

Fourth Edition

John Heil

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

**A Contemporary
Introduction**

Philosophy of Mind

The book is intended as a reader-friendly introduction to issues in the philosophy of mind, including mental–physical causal interaction, computational models of thought, the relation minds bear to brains, and assorted -isms: behaviorism, dualism, eliminativism, emergentism, functionalism, materialism, neutral monism, and panpsychism. The *Fourth Edition* reintroduces a chapter on Donald Davidson and a discussion of ‘Non-Cartesian Dualism’, along with a wholly new chapter on emergence and panpsychism. A concluding chapter draws together material in earlier chapters and offers what the author regards as a plausible account of the mind’s place in nature. Suggested readings at the conclusion of each chapter have been updated, with a focus on accessible, non-technical material.

Key Features of the *Fourth Edition*

- Includes a new chapter, ‘Emergence and Panpsychism’ (Chapter 13), reflecting growing interest in these areas
- Reintroduces and updates a chapter on Donald Davidson, ‘Radical Interpretation’ (Chapter 8), which was excised from the previous edition
- Updates ‘Descartes’s Legacy’ (Chapter 3) to include a discussion of E. J. Lowe’s arresting ‘Non-Cartesian Dualism’, also removed from the previous edition
- Includes a highly revised final chapter, which draws together much of the previous material and sketches a plausible account of the mind’s place in nature
- Updated ‘Suggested Reading’ lists at the end of each chapter

John Heil is Professor of Philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis and Durham University, and an Honorary Research Associate at Monash University. His recent publications include *Appearance in Reality* (forthcoming), *The Universe As We Find It* (2012), and *From an Ontological Point of View* (2003).

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Philosophy of Mind

A Contemporary Introduction

Fourth Edition

John Heil

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Preface to the Fourth Edition

The first incarnation of *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction* appeared in 1998 followed, six years later, by a second edition, then, nine years after that, by a third edition in 2013. Successive editions have undergone changes, large and small. The third edition saw the elimination of footnotes, authorial appendages I have come to regard as reader-unfriendly and expressions of stylistic laziness. This impression was reinforced for me when recently I had occasion to reread D. M. Armstrong's *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*, which originally appeared in 1968. Remarkably, in 376 pages (including a ten-page preface) the book contains not a single footnote. This is disciplined, confident, reader-friendly writing at a very high level, and of a kind that, like the Australian quoll and faculty positions in philosophy, is in increasingly short supply.

Once again, I have benefited from reports of readers who have used the book in teaching courses in the philosophy of mind. In response to these, I have reintroduced a chapter on Davidson, 'Radical Interpretation', that, along with a chapter on E. J. Lowe's 'Non-Cartesian Dualism', was excised in the third edition in an effort to keep the book to a manageable length. The Lowe chapter has not reappeared, but I have included a brief discussion of Lowe's arresting position at the end of Chapter 3, 'Descartes's Legacy'. The chapter on Davidson is the longest in the book, and in some ways the most challenging. I have reinstated it, or a version of it, however, because Davidson's approach to minds and their contents is congenial to many non-philosophers and because it provides a context for the discussion of Dennett in Chapter 9.

Also at the urging of readers, I have introduced a wholly new chapter, Chapter 13, 'Emergence and Panpsychism' (The chapter relies on material in Heil 2017, 2019). I struggle to understand emergence interpreted, not as a thesis about explanation, but as a metaphysical thesis. This is in part because I am skeptical that there is a single, univocal doctrine to be explicated. Nevertheless, I believe I have provided readers with a sense of how emergence might play out in the philosophy of mind where the focus is on the relation of consciousness to material goings-on.

The addition of these chapters has been possible because of cuts made elsewhere, most particularly in two concluding chapters in which I threw off my robe of impartiality (or opinionated impartiality), spread my cards on the table, and said

what I think about metaphysics and central topics in the philosophy of mind. I expect these chapters were rarely assigned in undergraduate courses. They have been replaced by a more measured Chapter 14, in which I try to draw together material in earlier chapters and sketch what I regard as a plausible account of the mind's place in nature.

I have updated suggested readings at the conclusion of each chapter, but in considering what to include, I was struck by the fact that more recent work is often unduly difficult and technical without adding much by way of philosophical value—especially for readers newly encountering the subject. Sometimes the original articulation of a position is clearer than subsequent iterations.

On top of additions and cuts, I have made numerous smaller changes. As has been the case from the first edition, the goal is to make the book readable without compromising content. To that end, I have tried to motivate positions discussed, to make their attractions salient, and to play down difficulties. I would prefer that my readers draw their own conclusions. Playing down difficulties is not the same as ignoring them, however, and I do not hesitate to call readers' attention to problems they might not have noticed. My belief is that virtually every position discussed in these pages has something to be said for it and something to be said against it. If readers are to make informed judgments, they need to have an appreciation of both, and this is what I have sought to inculcate.

As in previous editions, although chapters build on their predecessors, I have endeavored to make chapters largely self-contained. Individual chapters can be skipped, or even read out of order, without an appreciable loss of intelligibility.

Even after more than twenty years, what I like to think of as the classical problems in the philosophy of mind continue to exert a sense of fascination and urgency on my own philosophical reflections. If I have managed to convey some of the excitement in these pages, I shall rest content.

John Heil
St Louis
March 2019

Preface to the Third Edition

Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction appeared in 1998 followed, six years later, by a second edition. That second edition included numerous changes, corrections, and additions, some in response to philosophical developments in the intervening years, some based on my own experiences in using the book as a text in my own classes. This third edition reflects those two factors, but it reflects as well valuable suggestions from others who have used the book with their own students. I have taken those suggestions to heart. This was not always easy to do because in some cases, I received conflicting advice.

The book always aimed at illuminating issues in the philosophy of mind for readers not steeped in the literature. Because philosophy nowadays is conducted in an excessively technical idiom intelligible only to other card-carrying philosophers, this is not an easy task. Over the years, I have come more and more to believe that if you can't explain something clearly without recourse to an esoteric vocabulary, you don't really understand it. Philosophers who lace their writing with jargon and flaunt technicalities intimidating to all but a select group of readers seem, too often, incapable of plain speech. Is this because plain speech would not do justice to the subtle theses being advanced, or is it because all the hard philosophical work is being done by the jargon? A technical term can serve as a useful shorthand for a complex idea. At the same time, technical terms encode substantive philosophical theses. The use of jargon masks the extent to which the important moves are occurring behind the scenes, obscured by a specialized vocabulary—familiarity with which is taken for granted.

In my own teaching, I have found myself pulled in two, often incompatible, directions. First, I would like my students to cultivate a clear view of the territory and thereby improve their capacity to evaluate competing ways of thinking about the mind. Second, I would like to familiarize students with the going conceptions and arguments that support them. I have, with dispiriting frequency, felt pangs of guilt in trying to spell out and motivate views that I am convinced are, at best, shallow, and, at worst, incoherent. These views survive and continue to find supporters because smart philosophers are adept at defending almost any idea. I want my students to be familiar with the space of positions in the philosophy of mind, but there are places I cannot bring myself to take them.

I have, in this third edition, made additions, corrections, and changes on every page of every chapter, but four changes deserve special mention.

Chapter 4 of the second edition, 'Non-Cartesian Dualism', was a chapter many readers elected to skip, in part because the position discussed was a difficult and unfamiliar one. Its very unfamiliarity was what led me to include the chapter in the first place. Too much of the philosophy of mind is a rehash of familiar and well-worn, and hence comfortable, views. Sometimes it is useful to find inspiration elsewhere. In composing this third edition, I reworked the discussion with an eye toward clarifying the argument and making it more accessible. In the end, however, I decided to eliminate the chapter, mostly in the interest of keeping the book to a manageable length. I have heard from many readers who appreciated the chapter's inclusion. If you are one of those readers, I encourage you not to discard or recycle the second edition.

Much the same could be said about the second edition's Chapter 9, 'Radical Interpretation', which provided an account of Davidson's theory of propositional attitude ascription, a topic that some readers found fascinating, others daunting, and still others hopeless. The chapter does not appear in the third edition.

The second edition's Chapter 13, 'Property Dualism', has been reconceived and appears in the third edition as Chapter 11, 'Non-Reductive Physicalism'.

Chapter 10, 'Consciousness', is almost completely new. The chapter replaces Chapter 9 in the second edition, which was more narrowly focused on *qualia*. I discuss various accounts of consciousness and the qualities of conscious experience that previously were either mentioned only in passing or not discussed at all.

Chapters 14 and 15 of the second edition survive, much revised, in the third edition as Chapters 12 and 13. I do not expect instructors who use this book as an introductory textbook in philosophy of mind to assign these chapters. But it seems to me that anyone who takes the trouble to read through some or all of my discussion of various positions is owed an account of how the author himself thinks about the topics under discussion. If nothing else, my putting my cards on the table allows curious readers to factor out inevitable authorial biases. These chapters are meant to be self-contained. They can be read without extensive knowledge of material taken up earlier in the book. One result is that some themes and arguments that appear earlier appear again in modified form.

Once again, I am grateful to all those who took the trouble to pass along corrections and suggestions for improving the first and second editions. This third edition has benefited from the collective wisdom of many philosophers and many of their students. It has benefitted, as well, from support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from Washington University in St Louis.

John Heil
St Louis
May 2012

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction* appeared in 1998. Since that time, I have had occasion to rethink topics addressed in that volume, to discuss my approach to those topics with many people, and to hear from numerous readers. The result is this second edition.

One aim of the first edition was to make difficult issues intelligible to novices without unduly watering them down. My impression is that the effort was, on the whole, successful. This edition incorporates changes of two sorts. First, I have added or supplemented discussions of topics ignored or treated lightly in the first edition. My discussion of eliminativism, of *qualia*, and the Representational Theory of Mind have been expanded, and I have added a chapter on property dualism. Second, I have divided the book into shorter, more self-contained chapters. In so doing, my hope was that this would allow more flexibility for instructors using the book in courses in the philosophy of mind. Chapters, too, have been divided into bite-sized sections. I believe the new divisions make the book more attractive and easier on the reader.

As before, each chapter concludes with a listing of suggested readings. These listings have been expanded and updated (to include, for instance, Internet resources). I have also instituted an author/date citation scheme keyed to a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the volume. Readers' annoyance at having to turn to a separate bibliography to track down references might be offset by the absence of footnotes and endnotes. The first edition contained a handful of footnotes. I came to believe, however, that a book of this kind could, and should, be written without such textual intrusions.

I am grateful to readers who took the trouble to pass along corrections and suggestions for improving the first edition. I hope that the resulting changes have resulted in a better all-around book.

Many of the themes taken up in Chapters 14 and 15 (Chapter 6 in the first edition) were subsequently developed in detail in *From an Ontological Point of View* (Heil 2003), written during a year as a guest of Monash University. Revisions and additions distinguishing this second edition from its predecessor were also

undertaken at Monash during two subsequent visits. I am grateful to the University, to the School of Philosophy and Bioethics, and to my magnificent colleagues at Monash for support and encouragement. I am grateful as well to Davidson College for its generous support, material and otherwise.

John Heil
Melbourne
July 2003