

HOW DOES THE MIND EXIST?

Conversation on Cognitive Science

Toruń, December 17, 2003

Organizer: Institute of the Theory of Knowledge and the Theory of Science of the Department of Philosophy of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Patronage: Polish Cognitive Society

One of the reasons for organizing the above-mentioned conversation was the publication of Urszula Żegleń's book *Philosophy of Mind* ([Filozofia umysłu] Toruń, 2003). Urszula Żegleń is a professor of philosophy at the Nicolaus Copernicus University.

The one-day conversation had three parts and each part consisted of two speeches. After each speech there was a short but very active discussion on the respective topics.

In the first part, Prof. Stanisław Judycki (Catholic University of Lublin) presented in his speech: „The Problem of Mind-Body Identity” an overview of the arguments „for and against” the type-type identity theory of mind represented by Ullin T. Place, Jack J. C. Smart and Herbert Feigl. The arguments „for” are based: on physicalism, on the functioning of our conceptual structure, on analogy to inter-theoretical reduction and on empirical or quasi-empirical reasons. The arguments „against” are based first of all on the understanding of „identity”, used in extensional concepts. Dr. Robert Poczobut (University of Białystok) spoke on the subject: „The Functional Model of Reduction and Emergence”. As an introduction he gave an overview of (i) the ontology of mind (as a problem that belongs to the philosophical domain) and (ii) the theories of emergence. The functional model of reduction – founded on Jaegwon Kim's conception presented in his book: *Mind in a Physical World* (1998) – has to distinguish between the reduction of the causal states and the reduction of the phenomenal states (the influence of the environments should be taken into consideration.)

In the second part, Mag. Bartłomiej Świątczak (Nicolaus Copernicus University) spoke on the subject: „Externalism and the Problem of

Localisation of the Mind". The states of mind are representational and the questions are: should such states be identified with a content, with a bearer of content or with a bearer and content? Externalist could not identify the states of the mind with content or with the bearer. Prof. Zbysław Muszyński (University of Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Lublin) spoke on the subject: „The conception of extended mind”. Muszyński presented a critical exegesis of the article written by Andy Clark and David Chalmers, *The Extended Mind* (1999) in which the authors – in contrast to Hilary Putnam’s argument on the „Twin Earth” – give a kind of externalism based on the active role of environment in driving cognitive processes. One of the questions discussed was a „protesis” of the mind – as far the using of a notebook could be useful for that.

In the third part, prof. Robert Piłat (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) presented the essence of the model of conceptual spaces according to Peter Gärdenfors (see his book: *The Conceptual Spaces*, 2000). Gärdenfors calls his model to explain cognition the „conceptual spaces”: a lot of our reasoning is done by calculation – the analogy of a distance between two sides of perception. We say that things are similar if they are geometrically (Euclid) closer on some points of dimensional scales. It is possible to define concepts as domains in conceptual spaces. The question is: In which sense is the theory proposed by Gärdenfors an empirical theory and what philosophical consequences follow from it? Mag. Marcin Miłkowski (University of Warsaw) presented the subject: „Heterofenomenology and the Question of Introspection”. He was concerned with Daniel Dennett’s concept of heterofenomenology (see: *Consciousness Explained*, 1991) and with the concept of introspection. One of Miłkowski’s thesis was: if mental properties are accessible, they must be empirically accessible.

During the conversation was also presented the first number of the philosophical journal „Fenomenologia” (1/2003), published by the *Polish Fenomenological Society, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences* and the *Publishing House of the Humaniora Foundation*.

One of the main idea of the conversation was to provide a forum for discussion of the body-mind problems and problems of consciousness. This goal was fulfilled: the conversation provided an opportunity for scholars and post-graduate students from different Universities of Poland to exchange their proposed solutions to some of the above-mentioned topics. The high level of participation of the undergraduate students and graduate students has to be emphasized. Some of the students were very engaged in the technical carrying-out of the whole conversation.