

Letter to the Editor,

In the most recent article (April 1990) in his series on mind-body dualism, Frank Dilley defends the position that telepathy can be understood as (and thus reduced to) clairvoyance and psychokinesis. However, I can think of at least three cases wherein the brain cannot provide us with information on the mental state or (episodic or semantic) memory of another person:

(1) Communication between two discarnate minds, neither of which possesses (in the common sense of the word at least) a brain. The theory of 'astral brains' seems at present still farfetched to me.

(2) Telepathy with a reincarnated mind regarding experiences of its previous life, of which there obviously cannot be any cerebral 'memory traces' (unless one takes seriously the possibility of reading a deceased, decaying brain, which is excluded anyway in cases with cremation or other destruction of that brain), but only traces in psychical memory proper. Naturally, I mean telepathy as active reading, not the psychokinetic variant proposed by Dilley. The only alternative for mental telepathy in this case would be retrocognitive clairvoyance, which I understand falls outside Dilley's theory until now.

(3) Telepathy of unique properties of the mental memory as opposed to cerebral traces. I myself defend the position that it is a priori unthinkable that there are cerebral counterparts of at least the following mental experiences:

(a) clairvoyant experiences, because they are not arrived at via the nervous system and don't leave sensorial traces.

(b) thinking about or with meta-phenomenological concepts, such as concepts of consciousness, qualia, etc., since they concern entities which do not exist physically, and which cannot be conceived as existing that way, i.e. cannot be represented exhaustively in a physical medium as e.g. the brain. If I'm right, telepathy as conceived by Frank Dilley would not be able to deal with these special cases. Of course, it is very hard to test his seemingly parsimonious theory empirically, so let us ponder much on his arguments before accepting it.

Titus Rivas

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Contact: [Titus Rivas](#)