

# Nature of the mind

Philosophy



Nature of the mind Chapter four of the text “ Philosophy Here and Now” by Lewis Vaughn gives rise to insights about the nature of the mind. The conflicting arguments brought out by different philosophers covered in the book give rise to theories about the nature of the mind. They are well thought out and provide a basis for comparing and contrasting.

Rene Descartes and Chalmers table the two most compelling theories about nature of mind. Descartes refers to the nature of mind by introducing a theory in support of substance dualism. He argues that conceivability of something in the mind is also physically possible. This means that whatever is conceived in the mind is also logically possible. For instance, a person can assume a nonphysical state upon conception of that thought. In this case, the person disregards the body as an indispensable feature of his being.

This, according to Descartes, implies that the mind is an important feature to that individual. Therefore, the person is an immaterial, thinking being (Vaughn 63).

Chalmers theory of mind is known as property dualism. He asserts that mind states or properties are different from physical states. The mental states emanates from physical properties but not necessarily identical to them. This implies that the relationship between the states of mind and physical properties is that of supervenience. In this case, the mental states are more powerful than physical states. However, the existence of mind states largely depends on the physical states. From this relationship, there exists a kind of dualism between nonphysical and physical features. He concludes that mind features are superior to physical properties.

From the provisions of the two theories, there arise similarities and differences. The most striking similarity is that of acknowledging the mind as <https://assignbuster.com/nature-of-the-mind/>

superior to the physical states. In the argument presented by Descartes, superiority of the mind emerges when existence of physical states is brought about by the mind. This shows the power of the mind to create and dismiss the physical states. Similarly, arguments brought forward by Chalmers recognize the mind as the all-powerful entity between the two. Physical properties are given meaning by the mind (Vaughn 66).

The arguments differ from each other when in-depth analysis and evaluation are done. There is no superficial difference observable but it takes the examination approach to bring it to the surface. The difference is evident when prescriptive and descriptive aspects are considered. Descartes' argument implies of what is possible with the mind by introducing 'if'. The possibility of something is dependent on conceivability of the same in the mind. Failure to conceive, the relationship between the mind and the physical state fails to hold. On the other hand, property dualism is descriptive. It shows an existing relationship at all aspects only that the mind is superior to the physical properties. Another difference relates to the giver of value and meaning to the other. In this light, it asserts that something has a mental state in if only there is a physical state. This is contrary to Descartes' theory that the mind is the one that gives rise and value to physical properties.

Chalmers theory is superior. This is supported by the applicability of the two arguments. In real sense, there is no logicity in one assuming not to have a physical body. Similarly, one cannot exclude physicality and be left with only the mind. The physical properties are the influence to the mind as opposed to the mind influencing the physical properties. Therefore, the Chalmers' theory is more practical than Descartes'.

Works cited

Vaughn, Lewis. *Philosophy Here and Now: Powerful Ideas in Everyday Life*.

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