The Philosophy of Mind: Current and Perennial Controversies

Uriah Kriegel

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Introduction

This volume covers five central controversies in current philosophy of mind. There are many more than five current controversies, but arguably the most interesting are those that play out some of the perennial problems of the philosophy of mind. For through the historical progression of philosophical dialectic, certain ancient philosophical problems have taken very specific shapes and have narrowed in on what is felt to be the core of the original problem. This volume focuses on contemporary controversies that reflect such perennial philosophical problems.

The most perennial and virtually definitive problem of the philosophy of mind is the ancient mind-body problem, concerned with the ultimate relationship between mind and matter. In twentieth-century philosophy, this problem tended to be split into two sub-problems, concerned with the two mental features that proved most resistant to accommodation in a purely materialistic and scientifically friendly worldview. The first is consciousness, the felt subjective quality of experience; the second is representation, or intentionality, the mind’s special capacity to direct itself at something other than itself. Attempts to resolve the mind-body problem have consequently required special attention to the nature of consciousness and the nature of mental representation or intentionality. Accordingly, the first controversy covered in this book addresses the mind-body problem, the third addresses the nature of consciousness, and the fourth the nature of representation/intentionality.
In addition to the perplexities of body and mind, there are some pertaining to body in mind, as an increasing number of philosophers and scientists maintain that our mental life is thoroughly embodied. It is rarely clear what this exactly means, however, and the second controversy in this book concerns precisely that issue. The fifth and final controversy is arguably the most significant but also the most open-ended: it concerns the role of consciousness in our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

For each of these controversies, we have brought together a pair of prominent authors to expound opposing perspectives. Below, I describe in more detail the modern shape these controversies have assumed, and the contributions offered here by the two authors on each controversy.

1. The Mind-Body Problem and ‘Russellian Monism’

For most of its history, the mind-body problem has been conducted under the shadow of a forced choice between materialism and dualism. According to materialism, ultimately there is nothing in our world but physical matter; any mental features exhibited in our world are necessarily fixed by underlying physical features. According to dualism, by contrast, there is more to our world than physical matter and its physical properties: there are also some mental features that enjoy a certain independence from any underlying physical properties, insofar as in principle the latter could be present and yet the former absent (which means that the mental features are not necessitated by the physical). The problem is that both materialism and dualism face deep and principled difficulties that make them hard to accept.

If materialism were true, and mental facts were necessarily fixed by physical ones, we should expect that complete knowledge of pertinent physical facts about someone would allow us to know also the mental facts about her. If we really knew everything there is to know about this person’s brain (and body, and environment), and these facts necessitated the facts about her mind, then we should be able to figure out what the facts about her mind are. And yet this does not seem to be the case: we can imagine knowing everything about someone’s physical existence without knowing much
(or anything) about his or her mental existence (or even whether s/he has any). This sense of ‘explanatory gap’ between the physical and the mental is well captured by the nineteenth-century thinker John Tyndall:

> Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution to the problem, ‘How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?’ The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable.  

Thus even if an oracle informed us that whenever our brain is in physical state P, our mind is necessarily in mental state M, we would be utterly unable to see why that should be so. Similar ideas go back at least to Leibniz (1714, §17; italics his):

> It must be confessed, however, that perception, and that which depends upon it, are inexplicable by mechanical causes, that is to say, by figures and motions. Supposing that there were a machine whose structure produced thought, sensation, and perception, we could conceive of it as increased in size with the same proportions until one was able to enter into its interior, as he would into a mill. Now, on going into it he would find only pieces working upon one another, but never would he find anything to explain perception.

Here Leibniz appears to offer a diagnosis of this explanatory gap: physical facts concern structure and function, but at least some mental facts go beyond structure and function, and therefore cannot be physically (mechanically) explained.

Unfortunately, dualism faces its own difficulties. Science seems to have shown that everything we do is ultimately caused by neural processes in our brain: when we smile, some brain cells in so-called motor cortex fire an electrical impulse; when we jump up and down, other cells do; when we eat ice cream, yet others; and so on and so forth. At the same time, if you ask me why I smile, I am more liable to answer ‘because I am happy,’ or ‘because I saw something amusing,’ or some such – not ‘because my motor cortex caused me to.’ Now, for a materialist there would be no tension between these two explanations of my smiling (as caused by happiness and as caused by neural processes in the brain). For according to the materialist, happiness just is a neural process in the brain: to be happy about something is just to be in a certain brain state. However,
for the dualist these are two separate states, one mental and one physical. So the dualist cannot embrace both explanations of smiling. She must choose between the happiness-invoking explanation and the brain-invoking one. Choosing the happiness-invoking explanation is eminently commonsensical, but appears to be in tension with science, as it renders my brain irrelevant to my smiling. Embracing the brain-invoking explanation instead restores consistency with science, but leads to the horribly counterintuitive result that happiness can never make you smile. That is, it leads to the result that the mind is causally inert, entirely unable to affect the world outside it.⁵

In light of these difficulties, philosophers of mind have recently attempted to find new and creative approaches to the mind-body problem that evade the forced choice between materialism and dualism. The hope is to devise a view that gives rise neither to an explanatory gap between mind and matter (as materialism does) nor to causal inertia of mind vis-à-vis matter (as dualism does). The most successful gambit in this vein, sociologically speaking, appears to be so-called Russellian monism.⁶ Very schematically, this is the view that the universe includes some special properties that underlie, and are more basic than, both mental and physical properties. They are, in fact, both proto-mental and proto-physical. Their proto-mental status neutralizes the explanatory gap problem, while their proto-physical status neutralizes the problem of causal inertia.

The issue is how to move from this highly schematic characterization, almost a ‘wish list,’ to a more substantive and precise one. In his contribution, Daniel Stoljar (this volume) considers four different ways of working out Russellian monism. The first two he considers to be implausible, and the third to collapse to dualism. The fourth he is most optimistic about. According to it, the scientific theory of the world that humanity will ultimately converge on – at the end of inquiry, as it were – will likely refer to properties of whose nature we are currently entirely ignorant. These properties are nothing like the properties cited in current physics, so we cannot consider them physical (but at most proto-physical), and nothing like the properties cited in current psychology, so we cannot consider them mental (but at most proto-mental). Yet these properties, in virtue of their as-yet-unknown nature, will bridge the explanatory gap between mind and matter and secure the causal efficacy of mind vis-à-vis matter. That such properties exist is at present
mere speculation. But the fact that their existence would make intelligible the connection between mind and matter strongly suggests that something like them must indeed exist.

This view still faces the Leibnizian worry that scientific facts concern structure and function but at least some mental facts go beyond structure and function. However, the worry is based on the assumption that non-structural/functional facts cannot be grounded in structural/functional facts. According to Stoljar, however, this assumption is false – at least if we interpret “structural/functional” to mean “relational.” For some non-relational, or “intrinsic” facts are based on relational ones. Stoljar offers the following example: “From the fact that a series of points in space are arranged in a particular way, you might derive the fact that the region constituted by the points has a particular shape.” The facts about the points’ arrangement are relational facts (they concern the spatial relations among the points), but the fact about a region having some shape is arguably a non-relational fact (the region does not have the shape it does in virtue of standing in a relation to anything outside it, and is to that extent an intrinsic property of the region).

According to Derk Pereboom (this volume), however, this does not neutralize the Leibnizian worry. Pereboom distinguishes between intrinsic and absolutely intrinsic properties. A property is absolutely intrinsic if something has it not only (i) not in virtue of standing in a relation to anything outside it, but also (ii) not in virtue of any of its parts standing in certain relations to each other. Thus a region’s shape is intrinsic, but it is not absolutely intrinsic – precisely because it is grounded in the spatial relations among points that are part of it. But there is reason to think that consciousness is an absolutely intrinsic property, according to Pereboom. The reason is that consciousness seems both intrinsic and primitive. It seems epistemically primitive in the sense that its nature is fully revealed by introspection, and it seems metaphysically primitive in the sense that there is no collection of underlying properties that constitute it. Crucially, whenever something has an intrinsic property that is primitive in these senses, that property must be absolutely intrinsic. For, being primitive, the property cannot be constituted by a plurality of underlying properties, including a plurality of relational properties of the thing’s parts.
The upshot, for Pereboom, is that the best version of Russellian monism would have to advert centrally to absolutely intrinsic properties.

2. The Embodied Mind Research Program

Although the mind-body problem does not prejudge the exact relationship between body and mind, it does create an initial conceptual separation between the two. It presupposes that each can be grasped independently of the other. This conceptual separation has been sometimes rejected as wrongheaded: upon examination, it is claimed, our mental life is shot through with our physical being, as the mind is inherently embodied. For example, when you have to judge the slant of a hill from its bottom, your judgment will demonstrably change depending on how heavy your backpack is (Bhalla and Proffitt 1999). In this and other cases, we think and process information through our bodies. To some, such cases have suggested that we think with our body: it is simply false that the brain does all the thinking in the slant case – the back does some too.

Ideas orbiting this notion have proliferated considerably over the past generation of research, leading to a highly energetic but often conceptually confused ‘embodied cognition research program.’ One pervasive confusion in this area pertains to whether the body’s role in cognition is causal or constitutive: whether the body merely enables cognition that is strictly speaking performed by the brain, or on the contrary the body itself does the cognizing. The literature on embodied cognition has tended to be fuzzy on such foundational matters, with the result that there is no clear definition of what ‘embodied cognition’ amounts to among either cognitive scientists or philosophers of mind.

In an important recent piece, Alvin Goldman (2012) attempts to distill the plausible core of the program and offer a workable definition of embodied cognition. The key notion is that of a B-format. When you clench your fist, you can represent your fist clenching visually, by seeing it clench, but you can also represent it proprioceptively, by sensing the clenching from the inside as it were. Both representations require some representational format, but only the second one uses a body-related one – a B-format. A
B-format is thus a format for representing things in a distinctively bodily manner. The core insight of the embodied mind research program, according to Goldman, is that B-format are in fact pervasive to our cognition, and often get recruited to represent matters entirely unrelated to our bodies. Thus, in processing information on the slant of a hill we typically recruit B-formatted representations of how hard it would be for our body to climb the hill.

In his contribution, Larry Shapiro (this volume) raises three central difficulties for Goldman’s account of embodied cognition. The first is that B-formatted representations may not be necessary for embodied cognition, as some robots seem to engage in the latter but may not have the former. The second is that B-formatted representations may not be sufficient for embodied cognition, as it is quite possible that all cognition will turn out to employ B-formats but utterly implausible that all cognition is embodied. The third is that if Goldman’s characterization of embodied cognition were correct, it would not represent all that deep a challenge to the conceptual separation of mind and body, and would be less radical than many embodied-cognition proponents might wish for. Thus, in the film The Matrix, humans are enclosed in vats, immobile and unable to use their bodies, yet their mental life is subjectively indistinguishable from ours and nothing prevents it from employing B-formatted representations pervasively. By Goldman’s lights, then, mental life in the Matrix is just as embodied as outside it – even though the body itself has no role to play in it.

Goldman (this volume) provides new empirical and conceptual background to his approach to embodied cognition, before addressing Shapiro’s concerns. Goldman argues that the notion of B-format can be understood in such a way that non-humans certainly have it; so the necessity threat can be neutralized. He then argues that it is a virtue rather than vice of his definition that it leaves open the conceptual possibility that all cognition might turn out embodied (since this is an empirical possibility); so the sufficiency threat is neutralized as well. Finally, Goldman concedes that his definition casts the embodied-cognition program as less radical than many enthusiasts wish for, but denies that his definition is supposed to produce consensus. On the contrary, he takes it to constitute a moderate approach that represents a compromise between those who take the body itself,
rather than bodily representation, to be involved in cognition (on the one hand) and those who consider that bodily representation are restricted to body-related cognitive tasks rather than be pervasive in cognition (on the other hand).

3. Intentionalism about Consciousness and the Phenomenology of Moods

One central thread in mainstream philosophy of mind of the late twentieth century ties together the problems of intentionality, consciousness, and mind-body. In a first stage, it offers a purely materialistic, ‘naturalistic’ account of intentionality in terms of physical connections between parts of a person’s brain and parts of her external environment, this is often referred to as the ‘tracking approach to intentionality.’ In a second stage, it offers a reductive explanation of the subjective character of conscious experience in terms of this capacity to represent one’s environment by tracking parts of it; this is often referred to as the ‘intentionalist’ or ‘representationalist’ theory of consciousness. Finally, it suggests that since both intentionality and consciousness can be accounted for in terms of the causal physical processes underlying this tracking capacity, the mind is nothing but this underlying physical process; this is ‘materialism.’ Thus are combined materialism about the mind-body problem, intentionalism about consciousness, and the tracking theory of intentionality.

In early twenty-first-century philosophy of mind, all strands in this package have met with increasing resistance. A central challenge to the tracking theory of intentionality will be discussed in the next section. Perhaps the most important challenge to intentionalism about consciousness is the experiential dimension of moods. Accordingly, our third controversy concerns the prospects for an intentionalist or representationalist account of moods.

Moods appear to present a pronounced challenge to intentionalism because many appear to be entirely undirected. One often feels anxious or melancholic or euphoric without feeling so about anything in particular. The feeling often appears free-floating, unmoored from any particular feature of one’s immediate environment. It is thus difficult to see exactly how any representation of one’s environment could account for it.
Nonetheless, some intentionalists have insisted that moods do represent, but in a distinctly unfocused manner: one may be anxious about *everything*, melancholic about *the world*, or euphoric about *life*. Thus William Seager (1999: 183) writes: ‘Being depressed is a way of being conscious of things in general: everything seems worthless, or pointless, dull and profitless.’ This may be taken to resonate with our phenomenology of moods, the way they strike us subjectively. Consider Shakespeare’s characteristically acute description of Hamlet’s melancholia:

> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, seem to me all the uses of this world! (I.ii.133-4) … it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. (II.ii.297-303)

Hamlet’s bleak mood does represent, though what it represents are the most general of things: the world, the earth, and the air (the world’s ‘majestical roof’), all of which are represented as insignificant, unspecial, and charmless.⁹

In their respective contributions, both Amy Kind and Angela Mendelovici (this volume) oppose this particular intentionalist treatment of moods. Kind argues that in fact no intentionalist account of mood is workable. Although some aspects of the experiential character of mood can be accounted for in terms of representation of various features of one’s body and environment (including the world as a whole), some aspects of mood’s distinctive experiential character go beyond any such representation. For example, even if euphoria tends to correlate with representation of everything as wonderful, the experiential *intensity* of euphoric moods – just how elated one feels – can vary without any corresponding variation in represented degrees of wonderfulness: things are not represented as more or less wonderful depending on the constantly fluctuating intensity of one’s mood.

Mendelovici too claims that moods can be experienced even without representing any *thing*, not even the world as a whole or everything in it. However, she suggests that moods are still essentially representational, because although they do not represent any *thing*, they always and necessarily represent certain *features*. Euphoria represents
wonderfulness, though not any particular thing’s wonderfulness (not even the world’s); melancholia represents pointlessness or insignificance, though not any particular thing’s; and so on and so forth. Typically our conscious experiences represent features as bound to things that exhibit them (a perceptual experience of a brown table represents brownness as bound to the table). It is a peculiarity of moods, suggests Mendelovici, that they can represent altogether unbound features. This peculiarity explains their undirected feel without compromising the intentionalist notion that all conscious experiences, moods included, are essentially representational.

4. Intentionality and Its Naturalization

Suppose you meet a person who tells you that she is thinking, but when you ask her what she is thinking of, she replies ‘oh nothing, I’m just thinking.’ You would rightly conclude that this person does not understand what the word ‘thinking’ means. When a person is thinking, there is always an answer to the question ‘what are you thinking of?’ It is impossible to think without thinking about something. This is the intentionality of thought: thinking is always directed, it has aboutness.

In this, thought appears to be categorically different from physical objects and processes. A tree, an elephant, a house – these are not about anything, not directed at anything. They just are what they are, they do not send to something other than themselves. The same holds, of course, of the smallest particles of matter: they are what they are, and contain no reference to something outside themselves. But this seems to throw a wrench in the project of scientifically explaining thought processes in terms of the physical particles making up the brain. If no individual particles in a person’s brain is directed at anything, it is unclear how the vast collection of these particles could yield the person’s thought about a flower. The person’s directedness outside herself, to the flower, is completely inexplicable in terms of her undirected brute particles.

Tracking approaches to intentionality propose to resolve this tension by identifying some scientifically respectable (‘naturalistic’) relation that holds between a person’s brain the flower when, and only when, the person thinks about the flower.
Various notions from information theory help us make sense of the idea that one physical object can bear a physical relation to another physical object that makes the former carry information about the latter, essentially by tracking its presence. The idea is to apply the same information-theoretic analysis to thought: the mind’s capacity for representing objects outside it might be fully explained in terms of one’s brain states carrying information about one’s physical environment.\(^1\)

In my own contribution (this volume), I develop a challenge to this tracking approach. Typically, what our conscious experiences present to us and what they track in the environment are the same: when I see a lemon, my visual experience presents a lemon to me and also tracks the lemon on the counter. But we can imagine unusual circumstances where these two come apart. People in the Matrix can have lemon experiences even if they no longer come in contact with lemons, indeed even long after lemons have gone extinct. Such experiences present lemons to the subject but do not track any lemons in the environment. Should we say that such experiences represent or are intentionally directed at lemon or not? I argue for a mixed answer. There is one sense in which such experiences do not represent lemons, precisely because they do not track lemons; we may say that such experiences are not objective representations of lemon. There is another sense, however, in which such experiences do represent lemons, precisely because lemon is what the present to the subjects whose experiences they are; we may say that such experiences are subjective representations of lemon. The problem with tracking approaches to intentionality or representation, then, is that although they account for objective representation, they do not account for subjective representation.

Robert Rupert (this volume) argues, however, that the objective notion of representation is sufficient for accounting for all the data in the area, at least when we take note of the cognitive and/or computational architecture in which representations in the objective sense are embedded. Crucially, people in the Matrix do not in fact have representations of lemons in any sense, though we are tempted to think that they do – and the standard account of representation in terms of architecturally embedded objective tracking relations can explain the temptation. The temptation arises, according to Rupert, from the fact that when we have second-order internal states that track our first-order
representations, they can track only the presence of the state doing the representing, not the entity being represented. Accordingly, the second-order representation provides no genuine insight into what is being represented by the first-order representation, hence provides no support for the notion that something like a lemon is represented by it.

5. The Importance of Consciousness

For much of the modern era, mental life and consciousness were treated as one and the same, both in philosophy and in culture at large. But starting in the nineteenth century, two intellectual forces have pushed for ever expanding daylight between the mental and the conscious. On the one hand, there has been a growing recognition that much of our emotional life, and much of what moves us to act as we do, are determined by unconscious processes often opaque to us; well before Freud’s (1915) ‘The Unconscious,’ this theme was thoroughly explored in nineteenth-century literature, from Stendhal’s novels in the first half of the century to Strindberg’s plays in the second half. At the same time, in their search for perfectly mechanical explanations of mental life, British associationist psychologists began highlighting the role of physiologically driven sub-personal mechanisms in shaping our mental life; ultimately this led to the realization that most mental activity occurs below the threshold of consciousness, perhaps most explicitly in Henry Maudsley’s (1868) *The Physiology and Pathology of Mind*. By mid-twentieth century, the educated layperson’s standard conception of mind has transformed radically, portraying consciousness as merely the visible tip of the mental iceberg.

In early twenty-first-century philosophy, however, consciousness has enjoyed something of a comeback. The value of consciousness can be appreciated from a number of perspectives. One concerns *moral* value. It is natural to hold that even if much of our mental life is unconscious, consciousness is what makes our life *interesting*, indeed what makes it valuable. If *all* our mental life were unconscious, so that we were effectively zombies, life would be essentially pointless. There seems to be no intrinsic difference between death and complete and irreversible loss of consciousness: in both cases we are gone. Another perspective on the value of consciousness concerns our *epistemic* standing
in the world: unconscious zombies, even if their sub-conscious mental activity is indistinguishable from ours, can claim to know much less about themselves and the world than we. For they lack a consciousness that would present them directly with the world surrounding them and a self-consciousness that would present them with themselves.

In his contribution, Charles Siewert (this volume) attempts to make a case along these lines for the importance of consciousness. Siewert starts by noting that perceptual knowledge of one’s surroundings is often based on how things appear to one, and how things appear to one just is one’s phenomenal experience. Furthermore, one’s knowledge of oneself is based on introspection of one’s phenomenal experience, even if introspection is an intellectual rather than quasi-perceptual relation to oneself. And the epistemic significance of consciousness goes beyond perceptual knowledge and self-knowledge: it pertains also to knowledge of what the words we use mean, thus grounding linguistic understanding. Beyond its epistemic importance, phenomenal consciousness is also ethically significant in various ways. First of all, it grounds a kind of irreplaceable, non-instrumental value that one’s own life has to one: there is a strong intuition that being the same person tomorrow is better for me than being someone else just like me – but only insofar as I am not a zombie. Furthermore, the point extends to the irreplaceable value some persons have to other persons – it depends on these persons being phenomenally conscious (otherwise a duplicate would do just as well, and one’s value would not be genuinely irreplaceable).

Geoff Lee (this volume) is more skeptical about the value of phenomenal consciousness. His contribution focuses on the epistemic significance of consciousness, but touches on its moral significance as well. It might be thought that one is more justified in believing that some table is brown if one was conscious of the brown table. But Lee argues that this is an illusion. Imagine a creature whose cognitive architecture is exactly like ours, but who has no subjective consciousness; call this creature ‘pseudo-conscious.’ Lee argues that although it is true that one is more justified in believing that the table is brown if one is conscious of it than if one has no relation whatsoever to it, it is false that one is more justified in believing that the table is brown if one is conscious of it than if one is pseudo-conscious of it. Assuming materialism, consciousness must be some
kind of physical property of the brain, and pseudo-consciousness another physical property. Moreover, the strictly physical difference between consciousness and pseudo-consciousness is liable to be relatively small. It is unclear, under such circumstances, why it should matter to one’s table belief’s justification whether one was conscious or merely pseudo-conscious of the table. It is unlikely, in particular, that the small physical difference between the two should translate into a major epistemic difference. Thus claims to the effect that consciousness is particularly important may presuppose a non-physical conception of consciousness. On this view, it is not really possible to make a strong case for the value of consciousness while staying neutral on the debate over materialism and dualism.

How to Read this Book

The articles in this volume are intended to cater both to professional philosophers and to (post-)graduate students (as well as rather advanced undergraduates). But there are two ways of reading the book, one more natural for professional philosophers and one more suitable for a seminar.

For the professional philosopher, it would be natural to read the exchanges in the order in which they appear – horizontally from beginning to end, so to speak. In each exchange, the first of the two articles involves a more theoretically neutral set-up, so it is recommended to start with it. It is also possible to skip some exchanges, as these are more or less independent of each other, though the third and fourth can be seen as forming something of a module (as can perhaps the first and second).

This order could also be adhered to in a more pedagogical context, but there is another order that might be more suitable there. This is to read the book vertically and backwards: one would start with Chapter 9 about the significance of consciousness, move to Chapter 7 about a consciousness-based account of mental representation, then move to Chapter 5 about consciousness outstripping representation, and finally arrive to Chapter 1 about the elusive metaphysics of consciousness; before turning around, as it were, and reading Chapter 2 about trying to pin down the metaphysics of consciousness, moving on
to Chapter 6 about representation exhausting consciousness, then Chapter 8 about explaining representation without appeal to consciousness, and finally Chapter 10 about the insignificance of consciousness. This order highlights the centrality of the historical tension in philosophy of mind between first-person consciousness-based approaches to the mind and third-person consciousness-free approaches. Crucially, this order also goes from the most accessible, reader-friendly chapters to the most advanced, professionally sophisticated ones in an almost linear fashion. 11 With this in mind, I am tempted to recommend this order of reading for pedagogical settings.

References

- Goldman, A. This volume. ‘The Bodily-Formats Approach to Embodied Cognition.’
- Kind, A. This volume. ‘The Case against Representationalism about Mood States.’
- Kriegel, U. This volume. ‘Two Notions of Mental Representation.’
- Lee, G. This volume. ‘Materialism and the Epistemic Significance of Consciousness.’
- Mendelovici, A. This volume. ‘A Pure Intentionalist Theory of Moods and Emotions.’
- Pereboom, D. This volume. ‘Russellian Monism and Absolutely Intrinsic Properties.’
- Rupert, R. This volume. ‘The Sufficiency of Objective Representation.’
Shapiro, L. This volume. ‘When Is Cognition Embodied?’
Siewert, C. This volume. ‘Speaking up for Consciousness.’
Stoljar, D. This volume. ‘Four Kinds of Russellian Monism.’

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1 Note that the term ‘intentionality’ is used in a technical way in this context, which derives from the Latin intentio, meaning ‘to be directed at’; it does not in the first instance have to do with intending to do something or otherwise exercising one’s will, as everyday use of the word ‘intentionality’ might suggest.

2 There are three main versions of this. One denies that any mental features are ever exhibited, or instantiated, in our world; this is eliminative materialism. Another allows that some mental features are exhibited, but insists that those turn out to be nothing but physical features, that is, are identical to physical features; this is reductive materialism. A third view is that while mental features are distinct from physical features or properties, the former are nonetheless necessarily determined by them (i.e., the former ‘metaphysically supervene’ upon the latter); this is non-reductive materialism.

3 This is intended to be consistent with the mental properties being causally fixed by (hence ‘nomically supervenient upon’) physical properties due to the laws of nature. The crucial point is that since the laws of nature could be different, different physical properties could be causally connected with different mental properties (or none at all) – which demonstrated the mental’s measure of independence from the physical. We may call the emerging view naturalistic property dualism. There are also stronger versions of dualism that deny the causal determination of mental properties by physical properties (call this non-naturalistic property dualism) or insist that regardless of what goes on with mental properties, there is also a kind of material stuff of which minds are ‘made’ (this is substance dualism).

4 Quoted from Tennant (2007). Tyndall was a professional mathematician and amateur philosopher, and the passage quoted is from an 1868 presentation he delivered to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association.

5 This line of reasoning has been regimented in modern philosophy of mind by Jaegwon Kim (1989), whose essential argument is that dualism (as well as certain types of materialism) is inconsistent with three independently plausible principles. The first is the principle of the causal efficacy of the mental: sometimes such phenomena as happiness do cause bodily effects such as smiling. The second is the principle of the causal closure of the physical: every physical event has a physical cause, which means that we must invoke the brain in explaining such physical phenomena as smiling. Finally, the third is the causal exclusion principle: events in the world do not systematically have two separate causes, so that we must choose between the brain-invoking and happiness-invoking explanations. The only way to respect all three principle, argues Kim, is to suppose – with the materialist – that a mental phenomenon such as happiness is one and the same as some physical phenomenon such as a neural process in the brain.

6 The view’s name plays homage to an early proponent of it, Bertrand Russell, who writes this: ‘So long as the “subject” was retained there was a “mental” entity to which there was nothing analogous in the material world, but, if sensations are occurrences which are not essentially relational, there is
not the same need to regard mental and physical occurrences as fundamentally different. It becomes possible to regard both a mind and a piece of matter as logical constructions formed out of materials not differing vitally and sometimes actually identical.' (Russell 1959: 103; but see Russell 1921 for a much earlier statement) The view is also often attributed to Spinoza, whose relevant work antedates Russell’s by three and a half centuries.

7 A relational fact is a fact consisting in something having a relational property (or several things having relational properties, or there being a relation holding among several things). A relational property is a property something has in virtue of standing in a relation to something. For example, being a brother is a relational property, because anybody who has it has it in virtue of standing in a relation to something else. It is in this sense that the fact that I am a brother is a relational fact.

8 The term ‘naturalistic’ is commonly used in modern philosophy of mind to denote a broadly scientifically inspired theory, or one that attempts to dispense with super-natural entities in its explanations of earthly phenomena.

9 That Hamlet is depressed, or melancholy, is explicitly recognized both from Hamlet’s first-person perspective (II.ii.602) and from his archrival Claudius’ third-person perspective (III.i.1 65).

10 The classic on this is Dretske 1981. There is also a running debate, within this general approach, regarding whether the information-theoretic relations in question should be supplemented with a teleological component.

11 Note well: this order does not integrate the second exchange in the book (Chapters 3 and 4), which is orthogonal to the central tension between first-person and third-person approaches and where both papers are equally (and relatively highly) accessible.