

The Development and Plausibility of Materialism

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Smart 1959:

SENSATIONS AND BRAIN PROCESSES

SUPPOSE that I report that I have at this moment a roundish, blurry-edged after-image which is yellowish towards its edge and is orange towards its centre. What is it that I am reporting?¹ One answer to this question might be that I am

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When a person says, "I see a yellowish-orange after-image," he is saying something like this: "There is something going on which is like what is going on when I have my eyes open, am awake, and there is an orange illuminated in good light in front of me, that is, when I really see an orange."

Jackson 1982, "Epiphenomenal Qualia,"

I am what is sometimes known as a "qualia freak". I think that there are certain features of the bodily sensations especially, but also of certain perceptual experiences, which no amount of purely physical information includes. Tell me everything physical there is to tell about what is going on in a living brain, the kind of states, their functional role, their relation to what goes on at other times and in other brains, and so on and so forth, and be I as clever as can be in fitting it all together, you won't have told me about the hurtfulness of pains, the itchiness of itches, pangs of jealousy, or about the characteristic experience of tasting a lemon, smelling a rose, hearing a loud noise or seeing the sky.

Jackson 1976:

IV. THE EXISTENCE OF MENTAL OBJECTS

FRANK JACKSON

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THE mental objects I will be concerned with in this paper are such things as pains, itches and throbs—that is, the bodily sensations; and such things as after-images and mirages—that is, the visual hallucinations. There is a very widespread view that, while there may be things like the *having* of bodily sensations and the *experiencing* of after-images, there are, strictly speaking, no such things as bodily sensations and after-images. What exists includes the experiencing of pains and after-images, but not the pains and after-images themselves.

I will argue that there are considerable problems facing this denial of mental objects, and to this extent support that there are mental objects and the associated act-object account of having sensations and after-images. (The view that sensations and

need a full-scale analysis of waltzing, we only need to know enough about the meaning of "waltz" to know that statements putatively about waltzes can be, and are best, re-cast as about people waltzing.

Likewise, there are three ways we might seek to show that there are no mental objects: by showing that all statements of the form "*S* has a pain (itch, after-image, etc.)" are false; by producing a reductive analysis of such statements, for example, of a behaviourist or topic-neutral kind, which eliminates the relevant psychological terms; or, finally, by offering a partial analysis (a recasting which better displays logical form) of these psychological statements, and which, while not eliminating all mentalist vocabulary, shows that these statements are not really about mental objects.

Of the first strategy, I will just say that I am sure

Multiple Realizability

Bechtel and Mundale "Multiple Realizability Revisited: Linking Cognitive and Neural States," *Philosophy of Science*, 1999.

Discussions with Rosa Cao..

Fekete & Edelman, 2012. "The (lack of) mental life of some machines."

Setting aside the question of whether or not the neuronal level itself is the fundamental level for understanding the brain, we would like to explore the consequences of making this theoretical move, that is, setting a definite *categorical* threshold for functional equivalence (an alternative would be to conceive of functional correspondence as graded, with the *degree of similarity* replacing all-or-none equivalence). To put it bluntly, could it really be the case that a description up to a certain level of organization is a fundamental constituent of reality, yet beyond that point all details are inconsequential?

A different view: Grain-sensitive materialism.

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Lewis 1994, "Reduction of Mind."

D. LEWIS

charge are among the fundamental properties; and that whatever fundamental properties remain as yet undiscovered are likewise instantiated by very small things that come in very large classes of exact duplicates. We may further think that the very same fundamental properties and relations, governed by the very same laws, occur in the living and the dead parts of the world, and in the sentient and the insentient parts, and in the clever and the stupid parts. In

The heart of my own view is: (i) monism, and (ii) the construction of mind from things that are not mental (and have no mental properties).

Why?

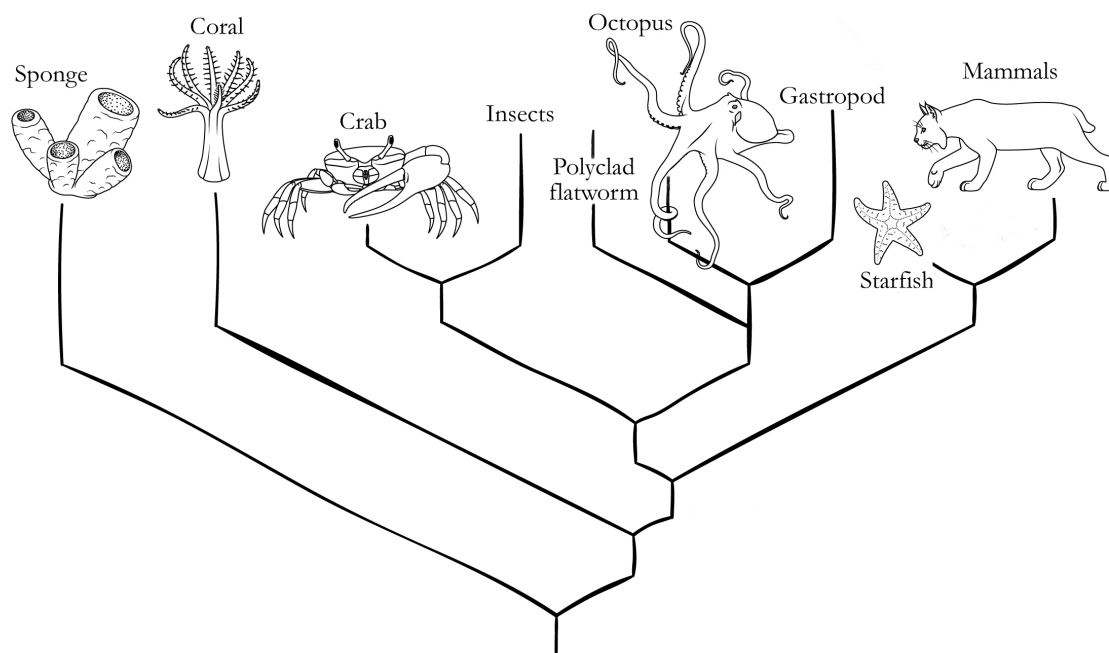
Smart 1959 again: Occam.

ducibly psychical something. And similarly the suggestion I wish to resist is also that to say “I have a yellowish orange after-image” is to report something irreducibly psychical.

Why do I wish to resist this suggestion? Mainly because of Occam’s razor. It seems to me that science is increasingly giving us a viewpoint whereby organisms are able to be seen as physico-chemical mechanisms:⁴ it seems that even the behavior of man

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(Drawn by Rebecca Gelernter)

Some other references:

Kaplan and Zimmer, "Brain-Wide Representations of Ongoing Behavior: A Universal Principle?" *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, 2020.

Passano, L.M. 1963. "Primitive Nervous Systems." *PNAS* 50.

Singer, W. 2018. "Neuronal Oscillations: Unavoidable and Useful?" *European Journal of Neuroscience*.

My "Gradualism and the Evolution of Experience," in press in *Philosophical Topics*. And the book *Metazoa: Animal Life and the Birth of the Mind*.