

PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

THE «MIND-BODY» PROBLEM: FROM CARTESIAN DUALISM TO BRAIN DEATH CRITERIA IN TRANSPLANTOLOGY

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Our purpose is to show the relevance and organic self-realization of Descartes' concepts in a context more appropriate for solving the «mind-body» problem, that is, in transplantology, where the ideas of human reducing to brain death, thinking things, dualism, and the body-machine, are realized than for the one-sided context of neurosciences. The theses are based on the works of Descartes, Damasio, works on bioethics. The scientific novelty is that for the first time we determined the conceptual similarity of Descartes' philosophy and transplantology: the criterion for death in transplantology (Cartesian reduction) for the whole human is brain death (Cogito, ergo sum – I think, therefore, I am) in two protocols (Harvard and Pittsburgh), the body-machine, the dualism of body and soul, a thinking thing. We conclude that the neuro-context is limited, one-sided for solving the «mind-body» problem when referring to the philosophy of Descartes. Placing the philosophy of Descartes in a different context – transplantology – shows the relevance of the ideas of human reduction to the brain death, thinking things, dualism, and the body-machine, and implements them.

The «mind-body» problem, as a key one in the philosophy of Descartes, was studied by the famous neuroscientist Antonio Damasio back in 1995, when his book «Descartes' Error: Emotions, Reason, and the Human Brain» was published. In his book, Damasio criticized Cartesian dualism and emphasized the importance of emotions for the success of human intellectual activity. Consciousness, thinking for Damasio remained at the locus of the problem: what is more primary, the elusiveness of these processes, due to the work of the whole organism, or their dependence on the work of the brain alone outside the state of the body? Damasio does not separate the body and the brain, and the process of thinking and consciousness covers the whole human with his/her emotional reactions. Descartes, on the contrary, places absolutely the entire intellectual, spiritual life in the brain separately from the body, and even the human soul is also located in a certain part of the brain,

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i.e., in the pineal gland, or in «iron N», as he calls this part of the brain [2, p. 72]. Damasio calls this very position an «error» in his book. According to the neuroscientist, there is no separation between mind and body.

The neuroscientist Damasio writes about Cartesian dualism as a key error of his philosophy in approaching a human: «This is Descartes' error: the abyssal separation between body and mind...» [1, p. 249]; or «Specifically: the separation of the most refined operations of mind from the structure and operation of a biological organism» [1, p. 250]. This dualism loses its erroneousness at the same time as the neuro-context changes: transplantology of all types is based on this «error» of Descartes, as well as many modern medical technologies.

«The body of a living human is also different from the body of a dead human, like a watch or another machine (that is, a machine that moves by itself), when they are assembled and when they have a material condition for the movements for which they are intended, with everything necessary for their action, from the same watch or the same machine, when they are broken or when their condition of movement is absent» [3, p. 484].

However, let us try to change the context-field of medicine for the ideas of the philosopher: we take out Cartesian dualism from the neuro-context and put it in transplantology. And the negativism of the interpretation will change dramatically, because transplantology literally embodies Cartesian dualism of mind and body. There is no problem of the primacy of thinking-consciousness and body. The «mind» is uniquely located in the brain, or rather, in the cerebral cortex, in the so-called «higher parts» of the brain, where the human's social personality, thinking, consciousness, and ethics are located.

«These people, like us, are composed of Mind and Body. And it is necessary for me to describe to you, firstly, the body separately, and then the mind separately; and finally, so that I show you how these two Natures must conjugate and unite, forming people like us» [2, p. 6].

In transplantology, similarly to Descartes, death criteria have been developed, according to which the death of an entire human has been reduced to «brain death» since 1968 and since 1992, where a human's personality and thinking, the living brain of the «higher parts» are combined, since the death criterion for the whole human is brain death (1968, the Harvard Protocols) or death of the «higher parts» of the brain (1992, the Pittsburgh Protocols). In this technology, the theses on the primacy of thinking and the higher parts of the brain, i.e., Descartes' «iron N», and the fact that a human is a thinking thing and a body-machine, are relevant.

Two minutes after death is fixed, the cortex, or «higher parts» of the brain dies, and the whole body is recognized as working only reflexively, vegetatively, soullessly and impersonally. Are the reduction of the whole

human only to the «higher parts» of the brain, recognition as Cartesian «I think» as the key, the only important thing for determining the reliability of the existence of a human as a whole, not realized literally in transplantology, in the 1992 «Pittsburgh Protocols», in which the death of a human is recorded at the level of death of the «higher parts» of the brain?

Therefore, in the context of transplantology, we do not believe that Descartes was mistaken; on the contrary, there is a literal embodiment of the ideas of dualism and «I think, therefore I am», as well as the placement of the elusive processes of thinking, consciousness, the human mind in specific areas of the brain. Damage to areas of the brain means the loss of the mind, social self, thinking. This is the determinism of the body-brain, the body-machine at the level of the brain without any metaphysics or ideas of human integrity. In transplantology, the subject's metaphysics has given way to the corporeal, biodeterministic understanding of human as the «human-machine» of Descartes and the process of thinking have begun to be understood physiologically, in connection with the activity of the body-brain, and not metaphysically. Thus, the subject of Descartes is not metaphysical, but corporeal, biological, and dualistic, and the whole philosophy of Descartes is rightly called «natural philosophy».

In our opinion, modern medical, ethical and legal innovations are based on dualism and literally embody the theses of Cartesian philosophy from four hundred years ago. The key element here is the dualism of mind and body, the priority of the brain over all other organs in the «body-machine», over the classical ethics of human integrity, because the whole human here is reduced to the brain, and while the brain (and subjectivity) is alive, the human lives. Thus, the «mind-body» problem is resolved neither in favor of Damasio's neuropsychological concept nor in favor of a metaphysical understanding of the subject and death, but in favor of dualism and understanding of human death as a physiological process of brain death accepted in transplantology.

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