**Mind and Body**

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Abstract

In my talk, I will argue for both unity and difference of mind and body. In contemporary philosophy, one finds so many different and excluding solutions to the mind-body problem. Some examples are substance dualism, property dualism, interactionist dualism, pschophysical parallelism, occasionalism, dual aspect theory, idealist monism, neutral monism, reductive and non-reductive physicalism, behaviorism, functionalism, identity theory, type identity theory, eliminative materialism, anomalous monism, weak emergentism, internalism, extermalism. This situation is puzzling and could indicate that the linguistic criticism—expressed recently for example by Hilary Putnam (*The Threefold Cord: Mind, Body, and World*, New York CUP, 2000) in the tradition of late Wittgenstein—is correct, and that applications of mental vocabulary to our brain functions and neurological processes is simply an illusory problem, resulting from a category error. Often it is the case, that a great variety of possible but excluding answers to one question, indicates that the question is meaningless. One now could draw the conclusion that the mind-body problem has to be ignored, and after the critical linguistic diagnosis, the therapy should be to avoid all answers, since they must be wrong. One also can argue more cautious, and say that the mind-body problem obviously goes beyond our comprehension and transgresses the capacities of our knowledge, maybe not for all times, but at least at the current level of natural science and at the current level of phenomenological descriptions of our intentional mental states. But, these answers do not satisfy our strive for a solution, since it seems as if we have as a matter of fact an interaction of the mental and the brain. I read the recent publications of John R. Searle, Donald Davidson, and Thomas Nagel on this subject as such strategies to acknowledge on the one hand the puzzle and a certain restriction of our knowledge and at the other hand to give notwithstanding at least a preliminary answer. But these answers then contain the problem that they again somehow transgresses the restriction of our knowledge.

The linguistic criticism has something in common with Kant’s solution to the problems of the dialectics of pure reason, guiding to a restriction of our possible knowledge and leaving us after the insight in the impossibility to give satisfying answers with the still persisting desire to find answers. The difference to the Kantian problem of dialectics is that in terms of the mind-body problem we do not deal with two metaphysical entities or two metaphysical positions, but with one entity belonging to the natural order and one belonging to the phenomenal order. Therefore, from a Kantian perspective the mind-body problem does not (completely) belong to the illusionary sphere of dialectical pure reason. Only in case one goes so far, to hold that the mind is free and the brain as a bio-physical entity is following rules of physical determination, the mind-body problem enters the Kantian sphere of the dialectics of pure reason, namely the third antinomy. But, as far as we only comprehend more simple mental properties like our everyday intentionality or qualia perception the mind belongs to the phenomenal world, not the metaphysical sphere of freedom. Even for this smaller problem there seems to be no satisfying explanation, since the explanatory gap from one pole to the other still isn’t bridged, not even the maybe most promising answers of emergentism could satisfy. The physicalist identification of mental states with neurological processes in this regard does not satisfy too, since if one only has a neurological description of firing synapses, without any psychological vocabulary, one will never be able to understand the mental state which is in question.

In my talk, I will argue that the problematic and oscillating situation of the mind-body problem proves that this is a real philosophical problem, which does not belong to the sciences, since they are working on possible solutions for concrete problems and philosophy does not provide us with such solutions, but enhances the ability to think critically about difficulties. I will argue that the mind-body problem belongs to philosophy because it involves topics of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and ontology. Following this insight I will argue that anytime we talk about the connection of mind and body or mind and brain we have to apply an as-if status, which guides us to an epistemic pragmatist parallelism, unfortunately without scientific foundation but profoundly rooted in our practice. The reduction of our knowledge of the connection of mind and body to an as-if status, allows to comprehend both unity and difference of mind and body.