

Name: Christopher Fisher

Student Number: 0605784J

Supervisor: Prof. Mark Leon

Title: 'The Place of Mental Properties in a Physical World'

Abstract

In describing the mind's place in the physical world, philosophers have produced a diversity of views. On the far right of the spectrum we find substance dualists, who think that there is in addition to physical substance, mental substance. A little to the left strong property dualists claim that while there is only physical substance, there are in addition to physical properties, mental properties. These two views broadly represent accounts of mind on which physicalism is explicitly considered false. Among those who think physicalism is true, are reductionists and non-reductionists. The former sit on the far left, claiming that there is only physical substance and that mental properties *just are* physical properties. Non-reductionists are at the center; rejecting the possibility of reduction, claiming that mental properties are distinct from physical ones, while resisting anti-physicalist claims about mental properties and substance.

In this paper I will argue that this spectrum needs to be substantially revised. In particular I will argue that non-reductive views are unavailable and that strong property dualist views are problematically related to views that are dualistic about substance. I will present an alternative physicalist view that does not appear on the above-mentioned spectrum. I will not provide an outright defense of the view, but I will argue that it is worth further consideration because it enables us to avoid many of the difficulties commonly associated with the abovementioned views. Ultimately the view's success will be determined by the possibility of accounting for subjective properties of phenomenal experience in terms of objective physical ones. It is beyond the scope of this paper to pronounce on this matter, but I will argue that if one thinks that the difference between the subjectivity of experience and the objectivity of physical properties is due to anything more than shortcomings in human explanatory capabilities, one is really endorsing a non-physicalist position. In this way, I hope to show that the best chance for a future physicalism lies in the alternative view that I offer here.