

# [The notion of sameness](https://assignbuster.com/the-notion-of-sameness/)

Give an argument for the claim that mental states are distinct from physical states. Explain the notion of sameness and explain why the argument is valid. Then explain a rebuttal an identity theorist could use to object to the argument.

Distinct Mental & Physical States

The idea of the human mind has always been an important and difficult notion to describe in terms of a definition or set of conditions. The thoughts, beliefs, or desires seem to have a clear distinction from the tangible elements of an actual human brain. So distinct, that perhaps they should be considered two fundamentally different things. Utilizing a Dualism approach, it should logical to assume that discern that there are difference elements s within the human body mind; The tangible elements of the brain can be labeled as physical things/states in this case, and the thoughts, beliefs, desires, pain, or other nonphysical things as soul or mental states. Utilizing the notion of sameness (also referred to as Leibniz’s law), this argument that physical and mental states are in fact distinct can be made valid. On the other hand, this issue of distinct separation versus identical substances is debatable as identity theorists that object may provide a rebuttal to this argument.

The concept of dualism begins with the idea that in the universe, there exist physical and nonphysical/mental substances or things. At first glance, it seems fairly obvious that physical properties do not share the same features as mental properties. For example, mental properties of the mind such as thoughts and beliefs don’t contain physical properties like weight, color, or shape. In addition, experiments have demonstrated that when a part of the brain is touched is electrocuted; it can cause mental sensations to occur, such as recalling a memory. Therefore this furthers the dualist argument that physical state of the brain and mental state of the mind are loosely connected and not identical.

The notion of sameness (also referred to as Leibniz’s law) provides the means by which a object or person can be justifiably, recognized as that certain object or person. There is a distinction that in this case, the notion of sameness is not numerical in the sense of same size, brand, or made of the same material, and that it must be qualitative with no “ degrees” of sameness and that one thing must or must not be the same as another thing. Another way to explain this notion is that if A equals B, then A must share all and exactly the same properties as B. In other words, if A is truly the same as B, then what is true of A must also be true of B.

Using this notion of sameness, the idea of a physical brain state and a mental or nonphysical state can be compared. For example, if John believes that he is in Davis, California can be determined to be true or false in obvious ways. However, his brain state of this believe cannot be analyzed and shown to be true or false. With these two premises: The mental state having the property of being true or false and the brain state not having this property, it can be concluded that mental states are not equal to or the same as brain/physical state and thus, the argument for dualism becomes valid.

However, identity theorists disagree with the above statements and may provide a rebuttal to such arguments written above on the basis of different concepts underlying physical states. An identity theorist may argue that physical states contain 2 concepts: A pseudo-neurological concept that contains the physical elements of the brain such as neurons firing, chemical hormones within the brain and a mental state concept that contains the “ perceived” as non-physical things such as pain, sadness, and hunger. To simply, imagine that Lois Lane is trying to establish the fact that Clark Kent is not Superman. She would make a list of properties that coincide with a Superman concept and a Clark Kent concept. She would then pick out a property from each list and maybe stating that “ Superman can fly” and Clark Kent can’t fly”. In reality, the viewer understands that Superman and Clark Kent are the same person but believes Lois Lane to also be rational when introducing him as 2 separate concepts. This should be compared to the opposite case where an irrational statement would be to say that “ Superman can & cannot fly” because although he Clark Kent and Superman are the same person, it does not make sense to mix different concepts together. Through this type of argument, the identity theorist makes the claim that the physical and mental states should be treated as separate but simply as different concepts under a unifying and single physical state.

As described by monist Keith Maslim, the dualist belief is that “ physical occurrences do not just appear to be different from consciousness; they are utterly different, so utterly different in fact, that it is inconceivable how the physical could produce the mental” and therefore a distinct separation between mental and physical states. At first, the notion of sameness seems to provide create a clear distinction of the mental and physical states, but this notion is quickly refuted with the identity theorist argument that multiple concepts coexist within the unitary physical state. Again, this mind-body discussion is left with more room for debate, rather than a clear-cut answer that may never be fully properly grounded and supported.