

John Protevi

<http://www.protevi.com/john/PhilMind>

Classroom use only.

This is a course in philosophy of mind. "Phil mind" is a 20<sup>th</sup> C term, mostly associated with the analytic philosophy tradition, though phenomenology, one of the main traditions in "continental philosophy," is part of the "enactive" program, which we will read at the end of the course.

Among the topics we're going to cover:

1. CLASSIC ISSUES
  - a. Mind-body relation (dualism, behaviorism, panpsychism, functionalism [later, in the phenomenology section, the "embodied mind"]);
  - b. Consciousness (its "place in nature"; its types; question of qualia and "hard problem");
  - c. Propositional attitudes (realism, eliminativism, instrumentalism);
  - d. The extended mind and externalism in meaning.
2. RECENT WORK
  - a. Externalism and social kinds (Haslanger)
  - b. Emotions and beliefs (Gendler on "aliefs")
  - c. Implicit bias and stereotype threat (Saul)
  - d. Intellectualism in the know-how debate (Stanley and Krakauer)
3. ENACTION
  - a. Dynamic systems modeling
  - b. Autopoiesis and autonomy
  - c. Phenomenology: methodology, consciousness, intentionality, temporality, embodiment, and TOM (theory of mind), among others.

Today I'm going to give you a roadmap of some basic concepts. THIS IS ONLY A FIRST APPROACH TO THE TOPICS. THERE ARE MANY IMPRECISSIONS WE WILL FIX LATER.

## CLASSIC ISSUES

### MIND-BODY RELATION

1. Dualism
  - a. Substance dualism
    - i. Interactionism (Descartes)
    - ii. Parallelism (Leibniz: God's pre-established harmony)
    - iii. Occasionalism (Malebranche: God's continual action)
  - b. Property dualism:
    - i. Emergentism (Broad): properly organized matter gives rise to psychological events, but not a separate substance
    - ii. Epiphenomenalism (Huxley): mental events are causally ineffective
    - iii. Non-reductive physicalism
      1. Anomalous monism: Davidson:
      2. Biological Naturalism (Searle):
2. Monisms
  - a. Neutral monism / panpsychism: there is a single ontological type, but it has both mental and physical properties
    - i. Spinoza (*Deus sive Natura*: one substance with infinite attributes, of which we can access two: mental and physical)

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- ii. Russell: physics only reveals structure; not internal experience; we however are natural beings with internal experience; physics cannot rule out internal experience in other natural beings.
- b. Idealism: mind is the fundamental stuff
- c. Materialism / Physicalism: matter is the fundamental stuff
  - i. Realist monism panpsychism (Strawson: builds on Russell)
  - ii. Analytical behaviorism (classically attributed to Ryle): a mental state is disposition to behave in a certain way in a certain situation; it's shown by looking to the history of behavior of a person.
- iii. Identity theory:
  1. Type-identity theory: Psychological types are identical with types of brain processes. Slogan: "Pains are C-fiber firings"
  2. Token-identity theory: Specific mental events are identical with specific brain events
- iv. Functionalism: Mental events are individuated by their functional roles in a cognitive system

## CONSCIOUSNESS

Chalmers has a very good roadmap in his "Place of Consciousness in Nature." He distinguishes an easy problem from a hard problem. The easy problems are things like "how does perception work: what information is being processed in what parts of the eye / brain?" The hard problem is "why is there an experiential side of mental activity?"

Block will distinguish A-cness from P-cness. Access consciousness = having information accessible for report and for global rational control; it is an information-processing term. Phenomenal consciousness is "qualia" or the "what is it like" side of experience.

Will we ever close the explanatory gap here, between 3<sup>rd</sup> person scientific explanation and 1<sup>st</sup> person experience?

## PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES

Beliefs and desires are attitudes toward propositions (or intentional objects on other readings). "I believe that P," "I hope that P," "I want it to happen that P," ...

Eliminative materialists think such folk psychology (explaining human behavior by means of belief-desire psychology) is becoming outdated and will / should be replaced by brain language. "I believe that P" should be replaced by "There is firing at neural sites 34.9.A.1 and 42.7.B.6."

Fodor thinks this replacement would be the worst intellectual disaster to ever hit the human race. He thinks thoughts are sentences in the LOT (language of thought). So he's a realist about propositional attitudes.

Dennett is an instrumentalist here. He thinks we can and should adopt an "intentional stance" (positing beliefs and desires) with regard to explaining behavior of some creatures (as opposed to a "physical stance" and a "design stance" for other beings.)

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## EXTERNALISM

Meaning externalism: "meanings just ain't in the head." Sense and reference determined by external factors, not by subjective intention. This fits with a causal theory of reference whereby a thing gets a name by an initial act, and subsequent uses of that name can be traced back in a causal chain: everybody who calls me "John" learned it from someone (or some document) in a chain stretching back to my parents' naming of me.

Vehicle externalism or the extended mind: some extra-neural and even extra-somatic materials can be the subvenience base for cognitive events.

## SOCIAL KINDS, EMOTIONS, IMPLICIT BIAS, AND KNOW-HOW

Here we transition out of the classic issues on the way to studying enaction. We're going to read 4 recent pieces illustrating work in semantic externalism in social kinds, emotional reactions to beliefs ("aliefs"), implicit bias, and "intellectualism" in the "know-how" discussion.

## ENACTION

To conclude the course we're going to read Evan Thompson's enactivism in *Mind in Life*, which has three main conceptual components: dynamic systems; autopoiesis, autonomy, and adaptivity; and embodied phenomenology. Thompson begins contrasting enactivism with brief sketches of the two dominant models of cognition: computationalism or cognitivism ("rule-bound manipulation of discrete symbols") and connectionism ("emergent patterns of activity in neural nets").

## DYNAMIC SYSTEMS MODELING

Dynamic systems models propose a "state space" with multiple dimensions, one for each relevant variable for the system being studied; the state of the system at time  $t_1$  is represented by a single point with values for each variable. Change in the system is modeled by a trajectory of points through the space at different times. Some systems display patterns ("attractors") and thresholds ("bifurcators"); some of these are characteristic of the type of system and are repeated throughout the history of the system. Some systems however develop new sets of attractors and bifurcators representing new behavior patterns and thresholds.

## AUTOPOIESIS, AUTONOMY, AND ADAPTIVITY

In an important moment in second-order cybernetics, Maturana and Varela came up with the concept of autopoiesis (= "self-making"). The paradigm is the living cell; the dynamics of the cell are such that metabolism and membranes pre-suppose each other: the metabolism produces the membrane, but the membrane must be there for the metabolism to work (otherwise the reactions are dispersed in the environment). Although autopoietic cells are thermodynamically open to the environment, they are "autonomous" in the sense that environmental events only perturb the cell, provoking restoration actions keeping the cell in its autopoietic equilibrium. In this way, the cell is "sense-making": it senses changes in the environment, makes sense of those changes relative to its maintenance needs, and then acts to restore its autopoietic equilibrium. Such sense making is autopoietic cognition, such that mind and life are co-implicating. However, this classic theory is caught in a binary of restoration or death; Ezequiel Di Paolo proposed that while autopoiesis is necessary for sense-making, it is not sufficient. Rather, autonomous cells must be "adaptive," that is,

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able to sense the direction and strength of perturbations to their metabolism so that their reactions can be calibrated to the environment and the cell's needs.

## PHENOMENOLOGY

Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Dreyfus, Wheeler, Zahavi, Gallagher, Thompson

For phenomenology, consciousness (or Dasein, or the lived body) is not a thing in the world, but that by which the meaning of the world is constituted. In its analyses phenomenology isolates structures of consciousness / Dasein / lived body: intentionality, temporality, embodiment, and so on.

Hans Jonas proposes a phenomenology of living things whereby their situation is articulated in a temporal structure of "needful freedom."