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Clapson, Philip (2017) Psychiatry as science: the theory of brain-sign. In: Philosophical Issues in Psychedelic Drug Use, 5-6 Oct 2017, Royal College of Psychiatrists. (Unpublished)

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Psychiatry as Science

The Theory of Brain-Sign

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Theme

The brain does not operate as a conscious/unconscious mind.

The brain does not reveal its operational processes in its operation.

The brain is a causal organ, and it communicates with other brains by its physical states.

Its operational processes have to be worked out as science.

The distinction between mental and physical illness R. E. KENDELL

[The British Journal of Psychiatry June 2001, 178 \(6\) 490-493](#) Editorial

‘A distinction between mental and physical illness is still made, both by the lay public and by many doctors, and the terms “mental disorder” and “mental and behavioural disorder” are still used [ref. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, APA*].... This has the unfortunate effect of helping to perpetuate two assumptions that have long since been abandoned by all thinking physicians [?], namely that mental disorders are disorders of the mind rather than the body, and that they are fundamentally different from other illnesses.

The distinction between mental and physical illness R. E. KENDELL

[The British Journal of Psychiatry June 2001, 178 \(6\) 490-493](#) Editorial

‘In reality, neither minds nor bodies develop illnesses. Only people (or, in a wider context, organisms) do so [?], and when they do both mind and body, psyche and soma [dualism!], are usually involved. Pain, the most characteristic feature of so-called bodily illness, is a purely psychological phenomenon [body/mind?], and the first manifestation of most infections, from influenza to plague, is also a subjective change[?] — a vague general malaise [body/mind?].

The distinction between mental and physical illness R. E. KENDELL

[The British Journal of Psychiatry June 2001, 178 \(6\) 490-493](#) Editorial

‘Fear and other emotions [mind?] play an important role in the genesis [causality?] of myocardial infarction, hypertension, asthma and other bodily illnesses [how?], and bodily changes such as fatigue [mind?], anorexia and weight loss are commonplace in psychiatric disorders. That most characteristic of all psychiatric disorders, depressive illness, illustrates the impossibility of distinguishing between physical and mental illnesses [but you do!].’

The distinction between mental and physical illness R. E. KENDELL

[The British Journal of Psychiatry June 2001, 178 \(6\) 490-493](#) Editorial

In this Editorial paper:

- 1) How mind and body as distinct entities interact is undefined and confused.**
- 2) The physical brain's relation to mind *per se* is not engaged.**
- 3) No functional/causal account of a *knowing* mind (by contrast with a physical brain) is offered.**

Physicality & Transcendence

Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, Sensing, Emotion, Thinking, Selfness

Psychology

is

Transcendence

Inexplicable transition

Biology

is

Physicality

Molecules, Cells, Proteins, Lipids, etc., Synapses, Transmission,
Structures

The theoretical predicament

'We' learn to be an 'I'.

We learn that we experience.

We learn we have minds.

We learn our separation from others.

We learn a religious backdrop of the unique and enduring soul.

We learn the unsolvable mind-body problem.

Cf. We learned being the centre of the universe with the gods above.

Shall we buy this car?



But where is the car they see?

- In their heads? (Mentalism)

The brain operates via its images of the car. How can it do that?

- In the world? (Empedocles, Husserl)

But how do their brains get at it?

2,500 years of dispute

The explanatory links

Physical intermediaries **between** their brains:

Electromagnetic radiation

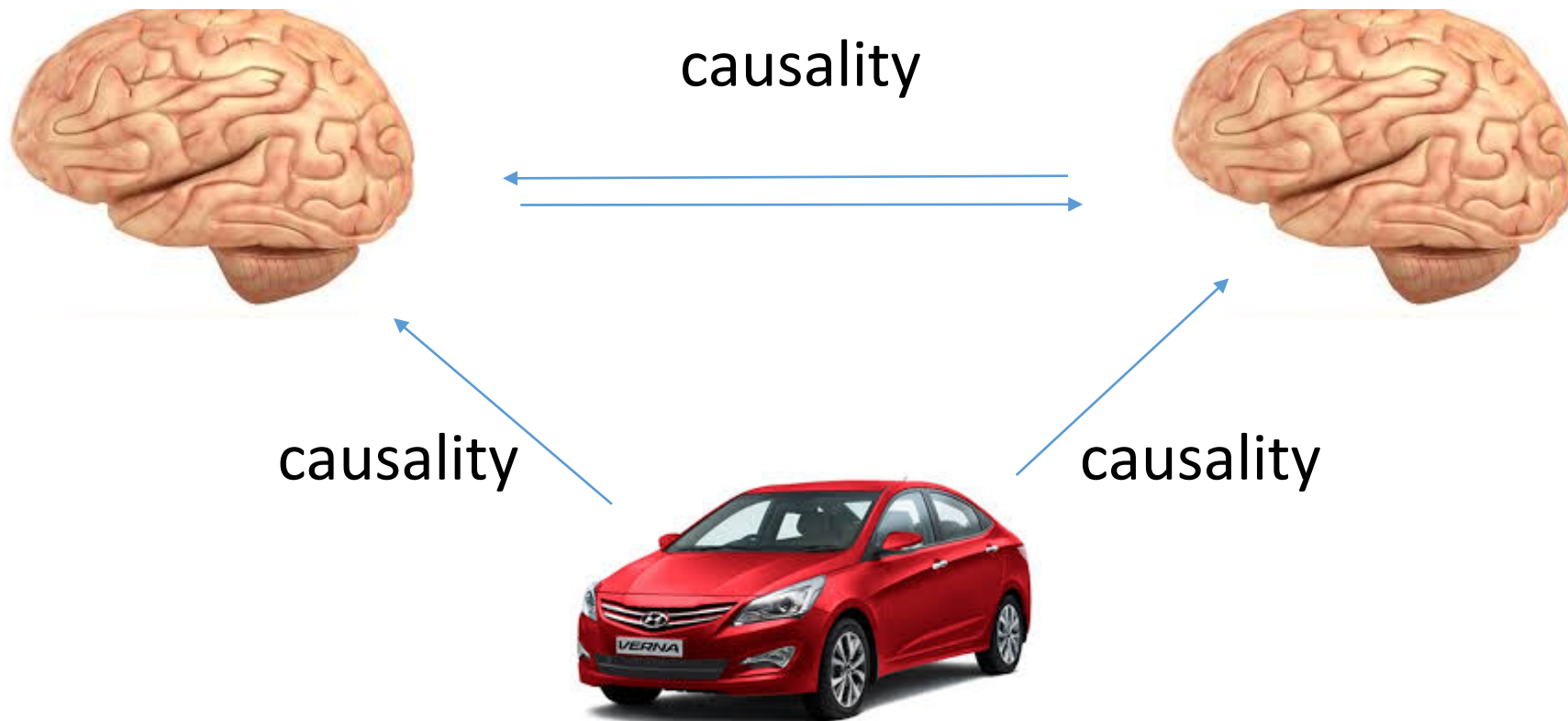
Compression waves

Molecular transmission

These 'transparent' properties are casual on brains.

The causal nexus via electromagnetic radiation

Two brains encounter the car and each other



Transition

Our biology (how we operate) obscures the way the brain functions.

A scientific account 'sees through' biology's operational effectiveness

The apposite scientific question is...

How do physical brains communicate for collective action? **Because...**

The brain is an incommunicable mass of causal material.

How do brains communicate?

- Two or more organisms are physically separate.
- To act collectively they must be **one unit of operation**.
- How is communication established?
- Each brain signifies the world of its communal action from its **causal orientation** toward that world – the brain phenomenon: **Brain-Sign**.
- ‘The world’ is a **joint signification** of what causality is directed to.
The world is not seen.
- This ‘joint world’ is not the same world or the real world.

First fundamentals of brain-sign theory

1) Brain-sign is a brain mechanism of communication about the world for collective action between brains/organisms.

Signs are biologically ubiquitous *and* intrinsically physical.

2) Brain-sign derives from the **current causal orientation** of the brain towards the world.

Brains 'interpret' their causal orientation to generate (assemble) brain-sign.

3) **Causal orientation** is for the action the brain will effect at a particular moment – if it does. **The brain is not a knowledge organ.**

The 'I' (subject, ego)

- No (transcendental) **Kantian subject** founds consciousness or mind.
- The 'sense of I' is the **biophysical marker** of this organism.
- Brains signify by the biophysical marker linked to that in the world toward which they are causally orientated.... **Brain-sign**
- Brain-sign functions as *this* world representation of *this* causal orientation in *this* brain at *this* moment.
- The 'sense' that 'we' do see *is* the biophysical establishment of communication.... **It is not causal for the host organism.**

Three categories of brain-sign

- 1) ***Categories-of-the-world*** are the causality-derived objects/states/conditions the brain faces moment by moment in the actual world.
- 2) ***Categories-of-interaction*** are the brain's causality-derived accounts of its relation toward the world, and replace such mentalist notions as emotion, sense or feelings.
- 3) ***Brain-sign language*** is an inter-neural method by which one brain can alter the causal orientation of another brain.

Brain-Sign Model of Neural Operation

Pre-established Directed Brain Assemblies + Immediate Sensory Framework

Integration ↓ **(No psychological faculties)**

Neural Causal Orientation

Interpretation ↓ **(No mental states)**

Generated Brain-Sign

Communication ↓ **'Common world' reference**

Action, Language

Why does this matter to Psychiatry?

A patient does not report a problem, or complain about their mental life. There is no mental life.... **Brain-sign enables operational unity.**

The patient's brain alters the psychiatrist's brain's causal orientation. Their brains then 'share' a ***communicative field*** – brain-sign.

The complaint is the **brain's report of failures in causal orientations.**

Drugs alter the causal orientation of the brain and interpretive ability: thus categories of the-world and categories-of-interaction.

They **do not cure mental illness.**

Why does this matter to Psychiatry?

The brain-sign model, and its vocabulary, offers Psychiatry a route to being a coherent scientific discipline... And Neuroscience.

Consciousness **is a scientific mistake** as fundamental as Geocentrism.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)

“The term *mental disorder* unfortunately implies a distinction between ‘mental’ disorders and ‘physical’ disorders that is a reductionistic anachronism of mind/body dualism. A compelling literature documents that there is much ‘physical’ in ‘mental’ disorders and much ‘mental’ in ‘physical’ disorders. The problem raised by the term ‘mental disorders’ has been much clearer than its solution, and, unfortunately, the term persists in the title of DSM-IV because we have not found an appropriate substitute”.