

Glossary

Analytical Thomism

A philosophical school of thought devoted to applying the methods of contemporary analytic philosophy to problems and concepts derived from **Thomism** in particular and medieval philosophy in general, and to applying concepts and arguments derived from Thomism and medieval philosophy to issues in contemporary analytic philosophy.

Anomalous monism

Anomalous monism holds that all events, including mental events, are identical to physical events, but that there are no scientific laws correlating mental events and physical events, so that a type-type reduction of mental events to brain events is impossible. It is also sometimes referred to as the **token identity theory**.

Aristotelian realism

Aristotelian realism, like **Platonic realism**, takes forms (for example, the forms of tables, chairs, and animal and human bodies) to be in some sense real and irreducible to physical properties, but unlike Platonic realism it also holds that in general, forms exist in some sense only "in" the physical substances they inform.

Attribute

See **property**.

Background

Searle's technical term for the set of non-**intentional** capacities and ways of acting that in his view underlie all manifestations of **intentionality**.

Behaviorism

A philosophical theory which holds that for a creature to exhibit mental states or capacities is just for it to have certain behavioral dispositions. The theory is sometimes called "logical behaviorism" or "philosophical behaviorism" to distinguish it from behaviorism in psychology, which is the view that a scientific approach to the study of the mind ought to eschew inner states and processes and focus on outward behavior.

Biological naturalism

Searle's term for his view that mental phenomena are not ontologically reducible to physical processes in the brain but are nevertheless caused by and "realized in" the brain. It is often suggested that the view is essentially a variety of **property dualism**, though Searle himself regards it as an alternative to both dualism and materialism.

Biological/biosemantic theories

A biological or "biosemantic" theory of intentionality is one that attempts to explain the **intentional** content of a mental state in terms of the biological function served by that mental state.

Bodily continuity theory

A bodily continuity theory of **personal identity** holds that what makes a person A existing at one time identical with a person B existing at another time is that A and B are associated with the same **body**.

Body

According to both **Cartesian dualism** and classical **materialism**, the human body is a mechanical system no different in its

essential nature and principles of operation from any other **physical** system. According to **hylomorphism** and **Thomistic dualism**, the body is an irreducible composite of **form** and **matter** inherently distinct in its nature from non-living physical systems, and its operations cannot ultimately be explained in entirely mechanical terms.

Cartesian dualism

The version of **dualism** associated with the philosopher René Descartes, namely a form of **substance dualism**.

Causal theories

A causal theory of mind is one that tries to explain some aspect of the mind by showing that it is reducible to or **supervenient** upon a certain kind of causal relation. For example, causal theories of **intentionality** attempt to show that a **mental** state's possessing intentionality amounts to its having certain causal relations to other mental states and/or to features of the external world.

Computational/representational theory of thought (CRTT)

The view that thoughts are best understood on the model of linguistic representations (for example, sentences) and that the transition from one thought to another is best understood on the model of the computational processes instantiated in modern digital computers. The CRTT is usually regarded as one possible way of developing **functionalism**.

Conceptual role theories

Conceptual role theories of **intentionality** attempt to show that the **intentional** content of any particular mental state can be explained in terms of its conceptual relations to other mental states.

Direct realism

Direct realism holds that in perceptual experience we are directly or immediately aware of an external world of **physical** objects existing independently of us. It is also sometimes known as “naïve realism” and is usually contrasted with **indirect realism**.

Dualism

Dualism holds that **mind** and **matter** are equally fundamental aspects of reality, neither reducible to the other. Two main versions are usually distinguished: *substance* dualism, which holds that there are two fundamental kinds of **substance**, namely **mental** substance and **physical** substance; and *property* dualism, which allows that there is only one fundamental kind of substance, namely physical substance, but holds that physical substance nevertheless has two fundamental kinds of **property**, namely, physical properties and mental properties. But **Thomistic dualism** would seem to be yet a third variety.

Eliminativism

A version of **materialism** according to which at least some, and maybe all, **mental** states and properties are, appearances notwithstanding, non-existent and ought to be eliminated entirely from a completed scientific account of human nature. This view is also sometimes referred to as “eliminative materialism.”

Epiphenomenalism

The view that **physical** processes in the brain cause **mental** processes, but are not causally influenced in turn by those mental processes. It is usually classified as a form of **dualism**, though some versions of **materialism** also seem to entail it, given the **mental causation problem**.

Epistemology

The philosophical study of the nature, grounds, and scope of knowledge.

Folk psychology

A term philosophers and psychologists use to refer to our ordinary ways of describing and explaining human behavior in terms of beliefs, desires, thoughts, experiences, and the like. The idea is that this everyday way of speaking constitutes a kind of rudimentary quasi-scientific theory.

Form

The form of a thing is its organizational structure; something irreducible to the sum of its parts. **Platonic realism** about form holds it to exist completely independently of either the **mind** or the **material** world. **Aristotelian realism** takes it generally to exist in some sense only “in” the things it informs.

Functionalism

Functionalism holds that **mental** states and processes can be analyzed in terms of the causal relations they bear to those environmental influences on the body that typically generate them, to the behavioral tendencies they in turn tend to generate, and to the other mental states they are typically associated with. The specific set of causal relations a particular mental state bears to these other elements is commonly said to constitute its “functional role.” (See also **multiple realizability** and **Universal Turing Machine**.)

Higher-order theory

A higher-order theory of consciousness is a theory that holds that what makes a **mental** state conscious is that it is the object of some other, higher-order mental state.

Hylomorphic dualism

See **Thomistic dualism**.

Hylomorphism

Hylomorphism holds that all **physical** substances are composites of **matter** and **form**, and that in the case of a living thing, its **soul** is to be identified with the form of its **body**.

Idealism

Idealism holds that all reality is fundamentally **mental** in nature, and in particular that the purportedly **physical** phenomena that seem, to common sense, to exist independently of any mind are, appearances notwithstanding, in some way reducible to mental phenomena.

Identity theory

The identity theory holds that **mental** states and processes are identical with states and processes of the brain and central nervous system – in short, that the mind is identical to the brain. It is usually regarded as a version of **materialism**, and thus is sometimes called “central state materialism.” But it can also be interpreted instead in terms of **neutral monism**, and the version of the theory that results in this case is sometimes called the **Russellian identity theory**. A further distinction between versions of the theory is that between the **type identity theory** and the **token identity theory**.

Indirect realism

Indirect realism holds that in perceptual experience we are aware of an external world of **physical** objects existing independently of us, but only indirectly, via our direct awareness of perceptual representations of those external objects. It is also sometimes known as “causal realism” or “representative realism,” and is usually contrasted with **direct realism**.

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Instrumentalism

In the philosophy of mind, an instrumentalist theory is one that takes **mental** phenomena to be convenient fictions: like **eliminativism**, it holds that such phenomena do not really exist objectively, but unlike eliminativism it nevertheless regards them as indispensable parts of a useful vocabulary for explaining and predicting everyday human behavior.

Intentional

An intentional mental state is one that manifests **intentionality**.

Intentionalism

Intentionalism is the view that all **mental** states are ultimately intentional, in the philosophical sense of being manifestations of **intentionality**. (See also **representationalism**.)

Intentionality

Intentionality is that feature of mental states like beliefs, desires, and thoughts by virtue of which they are about, directed at, mean, or represent, something beyond themselves. (In the typical case anyway, though sometimes a mental state could be about, directed at, mean, or represent itself.)

Material

Material things are those composed of **matter**.

Materialism

Materialism holds that all reality is fundamentally **material** or **physical** in nature, and in particular that all **mental** phenomena are reducible to, or at least **supervenient** upon, physical phenomena. (See **naturalism** and **physicalism**.)

Matter

There is, perhaps surprisingly, no general agreement on the precise meaning of this term, crucial though it is to science and

philosophy in general and to the **mind-body problem** in particular. For **hylomorphism**, matter is defined essentially in terms of its contrast with **form**, where form is just what gives matter its organizational structure. For some versions of **dualism** and **materialism**, matter tends to be defined instead in terms of its contrast with **mind**, where mind is understood as essentially involving consciousness and/or **intentionality** and matter as essentially involving neither. For other versions of these doctrines, matter is defined as whatever is characterized by the basic properties to be posited in a completed physics, though this definition seems unhelpful if it is allowed that a "completed physics" could take **mental** phenomena like consciousness and intentionality to be among the basic physical properties. Yet for some advocates of **structural realism**, such as certain defenders of the **Russellian identity theory**, the intrinsic nature of matter just is mental; while for other advocates of structural realism, we cannot know the intrinsic nature of matter. Given this variety of uses of "matter" and "material," the content and status of **materialism** seem far less clear than is usually assumed.

Mental

What is **mental** is just whatever is characteristic of the **mind**. The term is also commonly defined by way of contrast with what is **physical**, though it is controversial whether the mental and the physical are mutually exclusive categories.

Mental causation problem

The problem of explaining how the **intentionality** of **mental** states can possibly play any causal role in generating other mental states and behavior if mental states are, as **materialism** claims, reducible to or **supervenient** upon purely **physical** phenomena.

Metaphysical possibility/impossibility

What is metaphysically possible is just what is possible in at least one **possible world**. For example, a human being running a mile

in ten seconds, while not physically possible, is metaphysically possible in the sense that there is a possible world where the laws of nature are different enough from the ones in the actual world that human beings are capable of such a feat. What is metaphysically impossible is what is not possible in any possible world. For example, drawing a round square is metaphysically impossible because it involves a contradiction, so that there is no coherently describable possible world wherein round squares exist. Metaphysical possibility/impossibility is often contrasted with **physical possibility/impossibility**.

Metaphysics

The philosophical study of the ultimate constitution and fundamental structure of reality.

Mind

On the most uncontroversial characterization, the **mind** is just the seat of such phenomena as thoughts and conscious experiences. Disagreement begins as soon as one tries to give a more precise definition. Some theorists take consciousness to be the feature most fundamental to mind, while others regard **intentionality** as more basic. **Dualism** takes mind to be essentially non-**physical**, and **substance dualism** takes it to constitute a distinct kind of **substance**, while **materialism** rejects both claims. Some theorists deny that the mind is any kind of substance at all, and take it instead to be nothing more than a bundle of mental **properties**. For **Cartesian dualism**, the mind is identical to the **soul**, while for **hylomorphism**, **mental** properties are only one aspect of the human soul, alongside such non-mental properties as the capacity for growth, digestion, reproduction, etc. Given the variety of ways in which the term “mind” is used (and the variety of ways the term “**matter**” is used), the **mind-body problem** can be very difficult to formulate in a clear, concise, and uncontroversial way.

Mind-body problem

The mind-body problem is the problem of explaining what the metaphysical relationship is between **mental** phenomena and **physical** phenomena. It is difficult to state the problem in a more precise way without seeming to beg the question in favor of some specific theory or other: for instance, to characterize it as the problem of explaining how immaterial mental substances can interact with the **body** seems to presuppose the truth of **dualism**; while to characterize it as the problem of explaining how mental processes are produced by physical processes in the brain seems to assume the truth of **materialism**.

Multiple realizability

Minds are claimed by **functionalism** to be "multiply realizable" in the sense that the causal relations associated with the having of **mental** states could be instantiated not only in the neural structure of the brain, but also in, for example, the very different biological make-up of an alien life form or the circuits of the artificial brain of a sophisticated enough robot.

Mysterianism

The view associated with McGinn, according to which there is a true and complete **naturalistic** explanation of consciousness and other **mental** phenomena, but one which the human **mind** is constitutionally incapable of grasping.

Naturalism/naturalistic

The term "naturalism" is sometimes used to refer to the view that the natural world is all that exists, and in particular that there is no supernatural reality of divine beings, **souls**, and the like (in which case it is roughly equivalent to "materialism"), and sometimes used to refer, somewhat less vaguely, to the view that only what can be understood via the methods of natural science can be said to exist. (See **materialism** and **physicalism**.)

Network

Searle's technical term for the complex set of interconnected **mental** states and processes in which our **intentionality** is primarily manifested.

Neutral monism

Neutral monism holds that there is (contrary to **dualism**) only one fundamental kind of reality, but also that that kind is (contrary to **idealism** and **materialism**) inherently neither **mental** nor **physical** in nature.

Nominalism

Adherents of nominalism, in opposition to both **Platonic realism** and **Aristotelian realism**, deny that there are any genuine universals, and also usually hold that there are no abstract objects of any sort (**forms**, numbers, propositions, etc.).

Occam's razor

A principle of scientific and philosophical reasoning according to which, all things being equal, a more parsimonious explanation is to be preferred to a more complex one.

Occasionalism

A version of **dualism** in which **mind** and **body** do not interact with one another, but appear to do so because God intervenes from moment to moment to ensure that a given **mental** event is followed by an appropriate bodily event, and vice versa.

Ontology

The ontology of a philosophical or scientific theory is the class of entities it recognizes as existing. For example, non-**physical** substances are part of the ontology of **Cartesian dualism**, but are excluded from the ontology of **materialism**.

Other minds problem

The problem of explaining how, based only on our observation of another person's **physical** attributes and behavior, we can be justified in believing that he or she has thoughts, experiences, and **mental** states in general.

Panpsychism

Panpsychism is the view that all of **physical** reality is in some way associated with **mental** properties like consciousness and/or **intentionality**. Some versions of panpsychism seem more or less identical to **idealism**, though other versions seem closer to **property dualism** or the **Russellian identity theory**.

Parallelism

A version of **dualism** in which **minds** and **bodies** do not interact with one another, but appear to do so because the operations of each have been pre-established by God to run in parallel.

Personal identity

The relation by virtue of which a person A existing at one time and a person B existing at another time are one and the same person.

Physical

Used sometimes as a synonym for **material**, and sometimes to refer to whatever is posited by, or governed by the laws of, physical science. Whether "material" should also be regarded as a synonym for "whatever is posited by, or governed by the laws of, physical science" is unclear. (See **matter**.)

Physical possibility/impossibility

What is physically possible is just what is possible given the laws of nature (of physics, chemistry, and the like) operative in the actual world, while that which is physically impossible is what is not

possible, given those laws. It is physically possible for a human being to run a mile in ten minutes, for example, but physically impossible for a human being to run the same distance in ten seconds. Physical possibility/impossibility is often contrasted with **metaphysical possibility/impossibility**.

Physicalism

The term “physicalism” is sometimes used as a synonym for **materialism**, and sometimes used instead to refer to a specific version of materialism that holds that everything that exists is ultimately reducible to, or at least **supervenient** upon, the fundamental entities and properties postulated by physics. (See **materialism** and **naturalism**.)

Platonic realism

Platonic realism holds that abstract entities like propositions, numbers, universals and **forms** exist completely independently of either the **physical** world or the **mind**. It is usually contrasted with **Aristotelian realism** and **nominalism**.

Possible world

A possible world, in the philosophical sense, is a comprehensive and coherent description of some way that the world as a whole might have been. For example, in the actual world you are reading this book, but there is another possible world exactly like it except that you decided to take a nap instead. The idea of possible worlds provides one way of explaining the distinction between **physical possibility/impossibility** and **metaphysical possibility/impossibility**.

Property

A property is an attribute, quality, feature, or characteristic of a **substance**. For example, the redness and roundness of a red ball are properties of the ball.

Property dualism

See **dualism**.

Propositional attitudes

A propositional attitude is a **mental** state which involves taking a certain sort of stance toward a proposition. Believing, desiring, hoping, and fearing are the standard examples. In believing that Smith will win the election, for example, one takes a certain sort of stance toward the proposition that Smith will win the election, which is different from the sort of stance one takes when one merely hopes that Smith will win it, and different in still another way from the stance one takes when one fears that Smith will win it. Propositional attitudes are paradigm instances of mental states involving **intentionality**.

Psychological continuity theory

A psychological continuity theory of **personal identity** holds that what makes a person A existing at one time identical with a person B existing at another time is that A and B are linked by such psychological characteristics as memory and personality traits.

Qualia

Qualia are those aspects of a conscious experience in virtue of which there is something it is like to have the experience (for example, the smell of a rose or the way pain feels). They are commonly held to be directly accessible only from the first person point of view of the conscious subject, and also often held to be intrinsic in the sense of not being analyzable into more basic elements or relations. "Qualia" is the plural form of the singular "quale."

Representationalism

Representationalism is the view that **mental** states involving **qualia** are ultimately entirely representational in nature, in the sense that their possessing qualia is said to be reducible to their

being representations of a certain sort, where being a representation is understood to involve nothing more than having **intentionality**. Representationalism is thus a variety of **intentionalism**.

Rigid designator

A rigid designator is a linguistic expression that refers to the same thing in every **possible world**.

Russellian identity theory

A version of the **identity theory** associated with Bertrand Russell, which rejects the materialist metaphysics usually coupled with the mind-brain identity thesis and substitutes for it a variety of **neutral monism** (or, in some versions, a variety of **panpsychism**).

Skepticism

Skepticism, in the philosophical sense of the term, is the view that knowledge about some domain that common sense takes to be unproblematic is in fact impossible. For example, common sense holds that we know that there is a **physical** world existing outside our **minds**, but the philosophical skeptic holds that we do not, and cannot, really know this.

Solipsism

A solipsist is someone who believes that he or she is literally the only thing that exists, so that things that seem to exist independently (everyday **physical** objects, for example) are really just elements in the private world of his or her experience (like the objects one encounters in dreams or hallucinations).

Soul

In **Cartesian dualism**, the soul is a non-**physical** substance whose essence is to think, and which causally interacts with the

body, from which it is utterly distinct. On **Thomistic dualism**, a soul is the form of a living body, whether plant, animal, or human being; and in the case of the human soul (and it alone) it is associated with the powers of intellect and will, and has the capacity to continue to exist beyond the death of the body.

Structural realism

Structural realism is the view that natural science does not reveal to us the intrinsic or inner nature of the external **physical** world, but only its abstract causal structure.

Substance

A substance, in the metaphysical sense, is an independently existing thing, and is usually contrasted with a **property**, which typically exists as an attribute or characteristic of a substance. For example, a red ball is a substance, but the redness of it is a property.

Substance dualism

See **dualism**.

Substantial form

A substantial form, according to **hylomorphism**, is a **form** that makes a **substance** the distinct kind of substance that it is.

Supervenience/supervenient

One thing is said to supervene on (or be supervenient upon) another when there could not be a difference in the first without there being a corresponding difference in the second.

Thomism

A philosophical school of thought which derives its main doctrines, concepts, and methods from the work of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Thomistic dualism

A version of **dualism** derived from St. Thomas Aquinas, which regards the human **soul** neither as a distinct **substance**, à la **substance dualism**, nor as a bundle of non-**physical** properties, à la **property dualism**, but rather as the **substantial form** of the human **body**, à la **hylomorphism**. It also regards the human soul as being unique among the **forms** of **material** bodies in being subsistent, that is, capable of continuing in existence beyond the death of the body. The view is also sometimes known as “hylomorphic dualism.”

Token identity theory

A version of the mind-brain **identity theory** which holds that it is not possible to identify each **mental** state type with a brain state type, and that the most the identity theorist can hope for is an identification of each particular mental state token (for example, the specific thought about the weather I’m having right now) with some particular brain state token or other (for example, the specific neural event occurring right now in a certain region of my brain). The theory is also known as **anomalous monism**, and is usually contrasted with the **type identity theory**.

Type identity theory

A version of the mind-brain **identity theory** which holds that it is possible to correlate and identify each type of **mental** event (for example, thinking about the weather) with a type of brain event (for example, neural activity of such-and-such a kind). It is usually contrasted with the **token identity theory**.

Universal Turing machine

A Turing machine is, to oversimplify, an abstract specification of a mechanical device capable of instantiating any algorithm and thereby carrying out any computation. The variety of **functionalism** that takes the **mind** to be a kind of Turing machine is sometimes referred to as “Turing machine functionalism.”

Zombie

A “zombie,” in the philosophical sense, is a creature behaviorally, organizationally, and physically identical to a normal human being down to the last particle, but which is nevertheless devoid of any conscious experiences whatsoever.