CONCLUSION
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Jaegwon Kim, in his book ‘Mind In A Physical World’ cites that the philosophical problems do not arise in a vacuum. The problem of mental causation having a long history and the philosophers were very eager to know about the unknown mind. The mind and its functioning were considered as a mystery for them. In this juncture Rene Descartes came as a magician with a magic band to unravel the mystery behind the mind and its functioning. Descartes’ philosophy of mind establishes the metaphysics of the thinking self, the thinking substance that exists by itself and is conceived in itself. This thesis has attempted to show the importance of two schools of philosophy of mind, namely Cartesian dualism and the mind-brain identity theory to solve the problem of mental causation.

The Cartesian dualism represents dualism, and the mind-brain identity theory represents physicalism. In philosophy of mind these two schools are considered as highly important. Because the first one can be considered as a strong foundation for the discussions of mental causation in the philosophical community and the second one is famous for its ontological simplicity.
The first chapter of this thesis gave an idea of different schools of philosophy of mind discussed the problem of mental causation. The different schools are selected with an order according to the development in the growth of philosophy of mind. The cited schools in this chapter are Cartesian Dualism, under the head of ‘modified Cartesian dualism’ the schools such as Parallelism, Occasionalism, Idealism and Epiphenomenalism, and three materialist schools such as, Behaviorism, Mind-Brain Identity theory and Functionalism.

The second chapter of this thesis has discussed the Cartesian Dualism in detail. The importance of Cartesian Dualism in Philosophy of Mind is discussed. The influential conception of philosophy of mind is being advanced by Rene Descartes. He held that minds and bodies are ‘Substances’ of distinct kinds. This dualism of substances is subsequently labeled as Cartesian dualism. Descartes approach to the mind can be considered as a platform for almost all studies in philosophy of mind. Philosophers opined that human beings have a ‘privileged access’ to their own mind. Descartes believed that the thoughts about one’s own states of mind could not be false.

Under the head ‘Dualism’, two kinds of dualism are discussed. They are substance dualism and attribute dualism. The special nature of the mental is similar
to the nature of a special substance. The physical bodies can be fully described by
the physical sciences. If one is in pain or is thinking about tigers, that where is his
pain or his thinking is, strictly speaking, taking place. The sensation and the
thinking both inhere in the substance. This style of dualism is called substance
dualism. Typically, substance dualism goes along with the view that the identity of
a person over time is constituted by the identity over time of this substance.

The alternative approach of identity holds that the physical story about the
bodies is incomplete. Along with the kinds of properties to be found instantiated in
the material world in general, the bodies of persons and certain higher animals
instantiate special properties. Given the central role that the brain and central
nervous systems are not known, to play, in the possession of mental natures- things
without brains thinks nor feel- these special properties are most likely attributes of
certain states of the brain. This style of dualism is called, attribute dualism.

This chapter further discussed the method of Cartesian dualism. Descartes
held that minds and bodies are ‘substances’ of distinct kinds that, in the case of
living human beings, happen to be intimately related. This dualism of substances is
known as Cartesian dualism. Cartesian dualism is a strong dualism. Descartes
supposes that the world is made up of substances. A substance is not, as the term
might suggest, a kind of stuff like water, or coal, or paint. According to Descartes the substances like the pen, the trees, the table etc, are complex substances composed of other substances, their parts. In Descartes’ project of doubting everything that could be doubted, with a view to discovering something indubitable. His first conclusion was the famous ‘cogito’, - ‘I think therefore I am’ (cogito ergo sum). He concluded that he could not possibly doubt that he existed, so he knew he existed. But doubting is a type of thinking, so he also knew that whatever else he might be, he was ‘a thing that thinks’. Here Descartes couldn’t consistently doubt that he was a thinking thing because doubting itself is a variety of thinking, the very act of doubting that claim was sufficient to prove it is true.

Under the head ‘The Mind-Body interaction’ the interaction between the mind and body is discussed in detail. According to Descartes the causal engagement of mind and body is having two directions. The mind affects the body and the body affects the mind that is, the causal relationship is in two ways. Descartes explains that, two principles govern the bodily movements. According to him the will governs the bodily movements. He argues that it is clear from the childhood experiences that the bodily movements of a human being are occurring in obedience to the will. For example, the intention to kick a ball results in the forward movement of a leg and foot in the direction of the ball. Here the intention
to kick a ball results the bodily movement. In Descartes own example, “when a sword strikes our body and cuts it, a sensation of pain is produced in us by the physiological changes which occur in the body”. This example provides a particular kind of causation that is, a physical or bodily event, causes a mental event. Here the feeling of pain in the body is because of the physiological changes happened in the body by sword’s cut. Here Descartes comes to a difficulty, up to the explanation related to the distinct character of the body and mind is clear, but when it comes to the causal relation between the body and mind, is problematic. There are two different reasons for this difficulty. One is the way Descartes presented the body and mind. According to him body and mind are logically distinct subjects. The second is his general understanding of causation in terms of the push of one thing on another. These sorts of causation explanation work in the extended material things and it is not applicable to the causation relation between the body and mind. Because Descartes’ conception of body is an extended material thing and the mind is an unextended immaterial thing.

The third chapter tried to depict the Mind-Brain Identity theory in detail. Here the Identity theory is considered as a representation of Physicalism. The Mind-Brain Identity theory holds that each and every mental state is identical with some state in the brain. The Identity theory clears that, the desire for ice-cream, the
pangs of hunger, and the believing of lights have turned green are all states of brain. The view is about the states of mind. The Identity theory got its inspiration from science, which expresses many of its discoveries in terms of identity. For example, in the case of lightning, Science does not tell that lightning and electrical discharges between clouds are lawfully correlated. It tells that they are one and the same thing. Lightning is an electrical discharge between clouds. Science has discovered that water is H$_2$O. Science has discovered that whenever there is lightning, there is an electrical discharge of certain intensity between clouds and this shows a lawful correlation. There is one phenomenon described in two different ways. Whenever someone is in pain, they have C fibers firing, and this is a lawful correlation. Occam’s consideration then suggests that the identifying of pain with C fiber firing shows that it is possible to describe one phenomenon in both the language of neuroscience and psychology.

Under the head ‘Physicalism’ the way in which the Cartesian Dualism is sidelined by physicalism is clearly given. Physicalists maintain that all processes and states involved in the human mind are physical states and processes. The argument like, the mental states themselves are physical, shows that the subjects of those states couldn’t be non-physical. In brain research the assumption of all physical events are caused physically, rules outs the Cartesian dualism. The
interactions of the human beings to the rest of the world, is an important concern of Philosophy. The understandings about the different properties of things are explained in terms of the different shapes and sizes changed the concepts related to the mind. According to physicalism the human beings are nothing but complex structures made up of atoms. The ancient form of atomism can be taken as a prime example of materialism or physicalism tells that, nothing exists but atoms and empty space. The ‘Mind-Brain Correlation Thesis’ discusses the main concept of the Mind-Brain Identity theory. According to this thesis, then, each type of mental event that can occur to an organism has a neural correlate that is both necessary and sufficient for its occurrence. So for each organism there is a set of mind-brain correlations covering every kind of mental state it have.

Under the head ‘Arguments For Mind-Brain Identity Theory’ has discussed different arguments which supports the Mind-Brain Identity theory. J. J. C. Smart played a major role to popularize the mind-brain identity theory. He projected the ontological simplicity of this theory. Then further the discussion gone to the argument put forwarded by Kripke. Kripke advocates an approach to reference and naming according to which certain expressions pick out their referents by necessity. By this he refers to the same thing in every possible name. According to his argument, this is true in the case of proper names. With this he tries to give a
solution for the doubt regarding the necessary identity between the pain and particular kind of brain processes. For example, the name ‘Aristotle’ applies to that same individual person in every possible world without regarding the contingent facts about that person might be in that world. In every possible world means, in which the referent is referred, are called ‘rigid designators’. Kripke opined that many expressions other than proper names are also rigid designators. He included the psychological states such as, ‘pain’ and scientific terms designating processes in the brain, in ‘rigid designators’. In this way Kripke cleared that the mind-brain identity theory can be regarded as necessary and not merely contingent. In the case of both pain and c-fiber firing are rigid designators, applying to exactly the same thing in every possible world. Then if it is true in the actual world that pain is identical to C-fiber firing, there is no possible world where that same statement is untrue. It is true in every possible world means it is necessary. The Kripke’s argument revised the notion that the mind-brain identity theory as necessary rather than contingent.

The famous Identity theorist David Armstrong advanced some arguments in support of the mind-brain identity theory. Armstrong took the knowledge of empirical research that ‘DNA molecule is the causal agent of the transmission of inherited characteristics of organisms’ to support the identity theory. With the help
of the analogy of DNA molecules he stated that pain and C-fiber activation are identical.

Under the head ‘Token And Type Identity’ the different kinds of event kinds are discussed. The Identity theory talks about the identity of mental events and material events. There occurs a natural doubt about ‘events’. There are two alternative views about ‘events’. The choice among these two event kinds makes an important difference in the ways in which the identity theory can be understood. Among the two views, one view takes events as basic concrete particulars of this world along with material objects. And the second kind of view about ‘events’, is event types.

Here the difference between the type physicalism and token physicalism is clarified. The normal understanding about the mind-brain identity theory on the basis of Smart and Feigl is fully based on Type-physicalism. While considering the token physicalism, it only says that the mental and physical properties are instantiated by the same entities. It is clear according to the mind-brain identity theory that any event or occurrence with a mental property has some physical property or other. At the same time the token physicalism says nothing about the relationship between the mental properties and physical properties, that is the
relation between pains, itches, thoughts, consciousness, and the rest on the one hand and types of neural events on the other. By depending on the explanation given by Jaegwon Kim on token physicalism it is clear that mind-brain identity theory can be taken as type physicalism to get more strength on the stand. Type physicalism is a form of reductive physicalism holds without any doubt that, there are no mental facts over and above physical facts. So type physicalism is a strong and robust materialist doctrine.

Under the head ‘Objections to Mind-Brain Identity Theory’ the major objection raised against the mind-brain identity theory is being discussed. The major objections are, the epistemological objections, Privacy, Location problem, Phenomenal properties of mental events, Value, Felt quality, the explanatory gap, the complete knowledge, Pain a rigid designator, The multiple realization argument and anomalous monism.

Under the head ‘The Necessity of The Identity Theory’ a serious difficulty related to the claim on truthfulness of the identity is discussed. That is a statement of identity is necessarily true in all possible worlds. According to the American philosopher Saul Kripke, the thesis of mind-brain identity is contingent. Contingent means, the concept may not be a true in all possible worlds.
The forth chapter has given a picture of mental causation dealt within the two schools of philosophy under discussion. The title of the chapter has been given as ‘THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE APPROACHES OF CARTESIAN DUALISM AND MIND-BRAIN IDENTITY THEORY ON MENTAL CAUSATION’. But instead of comparing these two schools, this chapter has an intension to discuss the common issue ‘mental causation’ by using two logically different schools. One school represents the dualism and the other represents physicalism. Cartesian dualism represents dualism and Mind-Brain Identity theory represents physicalism.

The study shows that Cartesian dualism failed to give a substantial solution for ‘mental causation’. But that did not mean that that school of philosophy is irrelevant. Cartesian dualism can be considered as a foundation for modern developments in Philosophy of mind. Many of the problems which philosophy of mind now grapples have their origin Cartesian dualism. After Cartesian dualism, there are so many schools of philosophy aroused in philosophy of mind. But mental causation still exists as a puzzle. Merleau-Ponty observes that we all stand upon the shoulders of our philosophical predecessors, what he calls the “sedimentation of
history”. In denying or accepting Cartesian dualism, one must usually end up doing so from a standpoint that owes much to one or the other view of Caetesianism.

Reference

1. Burwood Stephen, Gilbert Paul and Lennon Kathleen, Philosophy of Mind