

Structural realism and the mind

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Abstract

This paper considers whether, and how, the mind can be incorporated into structural realism. Section 1 begins with some definitions, and briefly reviews the main problems which beset structural realism. The existence of the mind is proffered as an additional problem, to which the rest of the paper is devoted. Three different philosophies of the mind are analysed, beginning with eliminative materialism, which is briefly reviewed in Section 2. The identity theory of the mind-brain relationship is critically analysed in Section 3, and the notions of supervenience and emergentism are defined. In Section 4, the functionalist approach to the mind-brain relationship is introduced, and two specific functionalist approaches---the representational theory of the mind, and connectionism---are defined and appraised. It is argued that these approaches enable structural realism to be extended to include the mind. It is also argued that structural realism can be applied to the unconscious mind, and the paper concludes with the proposal that the distinction between epistemic structural realism and ontic structural realism is also valid in the case of the mind.

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