Universität Basel

Publication

A theory of psychosomatic medicine : an attempt at an explanatory summary

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

This article investigates issues in psychosomatic medicine that could broadly be seen as concerned with the status of 'subjective' and 'objective' realms. Initially, it considers two seemingly opposing perspectives, the biomedical model and the constructivist/semiotic model. The bio-medical model has all the set-backs of a positivistic and deterministic model: there is an unambiguous reality that can be ascertained given a detailed enough analysis. It furthermore assumes that observations can be explained by the application of linear causal relationships between the single components of reality. The constructivist perspective and the semiotic way of thinking view life and individuals moving through their life as dealing with particular signs; by applying semiotic thinking we understand why certain elements were selected out of the environment and why they were given a specific meaning. It suggests that some of the diffculties arising from these models can be ameliorated with reference to the neo-phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz. In particular, the concept of the lived body (Leib) assists in understanding the relationship between a patient and his environment.