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Interactionism

Because I can hardly deny that I exist, and that I have a body which is at least a part of myself, then I must either affirm the identity of myself with my body, according to the materialistic conception described earlier, or else affirm that I am two things—a mind that has a body and, equally, a body that has a mind. Nothing else is consistent with the data with which we began.

Now, the simplest and most common way of expressing the relation between a body and a mind, so that they together constitute a person, is to say that they interact; that is, they causally act, each upon the other. More fully we can say that while the mind of a person is not a physical thing, events that transpire within it sometimes have causal consequences or effects within the body. Conversely, although the body of a person is clearly not a mental or nonphysical thing, the events that occur within it, particularly within the nervous system and brain, sometimes have causal consequences or effects within the mind or consciousness. The body and mind of an individual person, accordingly, are whatever body and mind are so related. My body is that physical object that is within my immediate control, that is, that physical object, alone among all the others in the universe, that events within my mind are capable of affecting directly; and similarly, my mind is that mind, among all the others in the universe, that events within my body are capable of affecting directly. This, according to the view we are now considering, is what is meant by saying of a given body that it is mine, or that I *have* a certain body. What I am, accordingly, is a certain composite of body and mind that thus interact with each other.

Now, this conception of a person, which is very old and familiar, appears in some measure confirmed by the manner in which we often describe certain of our experiences. Thus, when there is some disorder in my body, such as a severely de-