

The mind



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The mind is a complex element in a living organism that assists to understand the world around them, be able to interpret experiences and internalize ideas pertaining reality in general. Dualism and physicalism are two philosophical entities that attempt to explain reality with regards to the mind and body relationship. Physicalism dimension is normally taken to be synonymous with materialism. The two entities perceive the relationship between the mind and body from different perspectives which brings about their differences.

Dualism for instance, which is derived from the concept “ duo” , meaning two, holds the view of the mind/body relationship from a duality perspective. It sees the two entities as being different from each other. Dualists believe that the mind and the body cannot be reduced to be the same thing because doing so will ultimately lead to the deviation of the true meaning of reality. Their focus is aimed at critical analysis of the perspectives that normally bring the differences between the mind and the body. The body is a physical reality. The brain which is part of the body is not equivalent to the mind. Physical manipulation of the brain can be achieved to attain its wellbeing. For example, surgery can be done to the brain if it is malfunctioning to enhance its efficiency. On the contrary, complex processes which are not physical in nature are normally used to heal mental illnesses. One of the major proponents of this erspective is Rene Descartes.

Physicalism is a philosophical entity that holds the view that reality as perceived by human mind does not go beyond the observable things. This term was coined by Otto Nuerath. According to physicalists, there are no real things which are beyond the physical objects. Therefore to a greater extent,

ideas behind physicalism conform to the empirical point of view. They do not however refute the existence of things beyond the physical. The proponents argue that even what exists beyond the physical is always supervened by the physical. For instance, “ physicalists don't deny that the world might contain many items that at first glance don't seem physical items of a biological, or psychological, or moral, or social nature. But they insist nevertheless that at the end of the day such items are either physical or supervene on the physical.” (“ Physicalism”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stoljar, 2009).

Rene Descartes is one of the main proponents of the dualism perspective. According to him, the mind and the body are two fundamentally different things. In one of his works, “ Meditations on the first philosophy”, (1641), Rene Descartes says that the mind is not an extended thing. The mind does not occupy any space as contrasted to the body which occupies space. It does not think but it is an extended thing (Descartes, 1980, pg. 93). He explains further and says that tthe mind is just an entity that thinks. To him, the mind has the capacity to affirm, deny, will, senses as well as imagines. The extended thing according to him has peculiar characteristics which are evident and can be proved. Some of the characteristics include; size, shape, movement from one place to another and many others. (Descartes, 1980, pg. 85). Quantifiable qualities can be used to describe matter (physical objects) something that cannot be applied when describing the metaphysical issues.

On the other end the argument that the mind and the body are two different entities can be refuted on the following several grounds. The descriptions put

forth by the dualists are seen to be inconsistent. They do not conform to the facts of fetal development and evolution of human beings (Lycan, 1996, pg. 168) . For example, all human beings began as physical human beings regardless of the metaphysical reality which could have been created by God himself. It could have existed but it is beyond the understanding of the human beings. There might be no prove that the original cell that later formed the human beings was conscious. It could not exist on its own outside the physical reality of the human body. In addition from the physical reality which was original, there is no evidence that some non-physical elements were later added. This affirms the idea that as individuals grow up, they remain whole as they were created since there is nothing added during the developmental process.