

Disposition: An Integrational Analysis

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The type of exclusion arguments offered by Jaegwon Kim and Ned Block seems to apply to the relations not only between the mental and the physical properties but also between the dispositional and the categorical properties, resulting to deny the causal efficacy of the properties of the first conjuncts. But the consequence of the argument is not attractive since it makes the mental and the dispositional properties to be causally superfluous, which is contrary to our intuition.

Would it be possible to have an alternative to the physicalist world-view? If any type of dualism is not an option, I am tempted to consider an integrational world view, which was first claimed by Confucius under the notion of cheng(誠). I would propose an integrational thesis that cheng(誠) of an entity is a power to realize the embedded objective of it in the context where it interacts with all others.

The notion of compassion may be said to be both dispositional and mental. Then, this notion is one candidate to shed lights on the integrational thesis. The thesis doesn't exclude roles the causal notion has to play in the integrational system. Rather it allows the causal notion in its proper place, not having to exclude other relational notions in the system. What it denies is that the causal relation is all there is among what are there.

The notion of compassion is essentialist in two senses. The first is the sense in which Mencius said that compassion is necessary for one to be a human(無惻隱之心 非人也). The second is the sense that compassion is an essentialist disposition. "Compassion" does neither refer to a mental state nor reflect a human relation, but it denotes an abstract property, or a theoretical notion, which can be singled out by a Ramsey sentence.

There are many challenges for the integrational thesis to meet. Some of them are how the integrational thesis could allow an essentialism of a kind?, Is there a way for the integrational view of language to meet the requirements of modal semantics?, and so on. The present paper may not be able to explain all of these questions but it will try to suggest how to approach toward the task.