

# The mind-body issue in science

Science



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Neuroscience is the study of the brain and psychology is... well, the answer to that question is not exactly clear. A direct interpretation of the word "psychology" boils down to "the study of the psyche" or "the knowledge of the psyche", but psychology does not have a definition of the psyche and, in general, they do not believe in it. Psyche comes from the Greek word meaning soul, so the psyche is actually the study of the soul, and yet psychology today has more or less become a study of the mind, and ironic situation since neither psychologists nor neuroscientists believe in the existence of the mind.

The generally held accepted view of the mind is that the mind arises from the activity of the brain. Thus, a major philosophical concern of neuroscience is, "Does the mind exist separate and independent of the brain?" The generally accepted answer to this question is, "No. The mind is an epiphenomenon that arises from brain activity." In the past, efforts were made to resolve this problem with philosophical arguments such as Fredric Weizmann's ideas about genetics and embryology (Forsdyke, 1999) and Michael M. Sokal ideas about phrenology.

Today, we can conclude that the mind/body problem of science has been successfully resolved despite the obvious fact that the resolution has yet to be recognized or acknowledged! We can now take pride that the resolution to this dilemma did not result in confirming the "pervasive" 19th-century fear humans might ultimately be viewed as "mere machines" lacking souls. (Jacyna, 1994)

Despite the generally accepted view that the mind is merely an epiphenomenon that arises from brain activity, more or less superimposed over brain activity, there is actually no evidence to support the idea. To date, all of the available data, without exception, suggests that the mind and the brain are two separate but interacting 'things'. Whatever evidence that does not suggest this is neutral. The evidence is sufficiently strong to have swayed diehard monists (who believe that the mind is the brain) into becoming dualists (who believe that the mind and the brain are separate).

Upon a review of the available data at the end of his life, the late neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield, MD (1891 - 1976), a former monist, concluded the evidence, "...it comes as a surprise now to discover, during this final examination of the evidence, that the dualist hypothesis seems the more reasonable of the two possible explanations." (Penfield, 1975) Although the available data may support Penfield's conclusion, there are still some interesting, intriguing and difficult questions to answer such as, " What is the realm of consciousness and the mind," " How does consciousness and the mind and the realm of mind relate to the brain and the physical body," and " Does a mind exist independent of the brain and the physical body?" We can briefly address each of these questions separately.

The central problem with the dualist point of view is that the mind exists as an abstraction unless it arises from brain activity. If the mind exists separate and independent of the brain, the answer to our first question is that the mind exists as an abstract field as proposed around the 1920s by developmental biologist Paul Weiss. (Weiss, 1926) Then, in the mid and late

1930s, Dr. Harold Saxton Burr and his associates discovered just such a field. (Burr and Lane, 1935; Burr and Northrop, 1939)

Dr. Burr discovered that all living things are molded and controlled by invisible and intangible electro-dynamic fields, that he called " L-fields" for the " fields of life". John White and Stanley Krippner call the L-field the "'bridge' or intermediate link between the mental and the physical... they offer evidence that the mind and body are quite separate...." (White and Krippner, 1977)

If Burr's findings are correct, it seems apparent that consciousness and the mind are electrodynamic fields that interact with the physical body. Burr was able to make a definitive connection between the L-field and wound healing and between the L-field and the mental functions and mental states of individuals.

Burr and his colleagues found that they could make impersonal, objective measurements of the mental and emotional states of psychiatric patients and that their electrical measurements generally agreed closely with psychiatric diagnoses. Consciousness and the mind somehow relate to the brain and the physical body through an electrical connection or bridge of sorts, forces associated with and coupled to cells. (Jerndal, 1982)

Finally, although the preferred view of the mind-body/mind-brain issue in neuroscience and psychology is the monistic view which states that the mind is merely an epiphenomenon that arises from brain activity, it is apparent that the mind transcends physical functions of the body, but there are concerns such as can more detailed studies be provided to determine if the

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mind can be associated with the L-field? Burr, Ravitz and their colleagues provided evidence that established a relationship between nerve and other tissue and that made useful neurological and psychiatric measurements that were associated with mental functions.

Therefore, they succeeded in establishing a firm connection between an abstract but very real field and the tangible nervous system. This data provides concrete evidence for the existence of an independent mind that transcends the functions of the physical body. Thus, it appears that the mind-brain and mind-body issue can be laid to rest. Now, the problem is, "How to get the word out." Perhaps that leaves us right back where we started, at least for now.

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