

Philosophy of Mind Lecture 10: Dualism III

1. Zimmerman's Paper

Zimmerman, D. (2010) From Property Dualism to Substance Dualism, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 84, 119-50.

2. Defining Terms

Just as with the Panpsychist pieces, Zimmerman spends a good length of time going into how he wants to define the theories. Property Dualism, for Zimmerman, is just “[...] the thesis that the mental properties of persons are significantly independent of, or in some other way distinct from, the physical properties of persons.” (Is that the same as everyone else? Does it matter?)

He also spends time trying to define substance dualism and substance materialism. We previously only concentrated on one (Cartesian Substance Dualism). Zimmerman discusses more. The one he wants to concentrate on is emergent dualism.

Emergent Dualism

Emergent dualism differs from the Cartesian party line. Given Cartesianism your mind and body are truly independent. They are only connected because God has hooked you up with a body. You could easily have existed *without* a body – as some sort of discorporate soul – and will continue to exist when the body ceases to be. It's a puppet you control, not something your existence depends upon. Emergent dualism denies this. Given emergent dualism, when certain physical states obtain, a soul emerges from this. In a sense, you depend upon your brain even though you're non-physical.

3. From Property Dualism to Adverbialism

What's adverbialism? Well, it's all to do with phenomenal states. Use a metaphor of Harman: if you're a property dualist you think certain things get special, non-physical properties. They would, for instance, be the phenomenal properties (*being in pain; the red quale*) Which things get that?

It's as if the property dualist needs to 'paint' bits of the world to signal that they have these non-physical properties. One theory – which Zimmerman doesn't think the property dualist can have – is act-object dualism. This says that the qualia are had by certain things. Which things? The objects? If I see a red pillar box, does the pillar box get to have the non-physical properties? Zimmerman says not: the pillar box would then have the properties independent of, say, whether we were zombies or not. But that's not right. In zombie world there *aren't* any such phenomenal properties (no 'mental paint'). You can go off and read about the other alternatives.

Zimmerman isn't a fan – or, more importantly, he thinks the *property dualist* isn't a fan. Far better to be an 'adverbialist' In this case you yourself are the subject of the properties. It's called adverbialism because you're not construed as having a conscious experience of a red object that's out there. Instead, you yourself have a mental state, and that mental state is 'reddish'. You are 'sensing redly'

4. From Adverbialism to Speculative Materialism

Garden Variety Materialism vs. Speculative Materialism

Zimmerman begins by defining two types of materialism. To get a grip on that, he introduces the notion of a natural part. A natural part is a part of you that appears in the biological sciences. Whereas natural parts aren't *randomly sliced* portions of your body. The materialist says you're a material object. *Which* material object are you? Normally they say you're one of the natural objects.

You're your brain.

You're your central nervous system.

You're your body.

You're *not* that (non-natural) object made up of your kidney, spine and about 7 ounces of brain matter.

Call that *Garden Variety Materialism*. I exist; I am a material, physical substance; I am identical to some natural part of my body.

Speculative Materialism buys into the first two conjuncts, but not the third. I exist; I am a material, physical substance; I am identical to some non-natural part of my body. It's speculative for it is both contrastandard, and you then have to *speculate* which non-natural part are you?

Vagueness of natural objects

Zimmerman argues that property dualists have to be speculative materialists. If adverbialism is true, and I am a natural part, that natural part has to instantiate the fundamental, non-physical properties. But natural parts are *vague*.

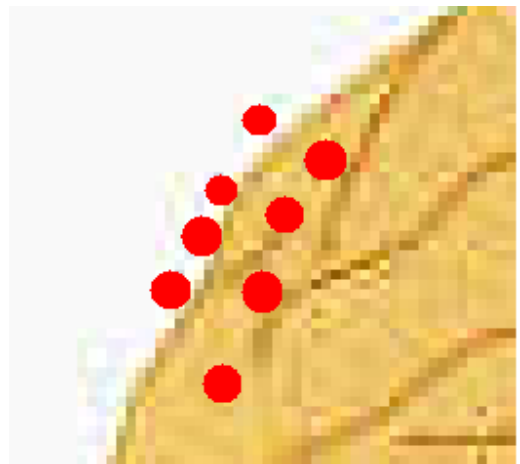
Take the brain. Imagine we zoom in on a bit of it. It's made up of atoms. But which atoms are a part of it? On my diagram, it seems easy to tell.

But that's not how the world works. If we zoomed in with a microscope to the atomic scale, you wouldn't see some ephemeral line marking out which atoms were parts of the brain. No – it's just not clear *where* that line is. And it's correspondingly unclear *which* particles are parts of your brain. So the *boundaries* of those objects are vague. I can't tell you *exactly* where your brain is. I

can tell you it's definitely in some places (say where the pineal gland is). But when we get down to the sub-atomic scale, it's not clear where it is. It's vague where it is.

Supervaluationism

But that's life. Things are vague. Who's tall? Who's bald? When did the Buddha first get fat? Where does Merseyside end and Cheshire begin? (It's not like there's a atom by atom placement of *exactly* where it is). Vagueness is fine – things are vague. Deal with it. *That's* not Zimmerman's problem. The problem arises because of how Zimmerman wants



to account for vagueness. For every object there are some *candidates* for what it might be.

Example: The one tonne weight. It does include lots of very similar one tonne weight-like objects. The candidates don't include, say, me.

When something is *definitely* F, all of the candidates are F. So if the weight is in this room, *all* of the candidates are in England. So it's *definitely* in England.

But if we edge it to the door so the edge of it is such that we're not sure whether it's in the room or not, *some* candidates will be in the room, other candidates won't. It's *vaguely* F. This type of theory is known as a supervaluationist theory. There's more to vagueness than this. But just note what Zimmerman's doing – he's *assuming* it for purpose of argument. If you disagree, you better have something to say about that!

Notice it makes vagueness a matter of language. If *only* we had precisely settled which candidate counts as a weight, we'd settle all of the vague questions (compare to the fat/tall/borderline examples).

From Adverbialism to Speculative Materialism

So how does this lead to dualism? Well, there need to be *psychophysical laws* telling us which physical objects end up having mental properties. They don't care about language. So the psychophysical laws are very precise: they will say of every candidate object whether it does or doesn't have mental properties. Take the natural part (say your brain) that you think you are if you're a GVM. Either

Not every candidate object has mental properties

If not every candidate object has qualia, not every candidate object is conscious. We said this meant that the object they are candidates of is *vaguely* that way. So you would only be *vaguely* conscious. **That's not right!** If I know anything, EM aside, I know I am *definitely* conscious.

All and only the candidate objects have mental properties

What would be the chances of that be? There are going to be lots of candidate objects – what are the chances of getting all and only the candidate objects?

More than the candidate objects have mental properties

So all the brain-candidates are conscious. But in addition some other objects are conscious – objects which *aren't* natural objects. So maybe that kidney-central nervous system object will turn out to be conscious. But now I'm not a natural object, as the best candidate for what I am has to overlap those non-natural objects. Now that's not to say this is *wrong* but is to say that *GVM* is wrong. You'd have to be a *speculative materialist*

5. From Speculative Materialism to Emergent Dualism

So, remembering that emergent dualism is a *non-Cartesian* substance dualism, how do we move from SM to emergent dualism? First, it's a bit weird. Zimmerman says it: 'leads[s] the materialist into dark speculations about the true location and physical nature of persons.'

What the materialist really needs is a 'special' object, such as a part of the brain. Speculative materialism is worrying in its speculations – it would be a lot more sensible if there was clearly, in biology, some single precise object picked out as being conscious. Some object that *wasn't* vague, such that the psychophysical laws said *just* one object – *that* object – was conscious. What they need is some biological part of us (heh, let's say the pineal gland an historical in joke) to turn out to be an obviously excellent candidate for being the object that speculative materialists say is thinking.

There would be such an object if you were an emergent dualist though! The dualist thinks a single object – an *immaterial* object – pops into existence. And unlike your brain or body, it's not composed of lots of atoms. Think back to Plantinga's article – it's got *no* parts. It's the one and only, very precise, candidate object for the psychophysical laws to say that it's conscious.

6. Summation

So the idea is that property dualism plus substance materialism leads to it being radically unlikely that Garden Variety Materialism is true. But Speculative Materialism is weird. What we need is one 'special' object, that has precise boundaries. No physical object is 'special'. The dualist soul, on the other hand, is special and precise. So emergent dualism is better than speculative materialism.