

Intentionality: New Directions

Peterhouse, Cambridge, 21-23 March 2017

A workshop organised as part of the *Cambridge New Directions in the Study of the Mind Research Project*



John
Templeton
Foundation

The Cambridge New Directions Project

2.5 year project: 2015-2017

Funded by the John Templeton Foundation

£1.2M

Two sides to the project:

- support for projects across the world
- activities in Cambridge

Funded projects

22 projects funded in 2015-17

UK, Continental Europe, North America and Australia

From

attention in Buddhist philosophy...

to

primitive colours and non-reductive minds etc.

Activities in Cambridge

Workshops:

Non-physicalist approaches to consciousness, May 2016

Intentionality: new directions, March 2017

Capstone conference 27-29 June 2017:

The Human Mind Conference

A collaboration with the University of London's Human Mind Project, led by Colin Blakemore

Activities in Cambridge

Weekly seminar by Tim Crane, 2015-17, on intentionality and consciousness

Public lectures, next one on 17 May 2015, Tim Crane 'Is the Mind a Physical Thing?'

Weekly project meetings

Project team

Tim Crane

Craig French

Laura Gow

Alexander Greenberg

Alex Grzankowski

Raamy Majeed

Chris Meyns

Maarten Steenhagen

www.newdirectionsproject.com

For more details

New Directions

Non-physicalist

Non-reductionist

approaches to the study of the mind

Two aspects

1. Accounts of the mind which are explicitly non-physicalist
2. Not starting with the question of physicalism, or with physicalist assumptions

Intentionality

The mind's direction on its objects

Self-transcendence

Mental representation

Aboutness

Defining intentionality

‘Only that which has no history can be defined’

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

Some common 20th century analytic ideas about intentionality

- (i) Physicalism — this is why intentionality is problematic
- (ii) Reduction — giving an ‘account’ of intentionality
- (iii) The semantic paradigm — propositional attitude attributions
- (iv) Intentionality conceived of on the model of singular reference

These are not the only approaches

- (i) Intentionality without the question of physicalism
- (ii) What does it mean to 'give an account' of intentionality and why should we give an account of it?
- (iii) Non-propositional attitudes
- (iv) Singular reference not a good model for intentionality in general

New Directions

Historical approach — why do we ask the questions we do?

Why do we have these starting points, these assumptions and presuppositions?

How do our questions today and their presuppositions relate to the questions of the past?

Challenge everything!



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research project 2015-2017

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