

# After Physicalism

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*University of Notre Dame Press*

*Notre Dame, Indiana*

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# Introduction

## *After Physicalism*

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What am I? Who, if those questions are supposed to be different, am I? Understanding these questions is understanding what philosophy of mind, or rational psychology, as it used to be called, is about. Philosophy of mind is concerned with the one asking the question, not with objects surrounding the one asking the question. It is concerned primarily with subjectivity, not with objectivity.

### 1. THE VAIN AGENDA OF PHYSICALISM—A PROGRAMMATIC ACCOUNT

Since the middle of the last century, the default answer to the questions of what and who we are has been the physicalist's objectivist answer: because everything is physical—so it went—we, too, have to be physical.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming that particulars and properties are the relevant ontological categories, we can state the thesis that everything is physical more precisely in terms of particulars and properties. In terms of particulars, that everything is physical means that every particular is

a physical particular, and in terms of properties it means that every exemplified property is physical. Combining the respective claims about particulars and properties, we can say that physicalism is either the thesis that every particular and every property is physical or the thesis that although every particular is physical, not every property is.<sup>2</sup> The first thesis is known as reductive physicalism; the second one is the thesis of nonreductive physicalism.<sup>3</sup>

For reasons well known, reductive physicalism failed. There could not be a coherent account identifying all nonphysical properties with physical properties because, as Lowe rightly points out, “a physical state is, by its very nature, one whose possession by a thing makes some real difference to at least part of the space which that thing occupies . . . , but my consciously thinking of Paris has no spatial connotations of this sort whatsoever . . . consequently the thesis that mental states ‘just are’ (identical with) physical states is simply unintelligible” (Lowe 2008: 23).<sup>4</sup>

Nonreductive physicalism is the only other *prima facie* plausible version of physicalism, but it also failed. The physicalists’ attempts to identify ourselves with our bodies, or parts of our bodies, could not be successful for the (often ignored) dualist reason that what it is to be a *body* or a *brain* is not what it is to be *you*—even if there are relations of dependency or emergence between you and your body.<sup>5</sup>

The failure of both reductive and nonreductive physicalism, however, does not entail that we should leave physicalism behind forever. There might be overwhelming arguments for physicalism which commit us to its truth, even if that truth were to be beyond understanding.<sup>6</sup> But there is no such argument as yet. That there are such arguments is an article of faith held by the physicalist.

A recent argument for physicalism is the argument from causal closure, the “canonical argument for physicalism” (Papineau 2002: 17). The fundamental assumption is that physical effects are not systematically causally overdetermined by ontologically distinct causes, and that the physical realm is causally complete (i.e., physical effects have purely physical causal histories). For those who assume the reality of mental causation, these assumptions entail that mental states have to be physical states in order to be able to be causally efficacious at all.

The argument is unconvincing because its crucial premise, the completeness of physics, is either consistent with dualist accounts of causation or else an arbitrary assumption only physicalists are likely to adopt.<sup>7</sup>

The completeness of physics is consistent with dualist accounts of mental causation since the dualist can argue that mental causation works in quite a different way from physical causation, and that therefore even if the physical realm were causally closed, there would be room for genuine mental causes. As Lowe suggests, “it could conceivably be the case that, even though [every physical event contains only other physical events in its transitive causal closure], sometimes a non-physical mental event *M* causes it to be the case that certain physical events, *P*<sub>1</sub>, *P*<sub>2</sub>, . . . *P*<sub>*n*</sub>, have a certain physical effect, *P*” (Lowe 2008: 54). But even on the assumption that the causal closure of the physical realm is not consistent with dualist accounts of causation, the argument does not succeed since, as I have argued elsewhere (Göcke 2008), the causal closure of the physical realm is neither an entailment of science nor a matter of metaphysical necessity. Our world could be one where at least sometimes mental events are genuine causes of physical events. The only option for the physicalist is to assume that as a matter of metaphysical contingency the actual world is in fact causally closed. To adopt this assumption is attractive only for those who already assume that there is no room for genuine mental causation, which is to say that it is convincing for those who already accept the conclusion of the argument.

Papineau argues that the completeness of physics is the cornerstone of almost any argument for physicalism:

It is true that these founding fathers of modern materialism offered a number of variant arguments for materialism, and that not all of these arguments feature the completeness of physics as prominently as does the causal argument. . . . Even so, it is not hard to see that nearly all these other arguments presuppose the completeness of physics in one way or another, and would not stand up without it. . . . Thus, for example, consider J. J. Smart’s (1959) thought that we should identify mental states with brain states, for otherwise those mental states would be ‘nomological danglers’ which play no

role in the explanation of behaviour. Similarly, reflect on David Lewis's (1966) and David Armstrong's (1968) argument that, since mental states are picked out by their a priori causal roles, including their roles as causes of behaviour, and since we know that physical states play these roles, mental states must be identical with those physical states. Or again, consider Donald Davidson's (1970) argument that, since the only laws governing behaviour are those connecting behaviour with physical antecedents, mental events can only be causes of behaviour if they are identical with those physical antecedents. Now, these are all rather different arguments, and they give rise to rather different versions of materialism. But the point I want to make here is not sensitive to these differences. It is simply that none of these arguments would seem even slightly plausible without the completeness of physics. (Papineau 2002: 233–34)

Papineau is right that without the completeness of physics almost none of the arguments for physicalism is remotely plausible. Since the completeness of physics is either consistent with dualism or else question begging, almost none of the arguments for physicalism is remotely plausible. Because I am not aware of any recent argument for physicalism which is remotely plausible and independent of the causal closure of the physical realm, I take it that physicalism has in fact no argumentative support.

Although both reductive and nonreductive physicalism cannot hope to achieve their goal, and although there are no remotely plausible arguments for physicalism, there is a considerable number of philosophers who still pledge allegiance to physicalism and prefer to deny the existence of what they cannot account for. The trend is this: instead of arguing that because everything is physical we and our conscious life have to be physical, physicalists now argue the other way around: if something is not physical, then it simply can't exist! This thesis is, to put it very mildly, question begging. Take as an example Kim on the qualitative feature of experience. As a first step, Kim recognizes that physicalism is false:

So qualia . . . are physically irreducible. Qualia, therefore, are the 'mental residue' that cannot be accommodated within the physical

domain. This means that global physicalism is untenable. It is not the case that all phenomena of the world are physical phenomena; nor is it the case that physical facts imply all the facts. There is a possible world that is like this world in all respects except for the fact that in that world qualia are distributed differently. I don't think we can show otherwise. (Kim 2005: 170)

That not all facts are physical facts, and that physical facts do not entail all facts, *is what the dualist said all along*. Instead of taking this seriously, however, by accepting that the realm of consciousness has its own being independently of the physical, Kim just denies that qualitative aspects of our experiences exist. Here is the quotation which leaves me, again, to put it mildly, perplexed:

Are mental properties physically reducible? Yes and no: intentional/cognitive properties are reducible, but qualitative properties of consciousness, or “qualia,” are not. In saving the causal efficacy of the former, we are saving cognition and agency. Moreover, we are not losing sensory experiences altogether: Qualia similarities and differences can be saved. *What we cannot save are their intrinsic qualities—the fact that yellow looks like that, and so on. But I say, this isn't losing much, and when we think about it, we should have expected it all along.* (Kim 2005: 174; my italics)

No more yellow in my life! Alas, we cannot save the intrinsic qualities of our experiences—they are gone! They just do not exist.

Kim is one of the most reasonable and clear-cut of physicalists, but what he is saying here is straightforwardly false. There is no such choice between “saving” the causal efficacy of mentality and “saving” the intrinsic qualities of our conscious life. Any account of ourselves which denies *either* the causal efficacy of our mental states *or* the intrinsic qualities of our experiences (what it is like to have them) is plainly to be rejected since it ignores the explanandum and thus is doomed to go astray—even if nowadays a lot of people *say* something like that for, as Aristotle might have said, want of education.<sup>8</sup> Be that as it may, the general physicalist strategy should be

clear: since within the physicalist paradigm Kim cannot account for the obviously given intrinsic qualities of our experiences, he denies the existence of what he cannot account for. If you want to be a physicalist, you have to deny the obvious.

## 2. A MINIMAL ACCOUNT OF CONSCIOUS BEINGS

Let us now turn to beings like ourselves, conscious beings. Quite independently of the ontological theses of dualism and physicalism—that is, independently of the question whether a conscious being, from an ontological point of view, is a physical or a nonphysical particular—a conscious being is at least at some point of time in at least one possible world the subject of a *stream of consciousness*. This is a minimal part of what we mean when we say that something is a conscious being: on the one hand, we do not demand that a conscious being is the subject of a stream of consciousness at every point of time of its existence, as perhaps it is not in a narcotic sleep (therefore, it is *possible* that a conscious being is not the subject of a stream of consciousness). On the other hand, we have difficulty in imagining a conscious being that is never the subject of a stream of consciousness. Therefore, it is *necessary* that there is at least some possible world where a conscious being is the subject of a stream of consciousness.

Because there are different senses of the term ‘consciousness,’ we have to find a sense in which a conscious being can properly be said to be the subject of consciousness. Husserl distinguishes three different notions:

1. Consciousness as the entire phenomenological being of the spiritual ego. (Consciousness = the phenomenological ego, as “bundle” or interweaving of psychic experiences.)
2. Consciousness as the inner becoming aware of one’s own psychic experiences.
3. Consciousness as a comprehensive designation for “psychic acts” or “intentional experiences” of any sort. (Husserl 1984: 356)<sup>9</sup>

The notion of consciousness as the entire phenomenological being of what Husserl calls the spiritual ego is the appropriate notion of consciousness: a stream of consciousness *is* an entirety of phenomenological being. The second and third notions of consciousness suggested by Husserl both presuppose the existence of consciousness as an entirety of phenomenological being. If there were no “bundle of interweaving psychic experiences,” then one could not be aware of one’s own psychic experiences and there could not be any intentional experiences.<sup>10</sup>

The notion of phenomenological being is synonymous with the notion of *experiences* or *qualia*. The existence of the one is necessary and sufficient for the existence of the other. In fact, there is no difference between being the subject of an experience or qualia and being the subject of phenomenological being.<sup>11</sup> A stream of consciousness therefore can be addressed as an entirety of experiences or qualia; it is, in other words, what each of us takes to be his conscious life with all its experiential diversity, and precisely in this sense it is an entirety.

There is a sense according to which consciousness is always self-consciousness because consciousness is always consciousness of a conscious being and therefore *eo ipso* is consciousness for a *self*.<sup>12</sup> The existence of phenomenological being, experiences, or qualia is not possible without there being *someone*, that is, a self in a minimal sense of the term, which is the subject of the phenomenological being (or, equivalently, of the experiences or qualia) in question.<sup>13</sup> This is not to say that to be conscious entails being *aware* of one’s own consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

From an epistemological point of view, I can speak only for myself about being the subject of a stream of consciousness, as I am the only instance of that kind of being to which I can *epistemologically*, immediately and with certainty, apply the term ‘stream of consciousness’ and thus apply the term ‘conscious being.’ The reason is that I am the only conscious being which for me is *directly* epistemologically accessible. Reflection on my consciousness provides me with knowledge that I am a conscious being; that is, I can be aware of myself as a conscious being by taking my consciousness as an object of



my consciousness.<sup>15</sup> I can say that you are, or the frog over there is, a conscious being only based on *hints* given in observable physical manifestations. You do, or the frog does, certain things which I understand as consequences of your or the frog's being conscious shortly prior to these physical manifestations because I *already* understand those reactions as consequences of someone who is a conscious being and in this sense is *one like me*.<sup>16</sup>

This seems to prejudge the nature of consciousness. One may be philosophically tempted to demand that in order to qualify as a subject of a stream of consciousness an entity has to be in an epistemologically identical situation to the one I am in or can be in, such that subjects of streams of consciousness are those and only those beings which can know that they are. But it is doubtful that the application of the term 'being which is or can be aware that it is a conscious being' really is a *conditio sine qua non* for the correct application of the term 'conscious being.' One may argue this way if one does not keep the *epistemological* and the *ontological* aspect of the matter separated; and it is tempting not to do so because the claim that "I know that I am a conscious being because I can be aware that I am conscious" supports a strong epistemological connection between consciousness and awareness of, or reflection on, one's consciousness. Without question, such awareness is sufficient for being a conscious being. But although there are cases like mine in which consciousness is *de facto* sometimes aware of itself, I do not know a convincing argument to show that it should be a necessary condition for some entity's being a conscious being that it must be able to be aware of its own consciousness in order for the term 'conscious being' to be truly applied to it.<sup>17</sup> There are no inconsistencies in the view that a conscious being cannot be aware of its consciousness. As Husserl says: "That a . . . train of sensations or images is *experienced* and in this sense is conscious does not and cannot mean that it is the *object* of consciousness, in the sense that a perception, a presentation or judgement is directed upon it" (Husserl 1984: 165).<sup>18</sup>

Two consequences follow immediately: firstly, there might be conscious beings such that we have no way to determine with epistemological certainty whether they are conscious beings or not. But that is not too high a price to pay, as I do not have epistemological

*certainty* that you are a conscious being without taking that as a reason to be uncertain about whether you are conscious. Although I have no epistemological certainty that you are a conscious being, I also have no reason to doubt it, and this is the sense in which I am certain that you are a conscious being.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, there are conscious beings which will never know that they are conscious beings because they cannot be aware of their consciousness. Consciousness can remain unknown to itself, although it is necessarily acquainted with itself in the sense of its being self-consciousness as specified above. In this way, a frog may be conscious of the world without being ever aware of its consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

The subject of a stream of consciousness is that particular which has an immediate though not necessarily reflected acquaintance with a self-consciously given set of experiences, and a conscious being is at least at some point of time in some possible world the subject of a stream of consciousness. Dualism entails that such a particular, a conscious being, exists in the actual world but that, from an ontological point of view, this entity is not a physical particular.

### 3. AN ARGUMENT FOR DUALISM

On the assumption that there are physical particulars, the general structure of arguments for dualism is this: firstly, specify the identity conditions for conscious beings like ourselves (we did so above), secondly, show that a conscious being can exist without exemplifying any physical property or that there is no physical particular with which a conscious being could be identified. To show that a conscious being can exist without exemplifying any physical property is a positive way to establish dualism; to show that there is no physical particular a conscious being could be identified with is a negative way to establish the truth of dualism.<sup>21</sup>

I present a negative way to establish the truth of dualism, where it is assumed that an experience is *complex* if and only if it is not simple, and that an experience is *simple* if and only if it cannot be analysed as the simultaneous existence of experiences of in principle independent types of experiences. The idea is that experiences such as

my *seeing* something are simple experiences because they cannot be analysed as the simultaneous existence of experiences of in principle independent types of experiences. In contrast, if we *hear and feel* at the same time, or taste and hear at the same time, then we are a subject of a complex experience because this experience can be analysed as the simultaneous existence of experiences of in principle independent types of experiences:<sup>22</sup> instead of hearing and seeing something I could only see something *or* hear something.

I focus paradigmatically on the complex experience of someone feeling, seeing, and hearing something simultaneously. I call this complex experience *c* and I let *a*, *b*, and *d* refer, respectively, to the simple experiences of this someone of feeling something, seeing something, and hearing something such that  $c = \{a, b, d\}$ . The symbols *a*, *b*, and *d* stand for experiences which are in principle independent of each other because it is not necessarily the case that a subject always feels, sees, and hears something at the same time: Just feel, hear, and see something and then close your eyes—you will not stop hearing and feeling. As things actually are, however, this someone is the one and only subject of *a*, of *b*, and of *d* because the simultaneous existence of *a*, *b*, and *d* is the existence of *c*—*a*, *b*, and *d* are phenomenally unified as *c*—and by assumption this someone is the one and only subject experiencing *c*.

However, neither the existence of *a* nor that of *b* nor that of *d* considered as such entails that there is one and only one conscious being experiencing *c* *even if* the existence of *a* entails that there is a conscious being experiencing *a*, the existence of *b* entails that there is a conscious being experiencing *b*, and the existence of *d* entails that there is a conscious being experiencing *d*: because *a*, *b*, and *d* are different experiences, they exist in principle independently of each other, even if they actually exist simultaneously. To see this, assume that *a* is exemplified but not *b* and not *d*. If the exemplification of *a* entails that there is one and only one conscious being experiencing *c*, it would entail that *b* and *d* exist because *b* and *d* together with *a* are just *c*. The exemplification of *a* would not be possible without *b* and *d* being exemplified. By assumption, however, *a* is exemplified but *b* and *d* are not. This assumption is coherent, and therefore, neither the existence of *a* nor that of *b* nor that of *d* entails the fact that there is

one and only one conscious being experiencing *c*. It is therefore a primitive fact about a conscious being which cannot be accounted for in terms of the simple experiences constituting the complex experience, and it is only the conscious being itself which can inform us about the experiences it is simultaneously the subject of.

Now could it be a fact about a physical particular that it is the one and only subject of *c*? No, the fact that there exists a particular which is the one and only conscious being experiencing *c* is metaphysically independent of the physical facts concerning your body or some parts of it (like your brain). There is no contradiction involved in assuming that there is a possible world which is a physical duplicate simpliciter of the actual world in which the relevant experiences are part of different streams of consciousness. That is to say, while in fact there is one and only one conscious being experiencing the seeing, hearing, and feeling together, there might be a world in which there is one stream of consciousness in which the hearing and seeing takes place and another stream of consciousness in which there is only the feeling. Therefore, there might be two distinct conscious beings. Nothing we could ever know about body and brain, even assuming that experiences supervene on physical properties of the brain, allows us to infer that there is one and only one conscious being experiencing *c*. Because this is a primitive fact about a conscious being but not a fact about a physical particular, and since it is a fact about a particular—that is, a certain conscious being—it is a fact about a nonphysical particular. Conscious beings therefore are nonphysical particulars.

Here is a possible rejoinder. It is assumed that a functional physical entity is a physical object composed of physical particulars which stand in certain functional relations that are physically realized. A conscious being, the physicalist might object, is a physically realized function. On this assumption the fact that there is one and only one conscious being experiencing *c*, the physicalist could argue, is entailed by the fact that *a*, *b*, and *d* are part of the same function. This objection rests on the assumption that it is possible that a conscious being is a physically realized functioning. Could this be true?

Suppose that you are a physical functioning and that the government of some country had a spy following you for some time such

that the spy recorded the functioning of your brain during a certain interval of time. With this information the government decides to realize this function in a robot brain. Assume that you are still alive when this happens: *Where are you?* Do you suddenly exist twice such that both of your existents are independent of each other? The one doing whatever you are doing right now, and the other having the experiences which you had while the spy was recording the function realized in your brain? This is absurd. But even worse: suppose you are dead. Would you be back alive whenever the function is realized? If we allow for such absurdities, which all point to a problem of subjectivity, then we could as well count on the possibility that somewhere in the universe by chance a function is realized which is a conscious being. A conscious being cannot be a physical functioning.

#### 4. AFTER PHYSICALISM: DUALISM

The recent revival of dualism is not only due to the failure of physicalism but is also due to the revival of *a priori* metaphysics. *A priori* metaphysics and dualism go hand in hand because the former is the method to establish the claims of the latter, which is why often the physicalist rejects the possibility of the former and adopts the method of the empirical sciences as a method of philosophy instead. The essays in the present collection all firmly engage in *a priori* metaphysics. The essays by Meixner, Lowe, Foster, Plantinga, and Swinburne are concerned with ways to establish the truth of dualism; the essays by Hasker, Smith, and Robinson deal with the relation between physicalism and dualism. Göcke argues that the I is not a particular. Priest says that, fundamentally, I have to understand myself not as a thing but as *no-thing-ness*. In both essays, there is a strong connection between metaphysics and spirituality. In the last essay, Schärfl argues that there are limits to dualism which we can see when looking at resurrection.

In more detail, in the first essay, Uwe Meixner argues for the naturalness of dualism. He clarifies that against common physicalist opinion, physicalism is not a consequence of science, since then the negation of physicalism would be incompatible with science itself—

which, as Meixner argues, is not the case. The philosophical support in favor of physicalism rather consists in the alleged difficulties of the dualist's thesis. The dualist, it is often argued, cannot account either for the causal relation between physical and mental items or for the intentional relation between mental states and the objects they are about. Now, even if those problems were insurmountable, it would not follow that materialism is true, because the choice is not between dualism and materialism alone, but between materialism, dualism, and idealism. Therefore, if dualism is false, it only follows that either materialism or idealism has to be true. The dualist problems concerning causation and intentionality, however, are not insurmountable. Meixner provides the outlines of a solution to each problem, and ends by suggesting an account of three different respects in which dualism is a natural position: dualism is culturally, philosophically, and most importantly, also biologically natural.

In the second essay, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism," E. J. Lowe argues for a dualism according to which a human person is not identical with its body, but nevertheless is not a Cartesian ego. Rather, human persons belong to the ontological category of psychological substances, which are able to possess physical states. Lowe rejects Cartesian dualism because of the problem it has accounting for the relationship between an essentially immaterial and an essentially material substance. Given that the human person itself possesses certain physical characteristics, he argues that its connection to a particular body rests on perception and will since it is only one particular body through the eyes of which we perceive and act in the world. Lowe ends by way of arguing that although the self is not an essentially immaterial substance, it is nevertheless a simple substance without substantial parts.

In "Subjects of Mentality," John Foster distinguishes between items of mentality and subjects of mentality. He argues that on a realist understanding of the physical world human subjects of mentality turn out to be wholly nonphysical in nature. According to Foster, this is to say that human subjects of mentality are devoid of corporal properties, location in physical space, and also devoid of any components that have such properties or location. One kind of argument for this dualism consists in the fact that the physicalist cannot

successfully determine a corporal subject of mentality, and that the dualist's proposal is the only available option. The deeper problem, according to Foster, however, is the fundamental issue of whether it makes sense to think of any type of corporal object as a mental subject, as in the case of reductive physicalism, or whether it makes sense to suppose that a physical particular has a nonphysical side to its nature, as in the case of nonreductive physicalism. Foster argues against both proposals and ends with considerations pertaining to the nature of animal subjects of mentality and the relationship between the subjects of mentality and their bodies, both of which, according to Foster, are intelligible on theistic assumptions.

Alvin Plantinga's essay is directed against materialism. He presents two arguments for dualism on the assumption that human beings can consider or envisage a proposition or state of affairs such that at least sometimes they can determine its modal status, that is, whether the proposition or state of affairs is necessary, contingent, or impossible. His first argument is from possibility to actuality: he can exist while neither his body nor any part of it exists because it is metaphysically possible that in an infinitely small time his body could be removed, destroyed, and replaced by a new body without him ceasing to exist. The second argument is from impossibility to actuality. Recurring to Leibniz, Plantinga argues that it is impossible for a material thing to think because a material state of, say, the nervous system cannot be an intentional conscious state. Since our mental states very often are intentional states, they cannot be material states. Plantinga ends by showing that none of the most common arguments for physicalism is sound.

In his "From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism," Richard Swinburne clarifies the basic notions 'substance,' 'property,' 'event,' 'mental,' and 'physical.' A mental property, according to Swinburne, is a property to which the bearer has privileged access on all occasions of its instantiation, whereas a *pure* mental property is one which does not entail that physical properties are exemplified at all. Swinburne then argues against reductive physicalism that a fully informative description of the world in purely physical terms does not entail that mental properties are exemplified. If, however, mental

properties were identical with or supervened on physical ones, such a description would have to entail their existence. Therefore, mental properties are not identical with physical properties. Swinburne continues to argue that conscious beings like ourselves are pure mental substances which possess only pure mental properties as their essential properties. The idea behind the argument is that pure mental substances can be distributed independently of the distribution of physical substances because a full description of a possible world does not entail that pure mental substances are connected to the bodies they are in fact connected to.

The next essay, by William Hasker, deals with the question of whether materialism is equivalent to dualism. Although materialism and dualism, considered as a family of views about the place of conscious beings in the world, are far from being equivalent, Hasker argues that the most plausible versions of each, materialism and dualism, are nearly equivalent. Hasker considers emergent materialism and emergent dualism. According to emergent dualism, the human person is a new substance emerging from its physical body. Although the human person is not identical with its body, it is generated and sustained by its body. According to emergent materialism, however, the human person is an emergent substance in the following sense: although the human person is entirely constituted by physical matter and nothing else, it possesses a *thisness* which is distinct from the *thisness* possessed by its constituents. The emerging substance thus is the human person as a whole. Hasker ends by considering arguments against and in favor of each position, and concludes that although *prima facie* some differences remain, the most promising theses of dualism and materialism are nearly equivalent.

In “Benign Physicalism,” A. D. Smith argues that after all there might be a physicalist thesis which is not demonstrably false. He suggests that because ultimately our concepts of fundamental physical properties are only functional concepts which give us no clue as regards the intrinsic nature of physical entities, it might be our own conscious experiences which are the intrinsic natures or ‘realizers’ of causally and functionally specified physical items. According to this account, we grasp the intrinsic natures of physical entities by way of



being aware of the irreducible qualitative character of our own experiences, where our experiences themselves are *autonomously* physical. Although experiences are not to be identified with, for instance, brain states, they might thus fulfill yet unknown causal, and therefore physical, roles. Since, however, the causal role of experiences thus understood might be only contingent, and since experiences also might have failed to be the realizers of certain causal roles, Smith ends by arguing that although such a thesis of physicalism is the most plausible one, it is philosophically rather uninteresting because it depends on the contingent causal structure of the world.

In “Qualia, Qualities, and our Conception of the Physical World,” Howard Robinson presents a strengthened version of the argument from knowledge against physicalism. Although commonly the argument is taken to show that the physicalist cannot account for qualitative features of mental states, Robinson argues that in fact the argument shows that the physicalist himself is unable to provide an intelligible notion of the physical realm which goes beyond the purely abstract and mathematical. Since experiential qualities are an essential feature of any adequate conception of the physical which goes beyond the purely abstract, it follows that the physicalist cannot account for an adequate notion of the physical which goes beyond the purely abstract. Robinson ends by showing that the physicalist cannot escape this conclusion in a monistic way by extending the notion of matter in such a way as to ascribe proto-mental or full-fledged mental properties to physical matter.

In his “Groundwork for a Dualism of Indistinction,” Benedikt Paul Göcke firstly provides a framework of possible worlds according to which possible worlds are constituted by individual essences which at once are the objects of our conceivings. He then goes on to argue that physicalism as a thesis about particulars existing in the actual world is simply irrelevant because the I is no particular at all. Rather, insofar as the I is connected to a particular human being, it is indistinguishable from that human being, that is, is neither identical to nor distinct from it. He ends by providing the resources for how to unite theories of the I thus understood, according to which it is the Absolute, with those theories of the I according to which the I does not exist at all.

In “The Unconditioned Soul” Stephen Priest draws, in an exploratory way, a distinction between conditioned and unconditioned philosophy. He argues that materialist and physicalist solutions to problems in the philosophy of mind are guaranteed to fail because they do not do justice to the reality of one’s own existence. By “deconditioning,” it is disclosed that I am an unbounded and unchanging inner space in which the time is always now. Priest claims that this inner space is a substance and is to be correctly identified with the immaterial soul. The existence of this deconditioned self is one of the hidden root causes of problems in the philosophy of mind, including the problem of personal identity, the mind-body problem, the problem of difference between the past and the future, and the problem of free will and determinism. Any plausible solution to those problems has to take account of the existence of the deconditioned self, or “unconditioned soul.”

In the last essay, “Beyond Dualism,” Thomas Schärfl argues that although contemporary materialists offer an understanding of resurrection as bodily fission, some dualistic intuitions seem to be unavoidable in order to spell out an appropriate understanding of the doctrine. The essay proposes a model of resurrection which goes beyond a materialistic understanding of the person on the one side and substance dualism on the other side. Based on phenomenological insights, the essay tries to avoid the burdens of Cartesian substance dualism, but it seeks an understanding of realization and embodiment which goes beyond a purely materialistic metaphysics.

## NOTES

1. Consider the following: “The world is as physics says it is, and there’s no more to say” (Lewis 1983: 361); “Physicalism: Being the claim that everything there is in the world—including human minds—is either itself a basic physical entity or else constituted by basic physical entities” (Walter 2003: v); “The doctrine of physicalism . . . is generally taken to hold that everything in the world is physical, or that there is nothing over and above the physical, or that the physical facts in a certain sense exhaust all the facts about the world” (Chalmers 1996: 41); “Physicalism is the thesis—call it ontological physicalism—that whatever exists or occurs is ultimately

constituted out of physical entities” (Shoemaker 2001: 706). For further clarification of the thesis of physicalism see Göcke 2009.

2. That not every particular is physical and every property is physical is an incoherent claim: if there is a nonphysical particular, then the property of being a nonphysical particular is exemplified. But then it is not the case that every property is physical.

3. Franciscotti (1998: 51) states the following: “Non-reductionism has become a dominant position in the philosophy of mind. In its standard formulations, this position implies that mental properties are not identical with physical properties. Most non-reductionists, however, still pledge their allegiance to physicalism by insisting that mental properties supervene on, and are realized by, purely physical phenomena.”

4. Smith is more explicit on the matter: “It is, I believe, sufficient for any sensible person simply to read the [thesis of reductive physicalism] in order to see [its] inadequacy” (Smith 1993: 225).

5. This, of course, does not entail *eo ipso* that Cartesian Dualism is true. See Lowe’s essay in this volume for an argument in favor of non-Cartesian substance dualism.

6. McGinn (2000) is essentially arguing that physicalism is true but that we lack the right cognitive constitution to understand its truth.

7. Cf. Lowe (2008: 41–78) and Göcke (2008).

8. To deny the existence of intrinsic qualities of our experiences is philosophically on the same level as to assert that it is possible for the same thing to be and not to be: “But we have now posited that it is impossible for anything at the same time to be and not to be, and by this means have shown that this is the most indisputable of all principles.—Some indeed demand that even this shall be demonstrated, but this they do through want of education, for not to know of what things one may demand demonstration, and of what one may not, argues simply want of education. For it is impossible that there should be demonstration of absolutely everything” (Aristotle 1995: 1588).

9. Here is the German original: “1. Bewusstsein als der gesamte (reelle) phänomenologische Bestand des \* empirischen Ich, als Verwebung der psychischen Erlebnisse in der Einheit des Erlebnisstroms\*. (A: \* geistigen Ich. (Bewusstsein = das phänomenologische Ich, als ‘Bündel’ oder Verwebung der psychischen Erlebnisse.)\*). 2. Bewusstsein als inneres Gewahrwerden von eigenen psychischen Erlebnisse. 3. Bewusstsein als zusammenfassende Bezeichnung für jederlei ‘psychische Akte’ oder ‘intentionale Erlebnisse.’” For a thoughtful study on Husserl’s notion of the transcendental ego and Sartre’s critique, cf. Priest (2000).

10. Phenomenological being thus is a *conditio sine qua non* for intentional acts and inner awareness of oneself. Even if one were to distinguish

more senses of the word ‘consciousness,’ that consciousness is a totality of phenomenological being is the most fundamental sense in which we can use the term ‘consciousness.’ Pope and Singer (1978: 1) provide a rough circumscription of what belongs to an instance of consciousness thus understood: “The stream of consciousness—that flow of perceptions, purposeful thoughts, fragmentary images, distant recollections, bodily sensations, emotions, plans, wishes, and impossible fantasies—is our experience of life, our own personal life, from its beginning to its end.”

11. The synonymy of those terms is also argued for by Chalmers. He is right in stating that ‘experience’ is a term in line with the notions of “‘qualia,’ ‘phenomenology,’ phenomenal,’ ‘subjective experience,’ and ‘what it is like.’ Apart from grammatical differences, the differences among these terms are mostly subtle matters of connotation. ‘To be conscious’ in this sense is roughly synonymous with ‘to have qualia,’ ‘to have subjective experience,’ and so on. Any differences in the class of phenomena picked out are insignificant” (Chalmers 1996: 6).

12. Heidegger states it thus: “Der Mensch hat Bewusstsein von Objekten und hat dabei auch ein Bewusstsein von sich, Selbstbewusstsein. *Jedes Bewusstsein ist auch Selbstbewusstsein*” (Heidegger 2001: 135; my italics). This fact is seen not only in the tradition of phenomenology, but also in recent analytic philosophy. Chalmers essentially states the same feature of experiences in Russelian terms of acquaintance: “My experiences are part of my epistemic situation and simply having them gives me evidence for some of my beliefs. All this is to say that there is something intrinsically epistemic about experience. To have an experience is automatically to stand in some sort of intimate epistemic relation to the experience—a relation that we might call ‘acquaintance’” (Chalmers 1996: 196–97).

13. If an experience exists, then there is someone this experience is the experience of. As Foster states: “If P is a pain-sensation occurring at a certain time  $t$  . . . we should ultimately represent the occurrence of P as the event of a certain subject’s being in pain at  $t$ . And if D is a decision occurring at  $t$ , . . . we should ultimately represent the occurrence of D as the event of a certain subject’s taking a decision at  $t$ . Quite generally, . . . we must represent each episode of mentality as the event of a subject’s being in a certain mental state at a certain time, or performing a certain act at a certain time, or engaging in a certain mental activity over a certain period of time” (Foster 1991: 205).

14. In Heideggerian terms, not all forms of conscious life are *Dasein*, whereby *Dasein* is understood to be “this entity . . . which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being” (Heidegger 1962: 27) and which “does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontologically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it” (Heidegger

1962: 32). If awareness of one's consciousness is a *conditio sine qua non* for the possibility that one's being becomes an issue for a conscious Being, then not for all conscious beings their Being is an issue for them.

15. I ignore Wittgensteinian worries about the function of the concept of knowledge in reference to self-ascriptions. Wittgenstein expressed these worries in his *On Certainty*: "I know where I am feeling pain,' 'I know that I feel it here' is as wrong as 'I know that I am in pain.' But 'I know where you touched my arm' is right" (Wittgenstein 2006: 41).

16. Because it is in the nature of hints that they are not knowledge-entailing, my understanding, of course, does not preclude the possibility of me making mistakes in my ascriptions of consciousness to certain entities.

17. Let us consider an argument by Carruthers which could be taken to support views like the one that (the potential of) self-awareness is a necessary condition for being a conscious being. The first step of Carruthers's argument is as follows: "In order to think about your own thoughts, or your own experiences, you have to possess the concepts of thought and experience. And these get their life and significance from being embedded in a folk-psychological theory of the structure and functioning of the mind. So in the case of any creature to whom it is implausible to attribute a theory of mind—and I assume that this includes most animals and young children—it will be equally implausible to suppose that they engage in conscious thinking" (Carruthers 1996: 221). Carruthers argues that in order to think about your own thoughts you need to have the concepts of thought and experience. Let's agree on this for the sake of argument. In order to reflect on your consciousness you need some concepts to grasp your consciousness as your consciousness. Carruthers goes on to deny conscious thinking of entities which do not possess such concepts, whereby, in order for the argument to be plausible, he has to understand "conscious thinking" as synonymous with "thinking about your own thoughts"—otherwise the first and the last point lack internal coherence. Let's also agree on this. However, Carruthers goes on: "If animals (or most animals) lack higher-order thoughts, then by the same token they will lack conscious *experiences*. For there will be just as little reason to believe that they are capable of thinking about their own experiences, as such" (Carruthers 1996: 221; my italics). This is baffling. As in the case of conscious thinking, which turned out to mean thinking about your own thoughts, he has to take the notion "conscious experiences" to mean "thinking about your own experiences." Otherwise the premises won't support the conclusion. If, however, this were an appropriate demand on some entity's being a conscious being, then, I'm afraid, most of the time I would be unconscious for the reason that, from a phenomenological point of view, the cases in which I think about my experiences or even experience them as experiences are desperately few compared with those of my experiences

which I never think about or otherwise reflect on. It does not follow therefore that in order to have conscious experiences I must be able to take my consciousness as an object of my consciousness.

18. Here is the German original: “Daß der zugehörige Belauf an Empfindungen oder Phantasmen *erlebt* und in diesem Sinne bewußt ist, besagt nicht und kann nicht besagen, daß er *Gegenstand* eines Bewußtseins in dem Sinne eines darauf gerichteten Wahrnehmens, Vorstellens, Urteilens ist.” Sartre circumscribes the pre-reflective consciousness, which he calls pre-reflective cogito, in the following quotation, which is worth quoting at length, thus: “Every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself. If I count the cigarettes which are in that case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: they are a dozen. This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. *It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting.* Proof of this is that children who are capable of making an addition spontaneously can not explain subsequently how they set about it. . . . Yet at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, *I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity.* If anyone questioned me, indeed, if anyone should ask, ‘What are you doing there?’ I should reply at once, ‘I am counting.’ *This reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but at those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not reflected-on in my immediate past.* It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito” (Sartre 1956: liii; my italics).

19. Here I agree with Wittgenstein: “From its seeming to me—or to everyone—to be so, it doesn’t follow that it is so. What we can ask is whether it can make sense to doubt it” (Wittgenstein 2006: 1).

20. Baker introduces the notions “weak first person” and “strong first person”: “A conscious being becomes self-conscious on acquiring a first-person perspective—a perspective from which one thinks of oneself as an individual facing a world, as a subject distinct from everything else—*All sentient beings are subjects of experience, but not all sentient beings have first person concepts of themselves.* Only those who do—those with first-person perspectives—are fully self-conscious. Beginning with nonhuman sentient beings, I shall distinguish two grades of first-person phenomena: weak and strong” (Baker 2000: 60; my italics). Baker’s weak first person comes close to what I dub the pre-reflective subject of a stream of consciousness, and her strong first person comes close to what is my self-reflective subject. However, whereas on my conception a conscious being can be both—sometimes

a weak first person and only in reflection a strong first person—Baker’s account seems to be an either-or classification.

21. Because every particular is essentially a physical particular or a nonphysical one, questions concerning the identity of conscious beings are modal questions. Arguments for dualism reflect this by presupposing that we are able to get in contact with the modal realm itself. In other words, arguments for dualism presuppose that conceivability broadly understood is a reliable guide to possibility. There would be no point in arguing that a conscious being can exist without exemplifying physical properties, or that there is no physical particular a conscious being could be identified with, if that did not entail that a conscious being in fact cannot be a physical particular. Because conceivability is an a priori affair, arguments of dualism are a priori arguments, which, if sound, cannot be refuted by any kind of empirical observation. For some, however, it is doubtful whether conceivability entails possibility. They argue that there are counterexamples concerning a posteriori necessities. They argue that, for instance, water turns out to be  $H_2O$ , and that since identities are necessary, it is impossible for water not to be  $H_2O$ . Because, however, we needed experience to identify water with  $H_2O$ , there is no a priori contradiction involved in assuming that water is not  $H_2O$ . It is conceivable, but not possible, that water is not  $H_2O$ . Therefore, it seems doubtful that conceivability is a reliable guide to possibility, which means on this view that arguments for dualism are as doubtful as the relation between conceivability and possibility is. The question who and what we are, in this Kripkean discussion, is not primarily concerned with the question whether we are physical or nonphysical particulars, but with the question of whether we are beings of such a kind that their conceivings entail possibility. If we are, then it is hard to escape the truth of dualism, and if we are not, then it is doubtful whether philosophy as a whole is possible at all.

22. That a subject is subject of a complex experience does not mean that the experience appears as a complex experience to its subject: complex experiences appear as one in the same way in which a simple experience appears as one; this is why one can refer to them directly as *this* complex experience.

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# 1

## The Naturalness of Dualism

UWE MEIXNER

In his famous biography of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell recounts the following anecdote (see, for example, Boswell 1986: 122):

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, 'I refute it *thus*.'

This anecdote can serve as a catalyst for various insights. In particular, it enables one to see the doctrine of psychophysical dualism in a new light. I hope that this will become apparent in this essay as it progresses.

### 1. THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHICAL OPINION

Boswell's text takes us back to a time (precisely speaking, it is the year 1763) when ontological idealism seemed irrefutable—though it

was perceived to be false—and even first-rate intellectuals did not manage to argue against it without helping themselves to wordless means of argument, exhibiting in doing so a certain amount of exasperation. Johnson’s eighteenth-century kick argument (it can be strengthened by any amount of knock, push, and pull arguments) against ontological idealism (and for the existence of an external and material world) is strikingly similar to G. E. Moore’s twentieth-century “proof” for the existence of an external and material world (and against ontological idealism): Moore’s holding up his two hands and concluding that there are at least two external (and material) objects in the world.<sup>1</sup> Both Moore’s argument and Johnson’s argument are of the same type: they both *enact*—by *bodily* activity—a commonsensical objection against ontological idealism. Both Moore’s argument and Johnson’s are, however, not entirely successful—for Bishop Berkeley (or any other reasonable ontological idealist, for that matter) was of course far from denying that there are hands in the world (which one can lift) or large stones (against which one can strike one’s foot). Berkeley merely denied that there are such things as *mind-independent* (or external) material objects; according to Berkeley, hands and stones, properly conceived, exist all right, but are not mind-independent material objects.<sup>2</sup> Much later in the history of ideas, Edmund Husserl—perhaps the most sophisticated ontological idealist of all time—held that hands, stones, and other cases of material objects are *according to their essence* the (intentional) correlates of (intentional) conscious states, that (therefore) the idea of these things existing independently of (or: external to) conscious states cannot be rationally defended and is indeed substantially (“sachlich”) absurd.<sup>3</sup>

Ontological idealism is still very much worthy of philosophical attention, though most philosophers nowadays are satisfied merely to consider some popular caricature of it. Deplorably, they take the caricature to be properly representative of the doctrine. The caricature indeed—not the doctrine—can be easily dismissed, whether it be by lifting hands or by striking stones, or by emphasizing (usually somewhat indignantly) that we cannot normally make the world be so-and-so simply by thinking it to be so-and-so.

But the pervasive substituting of popular caricature for the real thing is symptomatic of the fact that the time of a philosophical doc-

trine is over. The time of (the widespread belief of the philosophers in) ontological idealism is over (which does not mean that ontological idealism might not have a comeback someday). By and large, the doctrine is no longer taken seriously. Today, quite a different philosophical opinion rules among the philosophers: materialism, the very opposite of ontological idealism. It is illuminating to consider the similarities and dissimilarities between the hegemony of ontological idealism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the hegemony of materialism in the latter part of the twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

### Two Hegemonies

Ontological idealism once was felt to be a tyrant who usurped the throne of truth. But it was also felt that this tyrant doctrine was quite unassailable in its act of usurpation, because of its philosophical reasonableness, the quality of philosophical argument in favor of it. See the above quotation from Johnson's biography, where Boswell observes that "though we are satisfied [this] doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it." I take it that many knowledgeable people of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have made a similar comment, if given the opportunity.

Materialism, in contrast, is not felt these days to be a tyrant who usurps the throne of truth; at least, most of today's (Western) philosophers do not consider it in that light. The simple reason for this is that most of today's philosophers are firmly convinced of the truth of materialism.

As a consequence of the firmness of their commitment to materialism, the doctrine turns out to be irrefutable for *extrinsic* reasons. Every attempt to refute materialism must—qua attempted refutation—address those who believe in materialism and must consist in an argument; but every argument has premises; no argument can succeed in the eyes of those it addresses if they believe in the negation of its conclusion invariably—one is tempted to say: automatically—more firmly than in the conjunction of the argument's premises. This is the present situation. Unsurprisingly, it

creates in the adherents of materialism the idea that the doctrine is irrefutable for *intrinsic* reasons, that is, because of its philosophical reasonableness.

But one wonders what could have lodged the doctrine of materialism so firmly with so many reasonable people in the first place. In this regard, a comparison with that other at-one-time-hegemonic monistic doctrine—ontological idealism—does afford interesting perspectives. Ontological idealism grew out of a philosophical atmosphere which was, in the main, created by Descartes. Descartes discovered that his realm of consciousness could be regarded as a closed world all by itself—a world, he perceived, which in principle might also exist all by itself. It was not some dogmatic belief—above all, no religious interests of any kind—that led him to this view, which he put forward in his immensely influential *Meditations*.<sup>4</sup> The driving force behind Descartes's discovery was radical skepticism, a skepticism which, as far as Descartes was concerned, is indeed in (optimistic) search of absolute certainty, but which is radical nonetheless. Note that radical skepticism is an attitude that is at home solely among the philosophers—and therefore, a philosophical doctrine that grows out of radical skepticism has perhaps more right to be called philosophical than a doctrine whose inspiration is common sense, science, religion, or some combination of these three non-philosophical sources of ideas.

To Descartes's discovery Berkeley added—and I present what seems to me the best way to reconstruct the essence of his thought—that because one cannot help being located in one's closed, perspectival realm of consciousness and cannot ever leave it,<sup>5</sup> one has no reason whatsoever to suppose that there exists anything that could exist even if no realm of consciousness existed, in other words, that there exists anything which is mind-independent. Considerations of parsimony and non-arbitrariness, therefore, dictate that there does not exist anything mind-independent.

It should be noted that the above Berkeleyan argumentation for ontological idealism (which thesis is, in fact, not identical to but entailed by the thesis that there does not exist anything mind-independent; see below) is strictly philosophical—just as is Descartes's argumentation for the in-principle possibility that his realm

of consciousness is all there is. It is true that Berkeley had ulterior motives—religious motives—for his position. But this does nothing to alter the essential fact: Berkeley—whether in ideal reconstruction (as above) or without such treatment, in his raw arguments—was arguing for ontological idealism exclusively on philosophical grounds.

How strikingly different is the picture if we now turn to the monism that is diametrically opposite to ontological idealism: to the currently hegemonic monism, materialism! If a proponent of materialism is asked on what grounds he accepts this doctrine, the very likely first answer is this: it is the only global metaphysical doctrine that is compatible with science. If this were true, then materialism would have to be a consequence of science: if materialism is the only global metaphysical doctrine that is compatible with science, then the negation of materialism—which is also a global metaphysical doctrine—is not compatible with science, and therefore materialism is a consequence of science; that is, it is either a logical consequence of science alone or at least a logical consequence of science *plus* some uncontroversial philosophical principles of reason (methodological or otherwise) that “go without saying.” But materialism does not seem to be a consequence of science—neither a straight consequence of it (following logically from science alone) nor a philosophically uncontroversially supported consequence of it (following logically from science *plus* some uncontroversial philosophical principles of reason).

It does not seem to be a consequence of science that every concrete (i.e., nonabstract) entity is physical (which is the thesis of materialism, or physicalism),<sup>6</sup> though perhaps at some time in the future it will be a consequence of science that every concrete entity is one-to-one correlated with a physical entity. But there do not seem to be uncontroversial philosophical principles of reason that would allow one to conclude from *this* that every concrete entity is identical with a physical one. Therefore, that some concrete entity is nonphysical (the negation of the thesis of materialism) does not seem to be incompatible with science, and therefore materialism does not seem to be the only global metaphysical doctrine that is compatible with science.

However, the position of the proponents of materialism does not appear as untenable as it would have to appear if they had to rely solely on the incompatibility of every other global metaphysical

doctrine with science. For materialism, there is a “hidden” source of philosophical strength. What is that hidden source of strength?

### The Strength of Materialism

That source provides strength to materialism *ex negativo*, for it simply consists in the difficulties (the wounds, so to speak) of dualism—dualism being the global metaphysical doctrine that some concrete entities are physical, and some nonphysical. Dualism, materialists say (when they become philosophically thoughtful and stop harping on an alleged preference of science for materialism), is untenable because of certain difficulties connected with it. There are indeed such difficulties; they have to do with two salient relations between physical concrete entities and nonphysical ones. These two relations between what is physical and what is nonphysical but concrete do pose difficulties—which, indeed, are frequently believed to be insurmountable. As a matter of fact, the discussion has focused on only one of the two relations: the *causal relation*. But we shall see in the next section that the *intentional relation* poses a difficulty for dualism that is even greater than the difficulty posed by the causal one.

Dualism has its difficulties—it is quite another question whether they make dualism untenable. But suppose, for the sake of the argument, that those difficulties are indeed insurmountable, and that dualism is, therefore, untenable. Does it follow that materialism is correct, or at least that materialism is the position which one ought to believe in? It does not follow. The following disjunction is logically true, and its degree of rational credence is 1:

All concrete entities<sup>7</sup> are physical<sup>8</sup> (materialism), or  
 some concrete entities are physical, and some nonphysical  
 (dualism), or  
 all concrete entities are nonphysical (ontological idealism).

Therefore, in terms of truth, if dualism is not true, then it follows that the disjunction of materialism and ontological idealism is true; it does not follow that materialism is true. And in terms of rational credence, if the degree of rational credence for dualism becomes 0, then

it follows that the degree of rational credence for the disjunction of materialism and ontological idealism is 1; it does not follow that the degree of rational credence for materialism is 1.

The difficulties of dualism are not insurmountable—and indeed the situation is such that if they were insurmountable, then this would be far from pointing us towards materialism more strongly than towards ontological idealism. (For the justification of this assertion, which goes beyond what was established in the previous paragraph, see the next section.) What does this suggest about the nature of belief in materialism—given that materialism is, as we have seen, not the only global metaphysical doctrine that is compatible with science? That belief in materialism is not as well-founded—scientifically or philosophically—as materialist believers usually think it is. In fact, it is less well-founded than, say, Husserl’s belief in ontological idealism. Nevertheless, the hegemony of ontological idealism, which once seemed unshakable (see Boswell’s anecdote), is over. The current hegemony of materialism, which seems just as unshakable, will be over, too. It is to be hoped that the passing of the hegemony of materialism will not happen for reasons that are foreign to reason.

## 2. THE DIFFICULTIES OF DUALISM

Johnson and Boswell were dualists. This tickles the imagination. How would Johnson have refuted *materialism* if materialism had been the ruling global metaphysical doctrine of his days—that is, how would he have refuted materialism in a way that is *of one kind* with his “refutation” of ontological idealism? Consider the following variant of Boswell’s anecdote:

After we came from the beach, we stood talking for some time together of Daniel Dennett’s—the famous atheist’s—ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of consciousness,<sup>9</sup> and that every thing in the universe is merely material. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his naked foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, ‘I refute it *thus*.’