
human mind psychology Eliminative materialism

Posted by Monsieur Turtoni - 2010/02/18 06:18

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliminative_materialism Eliminative materialism (also called eliminativism) is a materialist position in the philosophy of mind. Its primary claim is that people's common-sense understanding of the mind (or folk psychology) is false and that certain classes of mental states that most people believe in do not exist. Some eliminativists argue that no coherent neural basis will be found for many everyday psychological concepts such as belief or desire, since they are poorly defined. Rather, they argue that psychological concepts of behaviour and experience should be judged by how well they reduce to the biological level. Other versions entail the non-existence of conscious mental states such as pain and visual perceptions. Eliminativism about a class of entities is the view that that class of entities does not exist. For example, all forms of materialism are eliminativist about the soul; modern chemists are eliminativist about phlogiston; and modern physicists are eliminativist about the existence of luminiferous aether. Eliminative materialism is the relatively new (1960s-70s) idea that certain classes of mental entities that commonsense takes for granted, such as beliefs, desires, and the subjective sensation of pain, do not exist. The most common versions are eliminativism about propositional attitudes, as expressed by Paul and Patricia Churchland, and eliminativism about qualia (subjective experience), as expressed by Daniel Dennett and Georges Rey. Various arguments have been put forth both for and against eliminative materialism over the last forty years. Most of the arguments in favor of the view are based on the assumption that people's commonsense view of the mind is actually an implicit theory. It is to be compared and contrasted with other scientific theories in its explanatory success, accuracy, and ability to allow people to make correct predictions about the future. Eliminativists argue that, based on these and other criteria, commonsense folk psychology has failed and will eventually need to be replaced with explanations derived from the neurosciences. These philosophers therefore tend to emphasize the importance of neuroscientific research as well as developments in artificial intelligence to sustain their thesis. Philosophers who argue against eliminativism may take several approaches. Simulation theorists, like Robert Gordon and Alvin Goldman argue that folk psychology is not a theory, but rather depends on internal simulation of others, and therefore is not subject to falsification in the same way that theories are. Jerry Fodor, among others, argues that folk psychology is, in fact, a theory and a successful, even indispensable, one. Another view is that since eliminativism assumes the existence of the beliefs and other entities it seeks to eliminate, it must be self-refuting. Eliminativism maintains that the common-sense understanding of the mind is mistaken, and that the neurosciences will one day reveal that the mental states that are talked about in every day discourse, using words such as intend, believe, desire, and love, do not refer to anything real. Because of the inadequacy of natural languages, people mistakenly think that they have such beliefs and desires. Some eliminativists, such as Frank Jackson, claim that consciousness does not exist except as an epiphenomenon of brain function; others, such as Georges Rey, claim that the concept will eventually be eliminated as neuroscience progresses. Consciousness and folk psychology are separate issues and it is possible to take an eliminative stance on one but not the other. The roots of eliminativism go back to the writings of Wilfred Sellars, W.V. Quine, Paul Feyerabend, and Richard Rorty. The term eliminative materialism was first introduced by James Cornman in 1968 while describing a version of physicalism endorsed by Rorty. The later Ludwig Wittgenstein was also an important inspiration for eliminativism, particularly with his attack on private objects as grammatical fictions. Early eliminativists such as Rorty and Feyerabend often confused two different notions of the sort of elimination that the term eliminative materialism entailed. On the one hand, they claimed, the cognitive sciences that will ultimately give people a correct account of the workings of the mind will not employ terms that refer to common-sense mental states like beliefs and desires; these states will not be part of the ontology of a mature cognitive science. But critics immediately countered that this view was indistinguishable from the identity theory of mind. Quine himself wondered what exactly was so eliminative about eliminative materialism after all: Is physicalism a repudiation of mental objects after all, or a theory of them? Does it repudiate the mental state of pain or anger in favor of its physical concomitant, or does it identify the mental state with a state of the physical organism (and so a state of the physical organism with the mental state)? On the other hand, the same philosophers also claimed that common-sense mental states simply do not exist. But critics pointed out that eliminativists could not have it both ways: either mental states exist and will ultimately be explained in terms of lower-level neurophysiological processes or they do not. Modern eliminativists have much more clearly expressed the view that mental phenomena simply do not exist and will eventually be eliminated from people's thinking about the brain in the same way that demons have been eliminated from people's thinking about mental illness and psychopathology. While it was a minority view in the 1960s, eliminative materialism gained prominence and acceptance during the 1980s. Proponents of this view, such as B.F. Skinner, often made parallels to previous pseudoscientific theories (such as that of the four humours, the phlogiston theory of combustion, and the vital force theory of life) that have all been successfully eliminated in attempting to establish their thesis about the nature of the mental. In these cases, science has not produced more detailed versions or reductions of these theories, but rejected them altogether as obsolete. Behaviorists argued that folk psychology is already obsolete and should be replaced by descriptions of stimulus and response patterns. Such views were eventually abandoned. Patricia and Paul Churchland argued that folk psychology will be gradually replaced as neuroscience matures. Eliminativism is not only motivated by philosophical considerations, but is also a prediction about what form future scientific theories will take. Eliminativist philosophers therefore tend to be concerned with the data coming from the relevant brain and cognitive sciences. In addition, because eliminativism is essentially predictive in nature, different theorists can, and often do, make different predictions about which aspects of folk psychology will be eliminated from folk psychological vocabulary. None of these philosophers are eliminativists tout court. Today, the eliminativist view is most closely associated with the philosophers Paul and Patricia Churchland, who deny the existence of propositional

attitudes (a subclass of intentional states), and with Daniel Dennett, who is generally considered to be an eliminativist about qualia and phenomenal aspects of consciousness. One way to summarize the difference between the Churchlands's views and Dennett's view is that the Churchlands are eliminativists when it comes to propositional attitudes, but reductionists concerning qualia, while Dennett is a reductionist with respect to propositional attitudes, and an eliminativist concerning qualia. Arguments for eliminativism Problems with folk theories Eliminativists such as Paul and Patricia Churchland argue that folk psychology is a fully developed but non-formalized theory of human behavior. It is used to explain and make predictions about human mental states and behavior. This view is often referred to as the theory of mind or just simply theory-theory, for it is a theory which theorizes the existence of an unacknowledged theory. As a theory in the scientific sense, eliminativists maintain, folk psychology needs to be evaluated on the basis of its predictive power and explanatory success as a research program for the investigation of the mind/brain. Such eliminativists have developed different arguments to show that folk psychology is a seriously mistaken theory and needs to be abolished. They argue that folk psychology excludes from its purview or has traditionally been mistaken about many important mental phenomena that can, and are, being examined and explained by modern neurosciences. Some examples are dreaming, consciousness, mental disorders, learning processes, and memory abilities. Furthermore, they argue, folk psychology's development in the last 2,500 years has not been significant and it is therefore a stagnating theory. The ancient Greeks already had a folk psychology comparable to modern views. But in contrast to this lack of development, the neurosciences are a rapidly progressing science complex that, in their view, can explain many cognitive processes that folk psychology cannot. Folk psychology retains characteristics of now obsolete theories or legends from the past. Ancient societies tried to explain the physical mysteries of nature by ascribing mental conditions to them in such statements as the sea is angry. Gradually, these everyday folk psychological explanations were replaced by more efficient scientific descriptions. Today, eliminativists argue, there is no reason not to accept an effective scientific

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Skinner, often made parallels to previous pseudoscientific theories (such as that of the four humours, the phlogiston theory of combustion, and the vital force theory of life) that have all been successfully eliminated in attempting to establish their thesis about the nature of the mental. In these cases, science has not produced more detailed versions or reductions of these theories, but rejected them altogether as obsolete. Behaviorists argued that folk psychology is already obsolete and should be replaced by descriptions of stimulus and response patterns. Such views were eventually abandoned. Patricia and Paul Churchland argued that folk psychology will be gradually replaced as neuroscience matures. Eliminativism is not only motivated by philosophical considerations, but is also a prediction about what form future scientific theories will take. Eliminativist philosophers therefore tend to be concerned with the data coming from the relevant brain and cognitive sciences. 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Posted by Monsieur Turtoni - 2010/02/18 06:18

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliminative_materialism Good subject! Eliminativist Man Common sense tells me that there's something too it. ha!

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Posted by dorayme - 2010/02/18 06:18

Good subject! As someone else has wisely said, comprehensive quoting usually goes along with a lack of comprehensive reading and understanding. <<http://www.netmeister.org/news/learn2quote.html>

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Posted by Immortalist - 2010/02/18 06:18

1. Our ordinary ways of thinking about the mental make up a theory (folk psychology) by which human behavior is explained and predicted. 2. Folk psychology provides only rough and in many cases completely defective or nonexistent explanations of human behavior (think of mental illness and. sleep, respectively, as examples). 3. A mature neuroscience will provide more accurate and informative explanations of human behavior than folk psychology. 4. Hence, we are justified in believing that folk psychology is a defective theory, and so that the mental entities the theory incorporates can be eliminated. That is, eliminative materialism is justified.

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Posted by Monsieur Turtoni - 2010/02/18 06:18

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Posted by Monsieur Turtoni - 2010/02/18 06:18

So now you have your ET shoulder sock puppet stalking me without you even trying to disguise the fact! You're truly are a creepy person. I'm with John on this one. It's unethical to feed into your illness. I wish you well..

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Posted by Zinnic - 2010/02/18 06:18

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So now you have your ET shoulder sock puppet stalking me without you even trying to disguise the fact! You're truly are a creepy person. I'm with John on this one. It's unethical to feed into your illness. I wish you well.. For what it is worth, I for one appreciate the provision of citations links. One can choose to look at them or not, but they provide interest and guidance for those of us who, not making a study of the history of philosophy, have general interest in current theories. The same sort of general interest that, as a biological scientist, I have in current theories in physics and mathematics. Areas that, along with philosophy, are beyond my expertise. Anyway, keep up the good work. Your efforts help to squash the nits and picks of that unpleasant piss poster who is seriously confused about his identity. Zinnic

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Posted by cmp6_gamehall_Averdein decaplex - 2010/02/18 06:18

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Posted by Monsieur Turtoni - 2010/02/18 06:18

Eliminativism maintains that the common-sense understanding of the mind is mistaken, and that the neurosciences will one day reveal that the mental states that are talked about in every day discourse, using words such as intend, believe, desire, and love, do not refer to anything real. Replacing the everyday perception / conception of water with a chemical description and a physics account doesn't eliminate what any of those lingual approaches refer to in their own manner. While words like beliefs, desires, etc, may refer to more abstract distinctions, they nevertheless symbolize collections of internal thoughts and feelings that are eventually witnessed concretely in terms of outcomes or behaviors. And this clamor over which is more epistemically real reeks of classic positivism: That science is the only real or valid knowledge, which is questionable from the standpoint that humans would have died-out millenia ago if the ways that modern science describes the world were the only effective conceptions of it. Also suggests an erroneous view that the sciences are extremely unified, when in fact the various fields have their own nomenclatures which are only tentatively bridged, with plenty of rivalry among them over which is more explanatorily robust than the others. The roots of eliminativism go back to the writings of Wilfred Sellars, W.V. Quine, Paul Feyerabend, and Richard Rorty. IOW, it's descended from linguistic idealism, which was far more rightly applicable to Rorty than Sellars. On closer examination, Sellars didn't really deny there were experiential presentations that symbolic systems represented. It was just difficult or impossible for communal-based epistemic endeavors to utilize such private appearances the way they did language, so that eventually you have some of those public discourses slash public procedures becoming skeptical and nihilistic about any personal presence of visual images, auditory and olfactory phenomena, etc. Today, the eliminativist view is most closely associated with the philosophers Paul and Patricia Churchland, who deny the existence of propositional attitudes (a subclass of intentional states), and with Daniel Dennett, who is generally considered to be an eliminativist about qualia and phenomenal aspects of consciousness. One way to summarize the difference between the Churchlands's views and Dennett's view is that the Churchlands are eliminativists when it comes to propositional attitudes, but reductionists concerning qualia, while Dennett is a reductionist with respect to propositional attitudes, and an eliminativist concerning qualia. The Churchland stuff is again much ado over little: The right of a particular practice or discipline to describe what it researches with its own brand of interpretative conceptions and terminology. Dennett's claim, OTH, potentially borders on Kookville if he truly

believes he is navigating around the countryside without the aid of visual, auditory, and tactile mappings composed of elements like colors, low and high pitches, haptic sensations, etc. This everyday scheme of being presented with such experiences has served humans since their evolutionary dawn, and who could even smoothly function if they had to switch to the over-technical complexity of this or that neuroscientific account? Yes it is hard to account for; especially when you have to use the very systems it's looking to eliminate to pass along the arguments. The way i look at is that for example pain does not exist. Sure we feel pain but there is no such thing as pain in the same sense that there is no such thing as red. It's overly simplistic to use terms like pain and red. I think thats the argument. So as things stand now, their only way forward is via science. As another example; they seem to believe that using folk psychology is primitive and corrupting.

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Posted by Eliminativist Man - 2010/02/18 06:18

cmp6_gamehall_Averdein decaplex <n...@webtv.net wrote in message Turtoni, submitting a topic from wikipedia: Eliminativism maintains that the common-sense understanding of the mind is mistaken, and that the neurosciences will one day reveal that the mental states that are talked about in every day discourse, using words such as intend, believe, desire, and love, do not refer to anything real. Replacing the everyday perception / conception of water with a chemical description and a physics account doesn't eliminate what any of those lingual approaches refer to in their own manner. While words like beliefs, desires, etc, may refer to more abstract distinctions, they nevertheless symbolize collections of internal thoughts and feelings that are eventually witnessed concretely in terms of outcomes or behaviors. And this clamor over which is more epistemically real reeks of classic positivism: That science is the only real or valid knowledge, which is questionable from the standpoint that humans would have died-out millenia ago if the ways that modern science describes the world were the only effective conceptions of it. Also suggests an erroneous view that the sciences are extremely unified, when in fact the various fields have their own nomenclatures which are only tentatively bridged, with plenty of rivalry among them over which is more explanatorily robust than the others. The roots of eliminativism go back to the writings of Wilfred Sellars, W.V. Quine, Paul Feyerabend, and Richard Rorty. IOW, it's descended from linguistic idealism, which was far more rightly applicable to Rorty than Sellars. On closer examination, Sellars didn't really deny there were experiential presentations that symbolic systems represented. It was just difficult or impossible for communal-based epistemic endeavors to utilize such private appearances the way they did language, so that eventually you have some of those public discourses slash public procedures becoming skeptical and nihilistic about any personal presence of visual images, auditory and olfactory phenomena, etc. Today, the eliminativist view is most closely associated with the philosophers Paul and Patricia Churchland, who deny the existence of propositional attitudes (a subclass of intentional states), and with Daniel Dennett, who is generally considered to be an eliminativist about qualia and phenomenal aspects of consciousness. One way to summarize the difference between the Churchlands's views and Dennett's view is that the Churchlands are eliminativists when it comes to propositional attitudes, but reductionists concerning qualia, while Dennett is a reductionist with respect to propositional attitudes, and an eliminativist concerning qualia. The Churchland stuff is again much ado over little: The right of a particular practice or discipline to describe what it researches with its own brand of interpretative conceptions and terminology. Dennett's claim, OTH, potentially borders on Kookville if he truly believes he is navigating around the countryside without the aid of visual, auditory, and tactile mappings composed of elements like colors, low and high pitches, haptic sensations, etc. This everyday scheme of being presented with such experiences has served humans since their evolutionary dawn, and who could even smoothly function if they had to switch to the over-technical complexity of this or that neuroscientific account? Yes it is hard to account for; especially when you have to use the very systems it's looking to eliminate to pass along the arguments. The way i look at is that for example pain does not exist. Sure we feel pain but there is no such thing as pain in the same sense

that there is no such thing as red . It's overly simplistic to use terms like pain and red . I think that's the argument. So as things stand now, their only way forward is via science . As another example; they seem to believe that using folk psychology is primitive and corrupting. I am trying to be practical, in the face of changing contexts. I approach everything from an engineering POV, including ambiguities. For instance, 'pounding sand' could indicate uselessness, or an effort to drive out bubbles, or both. The culture, for so long, has ignored brain function or used magic for explanation that bringing brain functions into the canonic models is difficult.

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Posted by cmp6_gamehall_Averdein decaplex - 2010/02/18 06:18

Identity is not correlation. IT depends upon correlation to make the claim. If Jane Parker and Bob's wife are supposed to be labels for the same person, I'd expect to encounter the same woman each time, not a giraffe that answers to Jane Parker when she's outside and Bob's wife when she's inside a building. To be a less uncontroversial claim that can totally shuck the correlation ball and chain, an explanation needs to be provided for the disparity. For instance, that Patricia Aldoraz and Dorayme are identical remains a controversy in here, despite a strong correlation between the two. Controversial if for no other reason than that the two labels themselves deny it. _

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Posted by cmp6_gamehall_Averdein decaplex - 2010/02/18 06:18

Whats your take on the evolution of consciousness? Do you mean consciousness as in a body responding to situations in the environment or the internal presentations (visual images, etc)

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human mind psychology Eliminative materialism

Posted by Zinnic - 2010/02/18 06:18

Eliminativism maintains that the common-sense understanding of the mind is mistaken, and that the neurosciences will one day reveal that the mental states that are talked about in every day discourse, using words such as intend, believe, desire, and love, do not refer to anything real. The Churchland stuff is again much ado over little: The right of a particular practice or discipline to describe what it researches with its own brand of interpretative conceptions and terminology. Dennett's claim, OTH, potentially borders on Kookville if he truly believes he is navigating around the countryside without the aid of visual, auditory, and tactile mappings composed of elements like colors, low and high pitches, haptic sensations, etc. This everyday scheme of being presented with such experiences has served humans since their evolutionary dawn, and who could even smoothly function if they had to switch to the over-technical complexity of this or that neuroscientific account? _ Shame, shame <g. You know very well Dennett does not truly believe that. It is a caricature of his eliminatist position you use as an Aunt Sally easily knocked down.

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Posted by cmp6_gamehall_Averdein decaplex - 2010/02/18 06:18

Shame, shame <g. You know very well Dennett does not truly believe that. It is a caricature of his eliminatist position you use as an Aunt Sally easily knocked down. Note the if in that passage of mine. ;) Just as the various interpretations and distortions of Kant have become potent agents to address in their own right, so the diverse simulations of Dennett. _

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Posted by Zinnic - 2010/02/18 06:18

Shame, shame <g. You know very well Dennett does not truly believe that. It is a caricature of his eliminatist position you use as an Aunt Sally easily knocked down. Note the if in that passage of mine. ;) Just as the various interpretations and distortions of Kant have become potent agents to address in their own right, so the diverse simulations of Dennett. _ Unfortunately Kant is not able to correct interpretations and distortions. However, Dennett clearly denies the antecedent of your conditional so I assumed you were using it to disparage his eliminatist stance. If by diverse simulations of Dennett you mean distortions of his position, I stand corrected ;-). Zinnic

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Posted by dorayme - 2010/02/18 06:18

Identity is not correlation. IT depends upon correlation to make the claim. Note that this is an epistemological point, not a logical one. You are right that we *generally* need to make some correlations before we can reasonable judge that A is B. For example we often spring to the fact that our spouses are two timing us by noticing stuff like the hot babe (who is going to get her teeth rearranged anytime soon) in the flat above is always home when one's spouse is missing otherwise unaccountably. But this talk of correlation is a bit vague. But yes, often we have to notice when some things occur at the same sort of time time as other things... that is a consequence of the logical fact about identity (stuff like one thing cannot be in two places at once etc etc...). But the argument, and this is a point that most people seem to miss, from the correlations to the identity always looks weak as a mere inductive argument. But then, in my view, all inductive arguments are weak. The strength of the identity argument does not rest merely on these inductive instances but on the power of simple explanation, it being the best *theory* overall.

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Posted by John Stafford - 2010/02/18 06:18

You are right that we *generally* need to make some correlations before we can reasonable judge that A is B. For example we often spring to the fact that our spouses are two timing us You were off to a good start, then the " must happen.

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Posted by Patricia Aldoraz - 2010/02/18 06:18

Identity is not correlation. IT depends upon correlation to make the claim. Note that this is an epistemological point, not a logical one. Very good. You are right that we *generally* need to make some correlations before we can reasonable judge that A is B. For example we often spring to the fact that our spouses are two timing us You were off to a good start, then the " must happen. Note how, when the going gets a bit harder, you collapse into personal invective. Leave dorayme alone and leave me alone and do what you urged others to do. Fuck off in other words.

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