused to allow that the soul was put into the body as a punishment for faults committed in a pre-earthly condition, but the chief question for him was how the souls arose, he leaves unsettled. He finds it hard to decide in favour of either of the two prevalent views of his day: 1) God creates a new soul for every child that is born, or 2) souls are generated from the souls of parents at the same time and in much the same manner as their bodies are produced by their parents' bodies. This theory is called "*Traducianism*". This theory seems to imply a somewhat materialistic view of the soul, no matter how one tries to refine it, for it implies that the soul is divisible and having parts is the characteristic of matter. Of course, Augustine never had the least intention of saying anything like that, but it is difficult to see how one is to avoid such a logical conclusion. This theory was condemned by Pope *Anastasius II* in 498.

Although the soul has a beginning in time, it does not die. Augustine proves its immortality by the usual arguments of his age, all of which stem from Plato. Although the soul is immortal in the sense of continuing to exist after death, it is not necessarily immortal in the sense of realising eternal blessedness. The eternal blessedness of the soul in God cannot be demonstrated: our expectation is an act of faith.

2.4 BONAVENTURE ON MIND AND BODY

He was from Italy. *San Bonaventura*, (original name *Giovanni Di Fidanza*) was a leading medieval theologian, minister general of the Franciscan order and cardinal bishop of Albano. He wrote several works on the spiritual life and recodified the constitution of his order in 1260. He was declared a doctor of the church in 1587. He developed a synthesis of philosophy and theology in which Neoplatonic doctrines are transformed by a Christian framework. He has also dealt with the unity of human soul and relation of soul to body.

According to him, the human soul is produced immediately by God, created by Him out of nothing. The human soul is the image of God, called to union with God, and on this count its production was fittingly reserved by God to Himself. He also argues that since the human soul is immortal, incorruptible, its production can be effected only by that principle which has life and perpetuity of itself. It is the entire human soul, not the rational faculty alone. There is one soul in human person, endowed with rational and sensitive faculties, and it is this soul which God creates.

The body was contained *seminaliter* in the body of Adam, the first man, and it is transmitted by means of the seed, but this does not mean that the body has a sensitive soul, educed from the potency of matter and distinct from the created and infused rational soul. The seed contains, it is true, not only the super-fluity of the father's nourishment, but also something of his *humiditas radicalis*, so that there is in the embryo, before the infusion of the soul, an active disposition towards the act of sensation, a kind of inchoate sensibility, but this disposition is a disposition to accomplishing the act of sensation through the power of the soul, once it has been infused: at the complete animation of the embryo by the infusion of the soul this inchoate sensibility creates or rather it is subsumed under the activity of the soul, which is the principle of sensation as well as of intellection,.

The human soul is the form of the body. St Bonaventure uses the Aristotelian doctrine against those who hold that the souls of all men are substance. The rational soul is the act and entelechy

of the human body, therefore, since human bodies are distinct, the rational souls which perfect those bodies will also be distinct, the soul is an existent, living, intelligent form, endowed with liberty. The soul is present wholly in every part of the body. Because it is the form of the whole body, it is present in the whole body; because it is simple, it is not present partly here and partly there, because it is the sufficient moving principle of the body, it has no particular situation, is not present at one point or in a determinate part.

Though Bonaventure accepts the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the form of the body, his general tendency is Platonic and Augustinian in character, inasmuch as he insists that the human soul is a spiritual substance, composed of spiritual form and spiritual matter. The important matter is that the soul, though the form of the body and moving principle of the body, is also much more than this, and can subsist by itself. The doctrine of the hylomorphic composition of the human soul is calculated to ensure its dignity and its power of subsistence apart from the body.

If the soul is composed of form and spiritual matter, it follows that it is individuated by its own principles. If this is so, however, why is it united with the body, for it is an individual spiritual substance in its own right? The answer is that the soul, even though a spiritual substance, is so constituted that it not only can inform a body but also has a natural inclination to do so. Conversely, the body, though also composed of matter and form, has an *appetitus* for being informed by the soul. The union of the two is thus for the perfection of each and is not to the detriment of either soul or body. The soul does not exist simply, or even primarily, to move the body, but to enjoy God; yet it exercises its powers and potentialities fully only in informing the body and it will one day, at the resurrection, be reunited with the body.

2.5 AQUINAS ON MIND AND BODY

Thomas Aquinas (*San Tommaso d'Aquino*) is Italian Dominican theologian, the foremost medieval Scholastic philosopher. He is known as 'Angelic doctor', (*doctor angelicus*), 'Dean of Medieval Scholastic Theologians', 'Founder of Father of scholasticism', 'Universal Doctor', 'Second Augustine', and 'Prince of Scholastics'. He developed his own conclusions from Aristotelian premises, notably in metaphysics, creation, and Providence. His doctrinal system and the explanations and developments made by his followers are known as Thomism.

Thomas Aquinas holds that the human person is the most perfect in all of nature. It is a being subsisting in a rational nature. The person is not the same as Nature. It is the perfection of *whoness* that makes a person. It is this perfection which makes Thomas to describe as 'that which is most perfect in all of Nature'. It is ironic that what is most perfect in all of Nature is often the cause of what is the most abominable in all of Nature.

For Aquinas, sensation is an activity of the total human composite and not an act of the soul, using the body as its instrument as Augustine would hold. The union of body and soul is not something unnatural, not a kind of punishment due to some fault in a previous state. The soul of man has no innate ideas: it needs a body in order to have sensation and to think. The union of soul and body is not to the detriment of the soul but to its good. Furthermore, there is only one substantial form in man and this is his human soul which confers on him his bodiliness. It includes his vegetative and sensitive functions together with his rationality.

Thomas Aquinas maintained that the Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism and that, departing from the views of his predecessors, he defended the unicity of the substantial form in a material substance, but in any case he soon opposed this opinion and held that the specific substantial

form informs prime matter immediately and not by the medium of any other substantial form. This doctrine he applied to human person, maintaining that there is but one substantial form in the human *compositum*. This one substantial form is the rational soul, which informs matter directly: there is no *forma corporeitatis*, still less are there vegetative and sensitive substantial forms. The human being is a unity, and this unity would be impaired, were we to suppose a plurality of substantial forms. The name 'human person' applied neither to the soul alone, nor to the body alone, but to soul and body together, to the composite substance.

The theory of the substantial union of the human composite ensures human's unity but does not it overdo it. Aquinas has made his famous distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic dependence. The purely sensitive soul of an animal is totally dependent on the body for all its operations. Hence when the body, on which it totally, intrinsically depends, perishes or corrupts, the sensitive soul of the animal cannot but corrupt too. But man has a rational soul which does not always depend on the body for all its actions. It has a subsistent form and so is only extrinsically dependent on matter. Hence, when the body corrupts, the soul is not affected.

Thomas follows Aristotle in stressing the unity of the human substance. It is the one soul in human person which confers on him/her all the determinations as human person, his/her corporeity, his/her vegetative, sensitive and intellectual operations. In a plant, there is present only the vegetative principle or soul, conferring life and the powers of growth and reproduction; in the brute there is present only the sensitive soul which acts as the principle not only of vegetative life, but also of sensitive life; in human person there is present only the rational principle or soul, which is not only the principle of the operations peculiar to itself, but also of the vegetative and sensitive operations. When death comes and the soul is separated from the body, the body disintegrates: it is not merely that rational functions cease, for the sensitive and vegetative functions also cease: the one principle of all these operations no longer informs the matter which it previously informed and instead of the unified human substance there results a multiplicity of substances, the new substantial forms being educed from the potentiality of matter.

Clearly the Platonic idea of the relation of soul to body was unacceptable to Thomas. It is the one individual man who perceives not only that he reasons and understands, but also that he feels, and exercises sensation. But one cannot have sensation without a body, so that the body, and not the soul only, must belong to human person. A person is generated when the rational soul is infused and he/she dies when the rational soul departs from the body: there is no other substantial form in human person than the rational soul and this soul exercises the functions of inferior forms, itself performing in the case of human person what the vegetative soul does in the case of plants and the sensitive soul in the case of irrational animals. It follows from that the union of soul with body cannot be something unnatural; it cannot be a punishment to the soul for sin in preceding state.

The human soul has the power of sensation, for example, but it cannot exercise this function without a body; it has the power of intellection, but it has no innate ideas and has to form its ideas in dependence on sense-experience, for which it needs a body, the soul, then, is united to a body because it needs it, because it is naturally the form of a body. The union of soul and body is not to the detriment, but to the good of the soul, *propter animam*. Matter exists for the form and not the other way about, and the soul is united to the body in order that it (the soul) may act according to its nature.

But though, Thomas emphasised the unity of human person, the close union between soul and body, he held that there is a real distinction between the soul and its faculties, and between the

faculties themselves. In God alone, are the power of acting and the act itself identical with the substance, since in God alone is there no potentiality; in the human soul there are faculties or powers of acting which are in potentiality to their acts and which are to be distinguished according to their respective acts and objects. Some of these powers or faculties belong to the soul as such and are not intrinsically dependent on a bodily organ, while others belong to the compositum and cannot be exercised without the body, the former, therefore, remain in the soul even when it is separated from the body, whereas the latter remain in the separated soul only potentially or virtually, in the sense that the soul still has the remote power to exercise the faculties, but only if it were reunited with the body; in its separated state it cannot use them.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How does Athenagoras prove the union of the soul and body?

.....

2) What is the position of Tertullian Regarding the Relation between the Soul and the body?

.....

3) How does Aquinas apply hylomorphism to relation between Soul and body?

.....

2.6 DUNS SCOTUS ON MIND AND BODY

John Duns Scotus was one of the most important thinkers of the entire scholastic period. Of Scottish origin, he was a member of the Franciscan order and undertook theological studies first at Oxford and later at Paris. He is influential realist philosopher and scholastic theologian who left behind a considerable body of work, much of which unfortunately was still undergoing revision at the time of his death. A notoriously difficult and highly original thinker, Scotus was referred to as 'the subtle doctor' because of his extremely nuanced and technical reasoning. On almost every major point of contention, Scotus took the opposite side to Aquinas. Scotus made important and influential contributions in metaphysics, epistemology and ethics.

In relation of soul to body, he holds that in human person there is only one soul, though there is, as already mentioned, a form of corporeity. There are various formalities in the human soul, which, though not really distinct from one another, are distinct with formalities, since the intellectual, sensitive and vegetative activities are formally and objectively distinct, but they are formalities of the one rational soul of human person. This one soul, therefore, not only the principle of human rational cognition, but it is also the principle of his/her sensitive activity and of life. The soul is, therefore, a part of human person, and it is only improperly that it can be

called subsistent, since it is part of a substance rather than a substance by itself; it is the composite being, soul and body, which is a *per se unum*. The soul in the state of separation from the body is not, properly speaking, a person. The soul perfects the body only when the latter is properly disposed for it, and this soul has an aptitude for this body. This means, says Scotus, that the soul cannot be individuated by the matter it informs, since the soul, that is, a particular soul, is infused into a body, and the creation of that soul is logically prior to its union with the body. The soul is united to the body for the perfection of the whole person, who consists of soul and body. According to Thomas Aquinas, the soul is united to the body for the good of the soul. The soul is naturally dependent on the senses for its cognition, and therefore the soul is united to the body for the soul's good, in order that it may operate according to its nature. For Scotus, however, the direction of human intellect towards material things and its *de facto*, dependence on the senses originate not so much in the nature of the human reason as such as in the present state of the soul, its condition in the body as wayfarer. He holds that the soul is united to the body, not for the good of the body simply, but for the good of the composite being, the human person. It is the composite being who is the term of the creative act, not soul taken by itself or body taken by itself, and the union of soul and body is effected in order that this composite being may be realised: the union exists, therefore, for the good of the whole person.

2.7 SAMKHYA THEORY AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF KANT

There is a striking similarity between the Samkhya theory of perception and the epistemological analysis made by Kant. According to Kant the manifold of sensations is transformed into perceptions and conceptions by the mind by means of the perceptual categories and the conceptual categories with their judgments. The perception is referred to the unity of the ego and converted into personal knowledge. The intellect classes the perception under its categories together with those of space and time. The transcendental unity of the ego to which all experience is referred is responsible for the synthesis of knowledge which is made available to the perceiver. In Kant, however, the order is brought about in the sensations directly by the mind or the understanding, while in the Samkhya the manifold of sensations undergoes the process of synthesis gradually through the mind, the ego and the intellect.

To Kant space and time are perceptual categories, but to the Samkhya they are conceptual categories. Both Kant and the Samkhya hold that knowledge is caused by the joint action of the senses and the internal organ presided over by the intellect. Paraphrasing the analysis of the Samkhya, it can be said that "Our eyes are only the external instruments of perception. They are not the organ of vision. The organ of vision is a centre situated in the brain. So is the case with all the senses.

The mind is connected with the senses, the senses with the corresponding centres in the brain and these centres with the physical organs in the direction of the external object. The mind presents the sensation to the ego and the intellect (*Buddhi*); the intellect takes it to the Self (*Purusha*) which is pure Spirit and is immaterial. Now real perception takes place. "The Purusha gives orders back to the motor centres or organs of action for execution through the intellect, ego and the mind".

According to the Samkhya theory of knowledge, the validity or the invalidity of knowledge is self-evident and does not stand in need of any external conditions. These characters are inherent in the nature of knowledge itself. In perception there is first the illumination of the mind by the

Consciousness, then the activation of the senses by the mind, and thirdly the contact of the senses with the external object. In order that perception may be right and not erroneous, there should be no defect either in the operation of the mind, the activity of the senses or the manner of the location of the object. The presence of the current of an unceasing consciousness linking up these different elements contributing to perception makes perception possible.

You may have heard often: "Everything is in the mind". This is because the mind assumes the shape of any object it intensely thinks upon. When you pass through a mango garden, a ray of the mind comes out through the eye and envelops the mango. It assumes the shape of the mango. The ray is termed a *Vritti*. The enveloping process is called *Vritti-vyapti*. The function of a *Vritti* is to remove the *Avarana* (veil) that envelops the object and the *Upahita-chaitanya* (consciousness defined by an adjunct). The veil that envelops the mango is removed by the *Vritti* or the mental ray. There is *Chaitanya* (consciousness) associated with the *Vritti*. This *Chaitanya* illuminates the object 'mango.' This result is termed *Phala-vyapti*. Just as a torch-light illuminates an object in a flash, this *Vritti-chaitanya* (consciousness conditioned by the mental mode) illumines the object. Only then does perception of the mango take place". "According to the Advaita theory of perception, it is the *Chaitanya* within us that makes perception possible. The *Chetana* (intelligence) within us unites with the *Chetana* (intelligence) in the object, and the result is perception. It does not follow from this that the mind and the senses are useless,.....for they serve the purpose of determining the special object of each sense.

"Knowledge comes through contact of the senses with objects. The objects come in contact with the senses. The senses are linked to the mind. The mind is connected to the Atman. The Atman illumines these" "The mind is formed out of the Sattvika portion of the five Tanmatras (subtle rudimentary principles out of which the gross elements are formed). There is light outside. The sun also emits light. The eye is made up of Agni-Tattva (fire-principle). That portion of the mind which perceives (through the eyes) is also made up of this fire-principle. So fire sees fire. Only that portion of the mind which is made up of Sabda-Tanmatra (the subtle principle of sound) can hear. Sound comes from Akasa (ether) outside. So the Akasa in the mind hears the Akasa from outside. But the Atman can see, hear, taste and feel everything. The Atman alone can be seen by the Atman. Therefore, whatever we see outside is only the "Atman" The consciousness of the oneness of the object and the subject can arise only in the realisation of the Atman. Sense-perception is thus the consciousness of an identity in difference, a perception of the object as different from the subject, together with the consciousness of its relation to the subject by way of a mysterious uniting link. This identity-consciousness owes its existence to the universal Self, and the difference-consciousness is caused by its being modalised, restricted and reflected in the *Vritti* of the Antahkarana.

"Perception through the finite mind or cognition or experience takes place serially and not simultaneously". Simultaneous knowledge can be had only in Nirvikalpa Samadhi where past and future merge in the present. Only a Yogi will have simultaneous knowledge. A man of the world with a finite mind can have only a knowledge in succession. Though several objects may come in contact simultaneously with the different sense-organs, yet the mind acts like a gate-keeper which can admit only one person at a time through the gate. The mind can send only one kind of sensation at a time into the mental factory for the manufacture of a decent percept and a nice concept.

What we call correct perception is no doubt valid for all practical purposes in life, as it corresponds to facts that can be verified by observation, coheres with the perceptions of the

different senses and with the experiences of other people, and also as it is seen to lead one to successful activity and therefore to possess the character of practical efficiency.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have described the philosophical understanding of the mind and body, in terms of scholastic western philosophy which they called as body and soul. The brief understanding of the Indian views is also presented.

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UNIT 3 MIND AND BODY IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

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- 3.2 Up to Descartes
- 3.3 Two Approaches: Monism and Dualism
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the unit is to introduce to the students a basic understanding of the mind- body problem in the modern Western Philosophy. Here the nature of reality from two viewpoints – monism and dualism has been talked about. The interrelation between mind and body and the various theories regarding the interaction between the two have been dealt with. Also a brief look at the standpoint of various modern philosophers on this particular issue has also been discussed.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The surprise and confusion regarding the nature of man has baffled philosophers of all ages. The world seemed full of contradictions. The mind and body did not seem to be one and the same substance or properties of one. A dualistic stand was there even in the earliest philosophical traditions. In the Cartesian philosophy, this distinction became so systematic that its effects got so rooted into various aspects of human life and thinking. Problem of understanding reality as two had its own problems. Though the interaction between the two seemed quite natural to common sense but to state it in a solid theory, it became difficult. There were other theorists who with equal conviction argued that there were not two different substances but the world was full of properties and appearances of the one and the same reality. The modern period of western thought was in fact preoccupied with the debates on the nature of reality and understanding the relation between both mind and matter.

3.2 UP TO DESCARTES

The mind-body problem, i.e. how the mind and the body are interrelated, is commonly seen as the most centric problem in the philosophy of mind. The other relevant issues discussed in the philosophy of mind are about the nature of the mind and it may not be much concerned about the nature of the physical body. Throughout history, be it in philosophy, religion or myth, there have been representations of a separation between the corporeal and spiritual and prominence have always been given to mind or the spiritual. It has been considered more enduring, efficacious and valued.

For long, in the history of philosophy, the mind body problem did not exist with such a severe dichotomy as happened in the modern period. The reigning mode of explanation sorted out reality and causality along quite different lines or, rather, without the sort of lines associated with a sharp dichotomy between the mental and the physical. Neither was there any serious difference between ideas of causality, of what is ultimately real, and how we can know with certainty - ontology and epistemology respectively. These concerns were all rather neatly integrated in to an Aristotelian, organismic framework of things. But during the renaissance, the group of causes started drifting towards two poles, putting this framework under strain. The material and efficient causes were drifting towards one pole and the formal and final ones towards another. Though we do not take them to be extremes in a mind-body dichotomy, yet, along with concepts like substantial form or pre-Aristotelian understanding of matter must have given rise to the problems that we saw in the modern world.

If we try to locate the beginning of the problem of mind-body dualism, as we understand it today, it would be doubtlessly in the writings of Rene Descartes. We find the full-blown paradox of the mind-body dichotomy in the Cartesian writings. In thinking, his method of radical doubt reaches a single certainty. A class of existence gets derived as the thinking substances. Mind was being put forward as a self-contained sphere of enquiry. This pole of the dualism was linked to an equally strongly-held belief that causality in the material world is based on matter in motion, 'extended substances', obeying their own material laws. Introspection became the basis of certainty, while scientific knowledge of the external world depended on the laws of matter and motion. These two bases for knowing introduced two closely-linked chasms in modern thought: the gap between mind and body in Ontology and the gap between the subject and the object in epistemology. Matter was considered something that was available for dealing in mathematical terms and to experimental method. Hence came the notion that what science deals with should be in terms of bodies having extension and shape. Similarly the non-extendable substance was understood in the negative, something that could not be treated mathematically and experimentally.

3.3 TWO APPROACHES: MONISM AND DUALISM

Dualism and monism are two important approaches taken to account when trying to solve the mind body problem.

Monism

Monism comes from the Greek word *monas*, meaning *one*. Monism is the strong argument that the mind and body are not ontologically distinct entities. This was first advocated by Parmenides

in the West and then in the seventeenth century, this stream of thought was further taken to greater significance by Baruch Spinoza. There are three strands of thought under this mode of thought. The physicalists claim that entities postulated by physical theories exist and the mind and its properties will be explained eventually as the physical theories evolve further. Idealists maintain that the mind is all that there is and the external world is either the mind itself or only an illusion created by the mind. And the neutral theorists maintain that there is some other neutral substance and both mind and matter are but two different properties of the same.

As we understand monism, it responds to the mind body problem stating that there are no two distinct substances. It would go on to mean that in fact there is only body or mind. These thoughts are contrary and the consequences of the two are quite distinct. We will look at some of the further explanations of the monistic thought.

Physicalism

To state in quite general terms, the theory proposes that everything is *physical*. The contemporary philosophers state the same as that everything supervenes on, or is necessitated by, the physical. The actual world, the universe and everything in it, conforms to a certain condition, the condition of being physical. Physicalists but never deny that there are many items in the world that do not appear physical in the first glance like the items of biological, or psychological, or moral, or social. But they hold on to the view that in the ultimate case, these items turn out to be either physical or supervene on the physical.

It is important to understand the concept of supervenience here. It is a central notion in analytic philosophy and claims that aesthetic, moral and mental properties supervene upon physical properties. If we consider two pictures on a computer screen, composed of pixels, we can say that the pictures supervene on the pixels. Or if we were to analyse closely a painting, going closer to it, we no longer see the painting but the brush strokes. Then we could say that the painting depends on the brushstrokes, but is not identical with them – the painting supervenes on them. Here we may have two possible theories: reductive and non-reductive. The reductive theorists might say that every mental concept can be reduced, somehow or other, to a physical concept and the non-deductive theorists might say that instead of trying to reduce the mental to the physical, the mental supervenes on the physical, as we saw above. It is a hope based enterprise that as science progresses, physics and neuroscience may be able to explain everything that is there.

Identity Theory

The identity theory of mind holds that states and processes of the mind are identical to states and processes of the brain. For example, if we feel pain somewhere in the body, then it is equal to say that the appropriate activity is going on in the brain, and if we feel love for someone, then it is another state in the brain. It may not be that the mind is identical to the brain. To ask, when we experience something green, does it mean that the brain state is green too, does not make much sense. Mind and brain remain a matter of identifying processes. The identity theory of mind is to the effect that these experiences just *are* brain processes, and not merely *correlated with* brain processes.

Functionalism

It is a questioning as to “how” rather than “what”. It is to wonder what the *function* of the mind is, or how the mind works, and to distinguish it from the body by saying that this function is different from those performed by the body. According to functionalism that which makes something a mental state of a particular type does not depend on its internal constitution, but rather on the way it functions, or the role it plays, in the system of which it is a part. It is a philosophical thesis about the nature of mental states. According to these theorists, mental states can be identified with the function they have on behaviour. Instead of questioning about what a mental state *is*, i.e. what it's composed of, or where it is, we call it *mental* because of what it does. The fact may be that we identify different bridges by the same concept for the function they do though they may be different in size, shape and strength.

Eliminativism

Eliminative materialism or eliminativism is the radical claim that many of our common sense understanding about the mind is deeply wrong and that some or all of the mental states posited by common-sense do not actually exist. The theorists claim that folk psychology, our ordinary common-sense understanding of the mind is hopelessly flawed and will eventually be replaced or eliminated by an alternative. This is usually taken to be an accomplishment that will be made by neuroscience, the study of the brain and nervous system. Eliminative materialism dates back to the 1960s and perhaps earlier. Descartes famously challenged much of what we take for granted, but he insisted that, for the most part, we can be confident about the content of our own minds. Eliminative materialists go further than Descartes on this point, since they challenge the existence of various mental states that Descartes took for granted. They might agree that folk psychology “works” to a certain satisfaction, but claim it will be replaced. For instance, the existence of malevolent spirits was invoked to explain some mental disorders in the past, but now we say that this account has given way to psychological and other explanations. Thus we generally note that malevolent spirits turned out to be not real after all. In a similar way, notes the eliminativist, the folk psychologist's theories will give way soon as mental states do not exist.

Idealism

Idealism offers an explanation to the reality or human experience in which ideas or spiritual, non-materialistic elements are central. The most famous idealist, perhaps, was George Berkley. This theory considerably differs from all the other monistic explanations that we saw before. In idealism the argument is that, instead of all mental concepts being actually physical, whatever be the way, the opposite may be true. Only minds and the mental are true and exist, and the physical should be explained in terms of the mental. Idealism, like any other monistic theory, does not need to explain the problem of mind-body interaction as ultimately there is only one substance.

Monism, particularly physicalism, is not without its share of criticism. We often find that there is something beyond all that is physical. In the famous article “what Mary didn’t know” by Frank Jackson a situation is presented. Herein Mary is given all possible information about colour, though she has never seen any colour for herself. Her world is in black and white. The day she is out in front of something red, she comes to know about the colour red that was not available to her before. From the two claims from this situation, i.e. 1. Mary had all the information about the physical before she was released and that 2. Mary learned some new information after she was released, we may come to conclude that after all everything may not be physical.

Dualism

The history of dualism could be traced as back as to Plato and Aristotle. But until in the seventeenth century, it was not precisely formulated and presented. This systematization we see happening in the writings of Rene Descartes. In philosophy of mind, dualism is considered to be any of those views about the relationship between mind and matter, which goes on to claim that the two are ontologically different and separate categories. Dualists are strong in claiming that neither mind nor matter could be reduced to the other. There are different kinds of dualistic theories and grades corresponding to the extremity of their claims.

The predicate dualists claim that there should be more than one predicate to make sense of the world. It is to ask if everything could be reduced to the physical. Suppose, one has to say that he/she is happy, can the experience of being happy be reduced to a physical predicate, such as one explaining it in terms of the brain states? If we cannot do that, then it means we need more than a single predicate to explain about the world. Almost all the psychological experiences may point to dualism this way. The arguments of the property dualists are stronger. The property dualists would argue that the two may not be substantially different but the mental and physical properties are categorically distinct and not reducible to each other. This is commonly called as mind and matter and is in opposition to monism which tends to treat both mind and matter as ultimately the same thing. They claim that whatever there *is* in the world, it must have more than one property, such as the property of being physical. It proposes that, although the world is constituted of just one kind of substance - the physical kind – there exist two distinct types of properties: The physical properties and the mental properties. To say it differently, it is the claim that non-physical, mental properties such as beliefs, desires and emotions *inhere* in some physical substances, such as in the brains.

Another kind of dualism, substance dualism, claims that there are just different types of substances, not just predicates or properties. Here substance is understood as something more than the collection of the properties it possesses; it is *the thing which* possesses them. So the mind is not just a collection of thoughts, but is *that which* thinks, *that which has them*, an immaterial substance over and above its immaterial states. The substance dualists argue that the mind is an independent substance and the property dualists argue that the mind is a group of independent properties that emerge from and cannot be reduced to the brain.

3.4 TOWARDS A SOLUTION - THE PROBLEM OF INTERACTION

Every other philosopher has something to say about the mind body problem and there does not seem to be a conclusive theory yet. Thinkers even today face the hard problem of consciousness, i.e. how the physical neural properties give rise to the mental faculties. How body and the mind interact with each other? How do thoughts cause actions or how do unconscious fantasies cause psychosomatic illnesses? How do thoughts impact on particles of matter and how do material impacts cause thoughts? Why do we have any experience at all, especially the experience of other minds? The problem of mind and matter influencing each other has been one of great magnitude. There have been many theories proposed to explain the same. Considering the claims

of dualism, we will look at certain solutions proposed to the problem of mind – body interaction and see how far they are viable.

Interactionism

If the mind and body were distinct, how do they interact. It seems there is some interaction between the two. Descartes gave interactionism its classical formulation. In the Cartesian philosophy, the theorists who propose an interaction between the mind and body hold that the two, though separate and distinct substances, casually interact with each other. They assert that a mental event can be the cause of a physical event and the physical event as that of a mental event. It means that there are two types of events, physical and mental, either of which can cause the other. For example, a pin-prick causes pain and the pain causes screaming. The dualist position according to this view go on to show the existence of two substances, body and mind, where physical events take place in the one and mental events in the other, while the two series of events can interact causally. Though Descartes could give no satisfactory account of the how the interaction takes place, he suggested that the pineal gland deep within the brain was the place to look for a possible explanation.

Epiphenomenalism

While Cartesian dualism argues that there is a two way interaction between the mind and body, all dualists do not hold on to the same view. Epiphenomenalism holds the view that the interaction is one sided. They argue that the mental events are caused by – or are a by-product of the physical events and it does not work the other way round. It is a one-way process. There is a denial of the interaction of the mental to the physical. One of the common analogies used to show the effect is that of the smoke rising from a factory. The smoke is a by product of the factory's running, whereas it actually does not cause the running of the factory. This theory holds the view that mental events are caused by physical events in the brain, but they have no effects upon any physical events. They claim that the mental events play no causal role in this process. Huxley, who held the view, compared mental events to a steam whistle that contributes nothing to the work of a locomotive.

Occasionalism

occasionalism is a philosophical theory about causation. It says that the created substances cannot be efficient causes. But all the events are taken to be caused directly by God. Following Descartes' death, some philosophers like Malebranche tried to address the problem of interaction. Holding on to a dualistic view, he suggested that neither body nor mind was causally related, but the two were in fact connected by divine interaction. On every occasion in which an interaction occurred, the intervention of God was required to explain it. So, whenever we wish to lift an arm God must intervene to cause the body to obey and similarly, whenever the body feels pain, God must allow that sensation to occur in the mind. The theory states that the illusion of the efficient causation between mundane events arises out of God's causing of one event after another. However there is no necessary connection between the two. It is not the first event causes God to cause the second event. Rather, God causes one and then the other. Occasionalism

is considered to be a rather odd viewpoint that seems unable to exist outside of a theological setup.

Parallelism

Parallelism is the view that mental and physical phenomena occur in parallel but that these simultaneities never involve causal interactions. They accept that the mind-body interaction is deeply problematic and there is no direct causal link between the two. The mind does not affect the body and the body does not affect the mind. This solution was proposed by Leibniz, but did not have much relevance outside the theological perspective. He argued that some kind of pre-established harmony between the two makes it look like having mutual interaction, but it is nothing but a coincidence. He claimed that no interaction or causation was necessary because like, the two clocks that keep the same time, behaviour of the two substances has been synchronized. Parallelism claims that though there is a correlation between the two, there is no causal interaction between the mental and the physical. Body and mind do not interact with each other but simply run alongside one another, in parallel. It is like saying that the event of burning one's finger and the feeling of pain happen to occur simultaneously but one does not cause the other. Hence it is a difficult position to hold. It does not account for the interaction that we experience in everyday life. To hold that there are two substances and there are obvious changes simultaneously in both without any causal relation seems counterintuitive.

3.5 SOME MODERNS THINKERS

Descartes

Descartes is famous and is celebrated for his position on the nature of mind and body. But he is not the inventor of the problem of mind-body interaction. A dualistic stand on reality could be traced back to the works of Plato. The concept of an immaterial soul that survived death was common to many of the early Christian thinkers. But what made Descartes famous was his method of approaching the point and the arguments that he forwarded in favor of the same.

Descartes claimed in the *Discourse* that the mind-body distinction directly followed from the cogito argument. Descartes claimed that mind could survive without the body and as per the definition of substance, 'nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence', falls in to this category. For Descartes, the substance in particular has attributes as well. Mind has thought as its property and extension is that of the matter. Mind and body were considered separate by Descartes, as the two, he believed could exist independently. The distinction is made based on their completely different nature. In the *second meditation*, Descartes argues that he is nothing but a thinking thing or being and it makes no sense to ascribe such modes to entirely extended and thoughtless things in the world. And also it is senseless to ascribe the properties of shape, weight or motion to the thinking, non-extended beings. Though, he opines, in this world the two cannot be entirely separate, he failed to provide a satisfactory answer to how the two interacted.

Spinoza

Baruch Spinoza, a monist, does not hold on to the view that man is a combination of two substances. Mind and body are nothing but two expressions of one and the same thing – under

thought and extension. Hence the mind-body problem, the question of the interaction between the two does not arise. According to him, there is a corresponding idea to every extended body and the vice versa. Just as the attribute of extension is the totality of extended things, so the attribute of thought is the totality of ideas. Hence mind and body are just two ways of considering one thing and in themselves they are not two distinct substances. Since his system did not take two separate things in to account, there was no question of interaction between the bodily and mental events. They do not cause each other, but he believed, that they *are all caused* as the universe is a deterministic system.

Descartes had the problem of deciding whether sensations were modes of matter or of mind, and he never came to a clear decision on the issue. On the one hand, they seem to be part of our stream of consciousness; on the other hand, they are extended, which means that they must belong to the brain. As far as Spinoza is considered, there was no such problem of thinking if the sensations were modes of matter or mind, since a single thing could be *both* extended *and* thinking.

John Locke

According to John Locke, there was an error in our thinking about the issue of mind and body. Locke's agnosticism could be understood as a warning not to confuse human point of view with what reality is. There may not be a problem in fact, Locke believes. It was an error of confusing nominality with reality – it was not a real problem but a nominal one.

Both Descartes and Locke make a distinction between the body and mind and both explain identity in terms of thinking. Locke here considers the persisting thought unlike Descartes who considers thought at a given moment. Locke, in contrast to Descartes who says that the self is but the thinking being alone, goes on to argue that the self is both the soul and the body. Locke thinks that soul and body are separate, but related. He does not seem to be making a sharp, substantial difference between the two. He does not agree that 'essence consists solely in the fact that he is a thinking being'. He does not give much of an importance to thinking at a given moment, but takes into account memory and thought as a persistent stream of happening.

Hume

Hume seems committed to the existence of two different kinds of events – mental and physical. But he does not ascribe them to different substances. He considers thus mind to be no more than a collection of perceptions and body, a collection of sensible qualities. Hume appears to be advocating a dualistic distinction between objects that belong to fundamentally different categories – those that are spatially located and those that are not. Hume rejects both materialism and immaterialism as rival forms of substance theory. But he equally rejects the alternative proposal by Spinoza, who thought there was a substance that is neither material nor immaterial but something to which both thought and extension belonged.

For Hume, both mind and body are important. Hume's idea that the mind is a collection of perceptions emerges clearly in the *Treatise*, where he elaborates on the bundle theory of mind by comparing it to a theater where perceptions appear and reappear. Central to his thought is the body as well. He considers a person to be embodied consciousness. He defends the idea that

one's body is essential to one's identity. He also takes to the view that our thoughts and perceptions have material causes. All mental events have physical causes, and this idea is reflected in his treatment of both impressions and sensations. Ideas too have a bodily foundation as they are associated in a way that depends on corresponding traces in the brain. He also holds on to the view that some mental events give rise to physiological or physical changes too.

Berkeley

George Berkeley is a monist who believes in the existence of the mind alone. In the pursuit for certainty, to avoid skepticism, Berkeley adopts Descartes' 'cogito'. Instead of the word 'matter', he uses the term, 'sensible things'. He defines it as a collection of sensible qualities which are immediately perceived. He argues that the sensible properties are property of the mind and not objects. Thus, he claims, there cannot be any thing independent of mind.

Berkeley does not accept two different notions of properties like Descartes. When examining his perception of things, Berkeley claims that whatever information he has are all secondary properties, which are functions of his mind. He, thus, rejects the existence of primary qualities. Hence the existence of physical world as a substance is rejected as well. To him, mind alone is the one and only substance and reduces matter to nothing but mere noise. He, like Descartes, brings in the concept of God as the cause of our ideas, the only possible cause of all ideas. And he claims that the sensible things do not vanish once no one perceives them though 'being is to be perceived'. The collection of sensible things is always there in God's mind and they do not cease to exist when some one does not perceive them.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

The approaches to reality have been many. Some have taken it as appearances or properties of one and the same substance, whereas, some believed there to be substantially different things. Mind and body problem is a phase in this understanding of reality. The monists faced the problem of explaining how the one appeared to be two contrary things and the dualists faced the task of explaining how two different substances are causally related. The modern western philosophers were all deep occupied with the nature of the physical and the mental and the relation between the two. Both the theories of monism and dualism were briefly looked at in the chapter. Also the views of a few modern thinkers were taken into consideration to see how different thinkers tried solving the issue, with or without the need of God.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Supervenience - It is a central notion in the analytic philosophy and claims that aesthetic, moral and mental properties supervene upon physical properties.

Eliminativism – It is a theory that folk psychology, our ordinary common-sense understanding of the mind is hopelessly flawed and will eventually be replaced or eliminated by an alternative better explanation of the physical world.

Parallelism – It is the view that mental and physical phenomena occur in parallel but that these simultaneities never involve causal interactions.

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UNIT 4 MIND AND BODY IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Mind-Body Problem: Contemporary Debate
- 4.3 Different Positions on Mind and Body
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the students to the complex notion of mind-body relationship and see its significance for our self-understanding.
- To make a survey of the various contemporary positions on this complex issue.
- To relate the mind-body problem to the contemporary phenomenological understanding of “lived body” and thus to appreciate the body as profoundly more than material.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The unit surveys the seven metaphysical strategies in understanding the mind in contemporary philosophy. A brief evaluation of the different positions in contemporary philosophy is taken. Then we ask if the mind-body problem is a false problem which should be “dissolved away”. Finally, we take up the continental tradition and see the significance of “lived body” there. Here the body is taken much more seriously and not apart from the mind.

4.2 THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM: CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

The mind–body problem is the problem of giving an account of how minds are related to bodies, or how mental states and processes are related to bodily states and processes. That they are intimately related seems beyond doubt, and has not been seriously disputed. Evidently, our perceptual experiences depend on the way external physical stimuli impinge on our sensory surfaces, and, ultimately, on the processes going on in the brain; our desire for a drink of water somehow causes our body to move in the direction of the water-cooler; a bruised elbow causes me pain when it is touched, and the pain in turn causes me to groan and wince; and so on. But how do conscious experiences emerge out of the electrochemical processes in a grey mass of neural fibres? How do our beliefs and desires manage to get the appropriate neurons to fire and thereby cause the right muscles to contract? Schopenhauer called the mind–body problem ‘the world knot’, a puzzle that is beyond our capacity to solve (Kim 2011).

The mind–body problem as it is now debated, like much else in contemporary philosophy of mind, has been inherited from Descartes. Descartes conceived of the mind as an entity in its own right, a ‘mental substance’, the essential nature of which is ‘thinking’, or consciousness. In contrast, the defining nature of material bodies, or material substances, was claimed to be spatial extendedness—that is, having a bulk in physical space. Thus, Descartes envisaged two disjoint domains of entities, one consisting of immaterial minds with their mental properties (e.g. thinking, willing, feeling) and the other of material bodies with their physical properties (e.g. size, shape, mass, motion). For Descartes, not only did minds lack spatial extension; they were not in physical space at all. However, the two domains are not to be entirely unconnected: a mind and a body can form a ‘union’, resulting in a human being. Although the nature of this ‘union’ relationship was never made completely clear, (Descartes claimed it to be a primitive notion that is intelligible in its own right), it evidently involved the idea that a mind and a body joined in such a union are involved in intimate and direct causal interaction with each other.

Thus, Descartes's mind–body doctrine combines substance dualism, i.e. a dualism of mind and body, each conceived as an independent substance, with the idea that there is causal interaction between the two. Many of his contemporaries, like Leibniz and Malebranche, were substance dualists, but they rejected the idea of mind–body causal interaction. They found it difficult to make sense of the idea that immaterial minds with neither extension nor mass, and not even in physical space, could somehow move material bodies with mass and inertia. Substance dualism, however, has largely dropped out of contemporary discussions, although it has by no means disappeared; few philosophers now find the idea of minds as immaterial substances coherent or fruitful.

There has been a near consensus, one that has held over almost a century, that the world is essentially physical, at least in the following sense: all that exists in the space-time world are bits of matter and complex structures aggregated out of bits of matter, and the space-time world is the whole world. If all matter were to be removed from this world, nothing would remain—no minds, no ‘entelechies’, no ‘vital forces’, and not even an empty space-time. According to this physical monism (or ‘ontological physicalism’), mental states and processes are to be understood as states and processes occurring in certain complex physical systems, such as advanced biological organisms, not as states of some ghostly immaterial beings. This means that the principal remaining project for contemporary discussions of the mind–body problem is that of explaining how the mental character of an organism or system is related to its physical nature (Kim 2011).

Recently, the Schopenhauerian pessimism has been resurrected by some philosophers, who argue that the mind–body problem is insoluble, and that we will never be able to understand how consciousness, subjectivity, and intentionality can arise from material processes. In any case, one thing that is certain is that the mind–body problem is one of the deepest puzzles in contemporary philosophy, and that it will continue to test our philosophical intelligence and imagination (Kim 2011).

4.3 DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON MIND AND BODY

Each and every culture has its peculiar views about what the soul or the mind is, where is it “seated”, what is it made of, and how does it function. Contemporary debates reflect in many respects the distinction between mind and body made by the early modern philosopher Rene Descartes. Descartes has bequeathed to the next generations of philosophers the very language in which we often talk about minds and bodies. This language, according to the English analytic philosopher G. Ryle has prevented philosophy and psychology from a satisfactory solution of the problems that arise from the mind-body dichotomy (Karageorgiev 2008).

Moreover, the Cartesian language speaks about minds with the same words used to speak about bodies: as if our thoughts, desires, and beliefs are ‘things’ or substances on a par with tables, chairs, and houses. This is a category mistake G. Ryle which makes the mind look as something impossible to catch, ‘a ghost in the machine’ G. Ryle of the human body. Many contemporary philosophers and scientists object to ghosts of whatever kind and their debate with adherents of Cartesianism has gave birth to the three major strategies in the metaphysics of mind: dualism, reductionism, and eliminativism.

In what follows we will take up the major features of these strategies in comparison to each other. Then we will sketch the explanatory approaches which supervene the metaphysical strategies – functionalism (dualistic and reductionistic), connectionism(eliminativistic), and the emerging view of the so called dynamic systems theory.

Dualism

Modern dualism has been stated most clearly by Descartes, who insists: ‘The rational soul could not be in any way extracted from the power of matter but must be expressly created.’ More recently, the Austrian philosopher F. Brentano replaces the soul with the phenomenon of intentionality and turns it into the most important and un-eliminable feature. Of consciousness: ‘the reference to something as an object is a distinguishing characteristic of all mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything similar.’ This has become known as ‘Brentano’s thesis’ and many contemporary dualists like Thomas Nagel accept it. What dualism – beside superstition, religious belief in angels and immortal souls, and other historical roots – amounts to, is that mind is a ‘brute metaphysical fact’ which cannot be explained in non-mental terms like physical or biological ones. Nagel adds that mind could be never known in the way we know material things, i.e. from an objective perspective. We will never be able to understand what it’s like to be a bat, because ‘some things can be known only from the inside’ (Karageorgiev 2008).

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is basically the mind-body problem?

.....

2) What is Brentano’s thesis?

.....

Reductionism

Not all philosophers agree with Nagel. Some raise the question whether any phenomenon can be known in some other way different from the first person perspective, insofar as we cognise ultimately as persons, not from an objective perspective as e.g. telescopes or thermometers. These philosophers believe that mental phenomena can ultimately be explained -in one way or another - as physical phenomena. It is a matter of scientific development and philosophical analysis of mental concepts like 'mind', 'belief', or 'hope' to achieve such explanation. This doesn't mean that belief is a physical thing. It means that the word 'belief' refers to something in our lives that can also be referred to by non-mental terms like 'propositional representation that leads to a certain movement, e.g. avoiding negative stimuli'. By analogy, when chemists speak of H₂O, i.e. when they have reduced 'water' to 'H₂O' it doesn't mean that water doesn't exist. Dualists claim that no proper reduction of the mental to the physical is possible, while some philosophers take the reduction to be actually elimination: not of the term by which we refer to the mind and its derivatives, but of the very thing itself. They are called eliminativists.

Eliminativism

Eliminativism holds that our commitment to different mental states is nothing more than an outdated folklore, and that it is certain to be superseded by a more scientific understanding of our nature. Thus, the standard eliminativist argument begins with the assumption that vernacular ('folk') psychology—in particular, the psychology of beliefs, desires, and other 'propositional attitudes'—is infested with massive and irremediable systemic errors and gaps, and concludes that it will be made obsolete as the scientific—in particular, neuroscientific—understanding of our behaviour continues to advance. Beliefs and desires will ultimately meet the fate that befell phlogiston and magnetic effluvia, the forgotten posits of discarded theories. This eliminativist argument is sometimes advanced against intentional psychology countenancing cognitive states that are analogous to propositional attitudes of vernacular psychology (Kim 2011).

Eliminativists propose that we may go on using the mental vernacular (words like 'depression', 'soul' or 'hope') in everyday communication, but such a language must be abandoned in science. This is similar to the situation in which we speak in everyday situations about sunsets and sunrises, although we know from physics that the sun does neither set, nor rise.

Functionalism

It is the approach which dominates contemporary research in not only philosophy of mind, but in the emerging interdisciplinary enterprise called cognitive science. The latter coordinates the efforts of philosophers, psychologists, linguists, artificial intelligence theorists, neuroscientists, and anthropologists to understand the nature of mind. Functionalism is arguably the most influential position on the mind-body relation during the past four decades. Functionalism conceives of mental kinds as 'functional kinds', not physical kinds. Pain, for example, is to be understood in terms of its function as a causal intermediary between sensory input (e.g. tissue damage), behaviour output (e.g. wincing, groaning, and escape behaviour), and other mental states (e.g. desire to be rid of it). An internal state of an organism that serves this function, which can vary from species to species (and perhaps from individual to individual), is said to be a 'realizer' of pain. Most functionalists are physicalists in that they hold that only appropriate physical states could serve as realizers of mental states functionally conceived. But they differ from type-physicalists in holding that, on account of their variable realizability, mental states

cannot be identified with physical–biological states. Functionalism construes psychology as an autonomous science of these functional properties and kinds, specified in terms of their causal roles and abstracted from their specific physical-biological realizations. This view of psychology has been influential; it can be considered the received view of the nature of cognitive science. The question whether or not functionalism is a non-reductive form of physicalism depends crucially on exactly what physical reduction requires, and it must be considered an open question. (Kim 2011)

Computationalism

Computational version of functionalism has been established due to the works of the English mathematician Allan Turing in 1940. The basic idea of his Turing Machine is that operations in the neurons which either fire an impulse or don't, can be represented as digital units, say of 1s and 0s. Performing computations on such symbols, a purely mechanical device can add 3 to 2 and get as a result 5, which is correct. More complex operations can be digitalized and implemented in a Universal Turing Machine, so we can say that mind is similar to a computer in that minds process information by the same rules as computers. This view has become known as the computer metaphor of the mind. However, there remains the broad and difficult question how those representations are being embodied in the nervous system of organisms (Karageorgiev 2008).

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Briefly explain the “most influential position on the mind-body relation”?

.....

2) What is computationalism?

.....

Connectionism

Symbolic representation which we encounter in language does not seem possible for embodiment by the neurons which die too often to be able to use their growth or metabolic changes as a means for encoding information. Therefore connectionism evoked the concept of neural networks which implement in their sustainable patterns of activation memory and knowledge, even conceptual knowledge. Neural networks are being modeled in computers, and quite successfully – robots which keep balance when kicked by the experimentator are constructed on this basis. ‘Connectionism can be distinguished from the traditional symbolic paradigm by the fact that it does not construe cognition as involving symbol manipulation. It offers a radically different conception of the basic processing system of the mind/brain. This conception is inspired by our knowledge of the nervous system. The basic idea is that there is a network of elementary units or nodes, each of which has some degree of activation. These units are connected to each other so that active units excite or inhibit other units. The network is a dynamical system which, once supplied with initial input, spreads excitations and inhibitions

among its units. In some types of networks this process does not stop until a stable state is achieved.'

According to connectionism, representation in the mind is distributed among neurons that form a network, so that if an individual neuron die, the pattern of activation persists as far as a new neuron joins the network to carry on the function of the dead one. You can see that connectionism is a variation of the functionalist approach. It is called also 'the brain metaphor of the mind.' (Karageorgiev 2008).

4.4 MIND-BODY PROBLEM AS CATEGORY ERROR

Each attempt to answer the mind-body problem encounters substantial problems. Some philosophers argue that this is because there is an underlying conceptual confusion. These philosophers, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and his followers in the tradition of linguistic criticism, therefore reject the problem as illusory. They argue that it is an error to ask how mental and biological states fit together. Rather it should simply be accepted that human experience can be described in different ways—for instance, in a mental and in a biological vocabulary. Illusory problems arise if one tries to describe the one in terms of the other's vocabulary or if the mental vocabulary is used in the wrong contexts. This is the case, for instance, if one searches for mental states of the brain. The brain is simply the wrong context for the use of mental vocabulary—the search for mental states of the brain is therefore a category error or a sort of fallacy of reasoning (PoM 2011).

Today, such a position is often adopted by interpreters of Wittgenstein such as Peter Hacker. This view is also supported by Hilary Putnam.

4.5 PHYSICAL BODY AND LIVED BODY

In this section, in order to understand mind better, we study some distinct characteristics of body, developed by two phenomenologist thinkers: Merleau-Ponty and Gabriel Marcel. Both have focused on the vulnerability as well as on the uniqueness of human body, seeing it not merely as a "physical body" or material object. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, one of the pioneers of phenomenology, has contributed much to a deeper perception of human body. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) this French thinker developed a rich variety of phenomenology emphasizing the role of the body in human experience. In his phenomenological approach of the body, Merleau-Ponty looked to experimental psychology, analyzing the reported experience of amputees who felt sensations in a phantom limb. Rejecting associationist psychology, which focused on correlations between sensation and stimulus, as well as intellectualist psychology, which focused on rational construction of the world in the mind, his phenomenological approach focused on the "body image". That is, our experience of our own body and its significance in our activities.

Phenomenologically the "lived body" is my own body as experienced by myself, as myself. My own body manifests itself to me mainly as the possibilities of acting in the world. It is what lets me reach out and grab something, for instance, but it also, and more importantly, allows for the possibility of changing my point of view. This helps me differentiate one thing from another by

the experience of moving around it, seeing new aspects of it (often referred to as making the absent present and the present absent), and still retaining the notion that this is the same thing that I saw other aspects of just a moment ago (it is identical). My body is also experienced as a duality, both as object (I can touch my own hand) and as my own subjectivity (I am being touched).

The experience of your own body as your own subjectivity is then applied to the experience of another's body, which, through apperception, is constituted as another subjectivity. I can thus recognize the Other's intentions, emotions, etc. This experience of empathy is important in the phenomenological account of intersubjectivity. In phenomenology, intersubjectivity is what constitutes objectivity (i.e., what you experience as objective is experienced as being intersubjectively available - available to all other subjects. This does not imply that objectivity is reduced to subjectivity nor does it imply a relativist position, cf. for instance intersubjective verifiability).

In the experience of intersubjectivity, one also experiences oneself as being a subject among other subjects, and one experiences oneself as existing objectively for these Others. Here one experiences oneself as the noema of Others' noeses, or as a subject in another's empathic experience. As such, one experiences oneself as objectively existing subjectivity. Intersubjectivity is also a part in the constitution of one's Lebenswelt, that is, "lifeworld" or "homeworld." (LB 2010)

Extending Husserl's account of the lived body (as opposed to the physical body), Merleau-Ponty went beyond a dualistic or dichotomous approach of mind and body. For the body image is neither in the mental realm nor in the mechanical-physical realm. Rather, "my body is, as it were, me in my engaged action with things I perceive including other people," according to him. In fact, his phenomenology addressed the role of attention in the phenomenal field, the experience of the body, the spatiality of the body, the motility of the body, the body in sexual being and in speech, other selves, temporality, and the character of freedom so important our human existence. Merleau-Ponty succinctly captures his embodied, existential form of phenomenology, when he asserts: "Insofar as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity [= consciousness] is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world." (LB 2010)

In short, consciousness is embodied (in the world), and equally body is infused with consciousness (with cognition of the world). That is the insight one gathers from a phenomenological appreciation of the body (Smith 2008).

Understood thus, we can perceive our body as much more than material. The deeper dimensions of our being may be embedded in the very bodily dimension of ourselves. So we can hope that we will have a deeper understanding of body that will take into consideration the lived dimensions of our existence.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is a “category error”?

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2) What is the “lived body” phenomenologically?

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have seen various theories on the relationship between mind and body in today’s philosophy, including the assumption that it is a category mistake. We also saw the phenomenological understanding of the body, that to some extent, eliminates the mind-body dualism.

4.8 KEYWORDS

Brentano’s Thesis: The thesis proposed in Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) that it is the intentionality or directedness of mental states that marks off the mental from the physical. In other words: 'It is of the very nature of consciousness to be intentional'

Category error: It is a semantic or ontological error in which "things of one kind are presented as if they belonged to another." Here a property is ascribed to a thing that could not possibly have that property.

Computationalism: The computational theory of mind is the view that the human mind ought to be conceived as an information processing system and that thought is a form of computation.

Connectionism: Connectionism is a set of approaches in the fields of artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience and philosophy of mind, that models mental or behavioral phenomena as the emergent processes of interconnected networks of simple units.

Eliminativism: This theory holds that our commitment to different mental states is nothing more than an outdated folklore, and that it is certain to be superseded by a more scientific understanding of our nature. Thus, the standard eliminativist argument begins with the premise that vernacular (‘folk’) psychology is infested with massive and irremediable systemic errors and gaps, and concludes that it will be made obsolete as the scientific understanding of our behaviour continues to advance.

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