

# 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*.'

Imagine Johnson's pain! Surely Johnson has demonstrated (in this counterfactual situation) that there is pain in the world (just as in the historical situation that Boswell recounts Johnson has certainly demonstrated that there is at least one large stone in the world). But does this refute materialism? Has he shown that at least one concrete entity is nonphysical, that is, not mind-independently physical\* (for elucidation, see the—admittedly rather important—note 8)?

In Boswell's anecdote, Johnson does not succeed in demonstrating that there is at least one concrete *mind-independently physical\**, that is, *physical*, entity (cf. note 8), namely, the large stone against which he strikes his foot. Though it is obvious that that stone is an entity that is concrete and *physical\** (in a neutral root-sense; see note 8), Johnson has not shown that it is also a *mind-independent entity* (which shortcoming, one may be sure, Berkeley would have pointed out against Johnson).<sup>10</sup> In the (obviously fictitious) variant of Boswell's anecdote, however, it does indeed seem that Johnson has succeeded in demonstrating that there is at least one concrete *not* mind-independently physical\*, that is, *nonphysical*, entity, namely, the pain he feels in his naked foot when he strikes this foot against the large stone. This pain is certainly a concrete entity. Now suppose—for *reductio*—that it is also a physical entity. Hence it is a mind-independently physical\* entity, and therefore a mind-independent entity. Hence that pain could exist even if no realm of consciousness existed—which, however, is plainly absurd.

The merits of this argument seem considerable to me. It hinges on two things: (1) on the conception of physicalness employed, namely, mind-independent physicalness\*, and (2) on the conception of mind-independence employed, namely, being able to exist even if no realm of consciousness existed. However, the use of both conceptions seems entirely appropriate in formulating the thesis of materialism/physicalism. If materialists speak of physical entities, they mean mind-independently physical\* entities,<sup>11</sup> and by this, in turn, they mean entities that are physical\* and could exist even if no realm of consciousness existed.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, materialism stands refuted. And it has become clear why I remarked in the previous section that the situation regarding the difficulties of dualism is such that if those difficulties were insurmount-



able (disqualifying dualism), then this would be far from pointing us towards materialism more strongly than towards ontological idealism: this is trivially so, because, as we have just seen, ontological idealism is the only viable alternative to dualism (since materialism stands refuted).

But it is time to look at the difficulties of dualism. They are the following two, of which the first one gets practically all of the attention:

- (1) Dualism assumes that some concrete entities are physical, and some nonphysical. This means that according to dualism some concrete entities are mind-independently physical\*, and some are not. But if this is true, how can any of the concrete entities that are not mind-independently physical\*—for example, certain mental events—causally interact with any of the entities that *are* mind-independently physical\*—for example, certain brain states? This is a problem, for it seems that we cannot do without such causal interactions.
- (2) According to dualism some concrete entities are mind-independently physical\* and some are not. But if this is true, how can any of the concrete objects that are mind-independently physical\*—for example, stones and trees—be the intentional objects of experiences—for example, of the visual experiences of Samuel Johnson, which, *qua* (dualistically conceived) experiences, are not mind-independently physical\* objects? This is a problem, for it seems that we cannot do without physical (i.e., mind-independently physical\*) objects being the intentional objects of experiences.

If one considers the kind of opposition to dualism that these two difficulties, each in its turn, appear to favor, then one finds that the first difficulty primarily suggests materialism (as *the* way to escape from it), whereas the second difficulty primarily suggests ontological idealism. Since ontological idealism is not much *en vogue* these days, the second difficulty, as far as I know, lies idle and makes no converts from dualism to ontological idealism (but I am not sure of this and cannot be); I submit, however, that the second difficulty played a considerable role in making Husserl an ontological idealist. The first difficulty, in contrast, is cited these days *ad nauseam* as the main

motivation for (accepting) materialism—in spite of the fact that if a monistic position were indeed the key to healthy causal relationships between the mental and the physical\*, then ontological idealism would seem to fit this role just as well as materialism.

Both difficulties have solutions that leave dualism intact. But the second difficulty—despite its current state of neglect—is considerably more difficult than the first one.

### 3. THE DIFFICULTIES OF DUALISM OVERCOME

The solution to difficulty 1 consists in conceiving of causation in such a manner that entities which are mind-independently physical\*—that is, which are physical\* and could exist even if no realm of consciousness existed—can still causally interact with entities that are not mind-independently physical\*, for example, with pain experiences. Such a conception of causation is possible, and an adequate theory of causation had better not rule it out. From the fact that *A* could exist without *C* existing (i.e., from the fact that *A* is in a certain manner ontologically independent of *C*),<sup>13</sup> whereas *B* could not exist without *C* existing, it simply does not in general follow that *B* cannot be a cause of *A*.<sup>14</sup> From the fact that moonshine could exist without the sun existing, whereas sunshine could not exist without the sun existing, it simply does not follow that sunshine cannot be a cause of moonshine (on the contrary: sunshine *is* a cause of moonshine). There is nothing to be balked at in the preceding statement. And there is as little to be balked at in the following statement: from the fact that a certain avoidance action of an animal could exist without (any realm of) consciousness existing, whereas the attendant pain experience of the animal could not exist without consciousness existing, it simply does not follow that the animal's pain experience is not a cause of the animal's avoidance action (especially if that action is prolonged).

The existence of nonphysical causation of physical events—that is, that there are mind-independently physical\* events which are caused by entities that are not mind-independently physical\*—is often denied on the basis of some principle or other of the causal clo-

sure of the physical world. There would be reason to be impressed by closure principles if they were consequences of science (in the sense explained in the section “Two Hegemonies” above). But they are not consequences of science; they are just plain metaphysical postulates, which are motivated to a large part by—materialism. This bias in favor of materialism disqualifies them from being legitimately made use of in arguing against nonphysical causation of physical events if the ultimate purpose in doing so is to attack dualism. And attacking dualism usually *is* the ultimate purpose of using closure principles against the nonphysical causation of physical events, in view of the fact that the nonphysical causation of physical events is indeed something that dualism can hardly do without: the general causal impotence of the nonphysical (even of the nonphysical and concrete) with regard to physical events is not really an attractive option for dualists.<sup>15</sup>

A solution to difficulty 2 is much harder to find (and, in fact, I am not at all sure that I have found one). The point of the difficulty has been very well expressed by Kant in his *Prolegomena*, §9:

For what is contained in the object [Gegenstand; Kant is speaking about nonabstract objects] as it is in itself, I can know only if the object is present to me and given to me. But even then it is incomprehensible how the intuiting [die Anschauung] of a present thing should make it known to me as it is in itself, since its properties cannot transmigrate into my power of presentation [meine Vorstellungskraft]. (Kant 1968: 144; my translation)

Kant’s proposed solution to the difficulty is to *dissolve* it by maintaining that, contrary to the assumption that gives rise to the difficulty, mind-independent concrete objects (Dinge an sich) cannot, in fact, ever be present and given (as intentional objects) to anyone, and that therefore what is contained in a concrete object as it is in itself—what properties it has in itself, that is, as a mind-independent object—cannot ever be known. In particular, mind-independent physical\* objects are not (intentional) objects of experience; all we ever deal with in experience are *representations* (Erscheinungen) of mind-independent concrete objects (in the existence of which Kant,

however, continued to believe)—representations that invariably are not mind-independently physical\* objects.

Kant was a *representationalist*. But in contrast to so many others who think that all that we ever deal with are representations and not the represented objects themselves, Kant was not epistemologically naïve: if representations are *all* that we ever deal with, then, indeed, the reality which they represent must remain unknown to us; after all, we cannot then take a look at what is behind the scenes and make comparisons between the representations on the one hand and what they represent on the other (since, according to supposition, representations are all that we ever deal with). Kant resolutely bit this bullet. Other philosophers, however, found the skeptical consequences of Kantianism regarding our knowledge of *reality in itself* unpalatable.

Our epistemic grip on reality in itself can, however, be vindicated in a surprising way if one adopts ontological idealism—and, of course, is correct in doing so. Then there is nothing behind Kant's "Erscheinungen"; then they—the appearances (that is, appearances qua objects of appearance, not appearances qua vehicles of appearance)—do not represent anything; rather, they themselves *are* the reality in itself, and that reality is given, present to us, and therefore can be known by us. The price for this is that there are no physical objects:

Suppose there were some physical object. Hence some concrete object would be physical—this follows because 'physical' entails 'concrete' (since 'physical\*' entails 'concrete'). But that some concrete object is physical contradicts the thesis of ontological idealism (see the section "The Strength of Materialism" above), according to which every concrete entity—hence also every concrete object<sup>16</sup>—is non-physical.

The consequence that there are no physical objects is not as bad as it sounds. It is not as bad as it sounds because ontological idealists can combine their denial of physical objects—that is, their denial of mind-independently physical\* objects—with accepting as many mind-dependently physical\* objects as are needed as intentional objects of our experiences and thoughts of the physical\*. Berkeley left the mind-dependence of mind-dependently physical\* objects unanalyzed (and, notoriously, he often confused appearances qua objects of

appearance with appearances qua vehicles of appearance),<sup>17</sup> whereas Husserl set himself the tremendous task of exploring and exhibiting the essential structure of their constitution—of the constitution of their reality and of their so-being, including their peculiar “mind-transcendence”—as an achievement in consciousness.<sup>18</sup>

But the advantages of ontological idealism are not for dualists, who, after all, normally find the thesis that there are no physical objects simply preposterous (just as materialists find that thesis preposterous; note that the thesis is incompatible not only with normal dualism, but also with materialism, since there certainly are some concrete objects). But how can dualists, in struggling with difficulty 2, sail through between the Scylla of representationalism and the Charybdis of ontological idealism?

Consider, for further clarification, a difficulty which is similar to difficulty 2: consider the proposition that the moon orbits around the earth (*not* the statement “The moon orbits around the earth”). Somehow this proposition—which is not a physical\* entity, not even a concrete entity—manages to be about the moon, which is a paradigmatic mind-independently physical\* object. But how can this be? Neither can the moon be plausibly considered an abstract entity (if this *could* be done, it would put the moon *into* the proposition—and, indeed, solve the problem), nor can it be plausibly maintained that the proposition is not directly about the moon: that it is about the moon only via some abstract representation of it, *the moon-in-the-proposition*, so to speak. I will not try so solve this conundrum.

Consider instead your experience of seeing the moon. Somehow also this experience—which, again, is not a physical\* entity, although this time it is a concrete entity—manages to be about the moon. How can this be—without the moon being taken, so to speak, into the experience and losing its mind-independence, and without the experience being not really (i.e., not immediately) about the moon, but about a mind-dependent representation of it? This is the problem.

Its solution (or rather: the direction for its solution) is this: there's *one* concrete and homogeneous reality, which is nevertheless divided into (A) the mind-independently physical\* (= the physical) and (B) the concrete but not mind-independently physical\* (= the concrete and nonphysical, in other words: the mental *broadly conceived*), part

(B) being divided in its turn into (B1) the concrete but nonphysical\* (= the mental *narrowly conceived*) and (B2) the mind-dependently physical\*. Thus, the one concrete and homogeneous reality is divided, and the means of dividing it is negation. But this in no way compromises the essential oneness and homogeneity of the one concrete and homogeneous reality—no more so than the essential oneness and homogeneity of the realm of natural numbers is in any way compromised by dividing that realm into various disjunctive classes of numbers (say, [B2] uneven primes, [B1] uneven nonprimes, and [A] even numbers). The difficulty in envisaging mind-independently physical\* objects as intentional objects of experiences (experiences being—for dualists—concrete, nonphysical\*, and trivially mind-dependent events) is, therefore, largely illusory. It is a product of fallaciously interpreting *division* and *exclusion* as *unrelatedness* or even as *repugnance*. Though a mind-independently physical\* object can exist without any realm of consciousness existing, it can nevertheless fit into a mind-dependently nonphysical\* experience—not, of course, as a part of it, but as that which the experience *grasps*. The oneness and homogeneity of the one concrete reality enables this sui generis relation, just as it enables causal interaction between experiences and mind-independently physical\* objects.

#### 4. THE THREEFOLD NATURALNESS OF DUALISM

Dualism is natural in a threefold manner. For one thing, dualism is *philosophically* natural—in striking contrast to the two monistic positions of materialism and ontological idealism.<sup>19</sup> A position is philosophically natural if, and only if, that position seems correct to most people who have not steeped themselves in philosophical reflection, in short, to most of the philosophically innocent. It does seem correct to most of the philosophically innocent—to common sense, in other words—that there is a mind-independently physical\* (therefore—ipso facto—concrete) world; this disqualifies ontological idealism from being philosophically natural. And it does seem correct to most of the philosophically innocent—to common sense—that there is a concrete world which is not mind-independently physical\*, but, in part, even mind-dependently nonphysical\* (i.e., the realm of con-

sciousness); this disqualifies materialism from being philosophically natural. Dualism is the remaining, philosophically natural, position.

Philosophical innocence is not cultural innocence. In fact, for us human beings, there is no such thing as cultural innocence. Cultural naturalness, therefore, has nothing to do with cultural innocence. Nevertheless, dualism is also *culturally* natural—in the sense that the overwhelming number of cultures in the course of human history was, by and large, based on dualism, with materialism and ontological idealism occurring in some of the most highly developed cultures as elitist positions, parasitic on dualism (i.e., living mainly by opposition to dualism).

What is philosophically or culturally natural need not be true. But neither need it be false. We have seen that dualism does not fare badly on philosophical reflection, either. Dualism's philosophically reflected standing is certainly not as bad as it is proclaimed to be by dualism's many enemies in the Western world. Indeed, much of the criticism that is leveled against dualism is neither fair nor free of a peculiar bigotry. (For a spirited response to such criticism, see Meixner 2004.) Dualism can hold its own against materialism, and it can also hold its own against ontological idealism (though it will not have escaped notice that the position of dualism is much harder to maintain against ontological idealism than against materialism). This gives the philosophical and cultural naturalness of dualism a rational sanction. It also should be noted that already the philosophical naturalness of dualism—and the cultural naturalness of dualism—provide, in themselves, some rational support to dualism (I am not, of course, saying that this support is rationally decisive).

Finally, but most importantly, dualism is also *biologically* natural. The fact of dualism is an outcome of biological evolution. I have defended this position at length in several of my publications.<sup>20</sup> Here I will be content to point out the central ideas. Much of an animal's life can be taken care of by a deterministic automaton—and this is what animals (including human beings) to a large part are: deterministic automata. But, as a matter of fact, the world is also in such a way that the property of being provided with a causally powerful (hence non-epiphenomenal), nonpredetermined subject of experience—in other words, with a free consciousness-guided *decision maker*<sup>21</sup>—is an evolutionary asset for an animal (in the familiar sense: having such a

subject of experience is advantageous to the animal's survival and well-being). Therefore, the continual emergence and sophistication of the *mind property* (i.e., the property of having an active and free subject of experience)—the existence of which is a natural possibility (that is, is allowed by the laws of nature)—was favored by evolution, once that property had made its appearance on the stage of the world. Its appearance was brought about by the confluence of the right causes, under the right circumstances (whether that confluence was entirely fortuitous or at least in part the effect of design—it does not here matter),<sup>22</sup> and by variation and selection the mind property has finally developed to its present (known) height in human beings. But subjects of experience, and experiences themselves, are nonphysical\* and (trivially) mind-dependent entities, not only in human beings but in all conscious animals. Hence dualism is a product of natural evolution, and therefore dualism is not only philosophically and culturally natural; it is biologically natural as well. The former two kinds of dualism's naturalness can in fact be said to find their natural explanation in this latter naturalness of dualism.

## APPENDIX: MOORE'S PROOF OF AN EXTERNAL WORLD

Moore argues as follows:

Obviously, then, there are thousands of different things such that, if, at any time, I can prove any one of them, I shall have proved the existence of things outside of us. . . . I can prove now, for instance, that two human hands exist. How? By holding up my two hands, and saying, as I make a certain gesture with the right hand, 'Here is one hand,' and adding, as I make a certain gesture with the left, 'and here is another.' (Moore 1959: 145–46)

This argument was first presented to the public in 1939. But already in a lecture of 1928/1929 Moore had spelled out a main reason for being dissatisfied with his argument—if intended as a refutation of ontological idealism (but only with this intention can his argument be considered interesting):



B. [Berkeley] is commonly held to have denied the reality of matter; and so, in a sense, he does. But if you read him carefully you will find he does *not* deny the reality of human bodies, & clouds, & mountains & loaves of bread. On the contrary he insists he holds such things are real. He is careful to say that what he denies is only *matter in the philosophical sense*. . . . And in trying to define what the sense [the philosophical sense] is, he mentions one characteristic which is, I think, often included—that of being independent of perception. . . . It may *possibly* be true, as B. would have said, that this desk is not independent of perception. (Moore 1966: 15–16; emphasis original)

Thus, Berkeley would surely have pointed out against Moore's argument for the existence of an external world that Moore has failed to show that the hands he holds up are independent of perception, indeed, that he has failed to show that they are mind-independent, and that, therefore, Moore has failed to present us (and himself) with things that are outside of us (and himself)—in the sense of 'outside of' (or 'external to') that is relevant for refuting ontological idealism. And it seems indeed that by making this objection, Berkeley would have rendered Moore's argument ineffectual against ontological idealism. (Moore does have a response to the Berkeleyan objection. But although Moore is entirely within his rights to give that response, against the ontological idealists it simply amounts to a begging of the question. The nature of the response will become apparent at the end of this appendix.)

Curiously, Moore does not seem to remember in 1939 what once was already clear enough to him, when he lectured on the question whether material things are real back in the twenties of the twentieth century. Compare the last quotation from Moore with the following:

There is, therefore, according to him [Kant], a sense of 'external,' a sense in which the word has been commonly used by philosophers—such that, if 'external' be used in that sense, then from the proposition 'Two dogs exist' it will *not* follow that there are some external things. What this supposed sense is I do not think that Kant himself ever succeeded in explaining clearly; nor do I know of any reason for supposing that philosophers ever have used 'external' in a sense,

such that in *that* sense things that are met with in space are *not* external. (Moore 1959: 139; emphasis original)

Apparently it has escaped Moore's attention that in the sense of 'external' that Kant has in mind the word designates the very characteristic which turns 'matter' into Berkeley's "matter in the philosophical sense," namely, the characteristic of being mind-independent (or independent of perception). And, contrary to what Moore thinks to be the case, there is good reason for supposing that Kant is right in believing that the word 'external' in this sense—namely, the sense of 'mind-independent'—has been commonly used by philosophers. Moreover, Kant is surely right in supposing that, if 'external' be used in that sense, then from the proposition 'Two dogs exist' it will *not* follow that there are some external things; nor will this follow from the proposition 'Two hands exist'—because neither two existing dogs nor two existing hands are ipso facto mind-independent things, as Berkeley and Kant would have objected against Moore's "proof of an external world" if it had come to their attention. Finally, not a few philosophers have used 'external' in a sense—namely, in the sense of 'mind-independent'—such that, according to them, things that are met with in space are *not* external. Indeed, neither Kant nor Berkeley would have been averse to seeing his own view expressed in that way, *provided* it was clear that the word 'external' was, in the relevant context, just a synonym for 'mind-independent.'

It should not go without mention that Moore does, after all, hit on this philosophical sense of the word 'external,' the sense in which it means as much as 'mind-independent': "To say of anything that it is external to our minds . . . [means] . . . that from a proposition to the effect that it existed at a specified time, it in no case follows that any of *us* were having experiences at the time in question" (Moore 1959: 143; emphasis original). This is near enough to "it could exist without any realm of consciousness existing" and can, in fact, be made equivalent to it (for this, one just needs to give the "us" the greatest possible extension and replace the "at the time in question" by "at any time"—modifications, I believe, Moore could not have had any reason to be averse to if they had been proposed to him). Moore does decide to use the word 'external' in the sense of 'mind-

independent,' and he therefore does intend his "proof of an external world" as a proof of a mind-independent world. With his hand action, Moore is indeed attacking ontological idealism, just like Dr. Johnson—176 years earlier—was attacking ontological idealism with his foot action.

How, exactly, does he do so? Moore believes that dogs and hands and, for that matter, soap-bubbles are *ipso facto* (qua dogs, hands, soap-bubbles) mind-independent objects: "I think . . . that from any proposition of the form 'There's a soap-bubble!' there does really *follow* the proposition 'There's an external object!' 'There's an object external to *all* our minds!'" (Moore 1959: 145; emphasis original). Here Moore is asserting what Berkeley (and Husserl, and every reasonable ontological idealist) firmly denies: that the proposition 'X is a mind-independent object' (or 'X could exist without any realm of consciousness existing') is a logical consequence of 'X is a common-sense object (a dog, hand, soap-bubble, etc.).'

Who is right in this controversy regarding a question of *logic* (broadly conceived)? Moore or Berkeley? To be precise, the question is whether Berkeley or *Moore in 1939* is right. For, as a matter of fact, Moore can be said to have believed in 1928/1929 that Berkeley is right. See the last sentence of the above quotation from Moore's 1928/1929 lecture: "It may *possibly* be true, as B. would have said, that this desk is not independent of perception."<sup>23</sup> But in 1939, Moore had changed his mind. Did Moore in 1939 have a better grasp of the logical grammar of English than Berkeley had in the eighteenth century? Or *vice versa*?—I rather doubt it. What we really have before us in this controversy is an utterly fundamental conceptual question that has no preformed answer whatsoever; it marks the great divide between two philosophical worlds.

## NOTES

1. See Moore 1959: 145–46, and the appendix to this essay for a brief discussion of Moore's argument, with Berkeley and Kant in the vicinity.

2. See Berkeley 1965: §22–§24, §34.

3. See, for example, Husserl 1950: §47, §48, §135.

4. See the first and second of Descartes's *Meditations*. The in-principle possibility of the world of consciousness existing all by itself can be used as a premise for establishing substance dualism; see my neo-Cartesian argument in Meixner 2004.

5. The attempt to do so leads to absurdity, because it seeks to obtain a perspective for the acquisition of knowledge that is not a perspective for a conscious subject: the view from nowhere, as Thomas Nagel was to call this impossible perspective.

6. The terms 'physicalism' and 'materialism' are used as synonyms in this essay. Aside from this special, stipulated usage, the first designation is accurate in describing the modern content of the doctrine (whereas the second designation is not); the second designation is continuous with the long history of the doctrine (whereas the first designation is not).

7. In this essay, the words 'entity,' 'exist(s),' and 'existent' are taken to express, with different grammatical functions, the same content. Moreover, 'entity,' 'exist(s),' and 'existent' are stipulated to be synonymous with 'actual (or real) entity,' 'actually exist(s),' and 'actually existent.' (Note that 'actually' adds content here, and is not a mere device of emphasis.) "There exists a P," "there is an existent P," "some P exists," "some entity is (a) P," "some existent entity is (a) P"—all these sentences are taken to mean the same thing. But "something is (a) P" and "there is a P" do not necessarily prolong the list; to see this, replace "P" by the adjectival expression "merely possible" or by the corresponding substantive expression "mere *possibile*" (just as the grammar of the context of replacement requires).

8. The word 'physical'—this ambiguous word—is in this essay taken to be synonymous with 'mind-independently physical\*' (where 'physical\*' expresses a neutral root-sense). Accordingly, something is nonphysical if, and only if, it is not mind-independently physical\*. Only in the described sense of 'physical' and 'nonphysical' can the thesis that all concrete entities are nonphysical be regarded as an adequate formulation of ontological idealism (since an ontological idealist will not hesitate to assert that a chair is a 'physical object'—meaning by this: mind-dependently physical\* object).

9. Dennett 1991 can certainly be read in this way.

10. I note in passing that Berkeley corresponded with a Samuel Johnson, but *not* with the famous Doctor. See Berkeley 1965.

11. Not all physical\* entities are physical\* in the same neutral root-sense. For example, an existent *property* which is physical\* is not physical\* in the same sense in which an existent physical\* *individual* is physical\*. The large stone against which Johnson strikes his foot is an existent *individual*, and it is shown to be physical\* by the fact that Johnson strikes his foot against it. Being a large stone is an existent *property*, and it is, indeed, physical\*; but this property is certainly not shown to be physical\* by Johnson's

striking his foot against it (one cannot strike a property). Rather, that property is existent and physical\* (i.e., a physical\* entity) because it is exemplified by individuals which are physical\*, and exemplified solely by such individuals. (Note that exemplification is taken to require that the exemplifier is existent.)

12. Here the words 'mind' and 'consciousness' must of course be taken in their normal—mentalistic—sense. There are also specifically materialistic ways of understanding the words 'mind' and 'consciousness,' which, however, are useless for formulating the materialistic doctrine in such a way that it stands in contrast to dualism. A materialist can understand 'mind' in such a way that she can agree to the assertion "Some concrete entities are *not* mind-independently physical\*." Why? "Because my current brain states, though physical\* entities, do not exist in a way that is independent of every waking brain." And she can understand 'consciousness' in such a way that she can agree to the assertion "Some concrete entities are *not* such that they are physical\* and could exist even if no realm of consciousness existed." Why? "Because my current brain states, though physical\* entities, do not exist in such a way that they could exist even if no waking brain existed."

13. The other manner of ontological independence of *A* from *C* is this: with *C* existing, *A* might still not exist.

14. Nor does it follow that *A* cannot be a cause of *B*. But I will concentrate on the other alleged impossibility of causation, the already mentioned converse one.

15. For a closer scrutiny of principles of causal closure, see Meixner 2008 and Meixner 2009.

16. Every object is per se an entity; the converse of this per-se inclusion, however, I consider to be false. Just like the word 'entity' (cf. note 7), the word 'object' has existential import, as in fact follows (on the basis of note 7) from 'entity' being entailed by 'object.' Note that the word 'object' has a different, entirely relative sense in the expression 'intentional object (of).' Properties, for example, which are not objects, can yet be intentional objects, and so can nonentities.

17. This is rather evident in the following passage: "[Try] whether you can conceive it possible for a sound, or figure, or motion, or colour to exist without the mind or unperceived. This easy trial may perhaps make you see that what you contend for is a downright contradiction" (Berkeley 1965: 69 [§22]).

18. See Husserl 1952: §§1–18; Husserl 1950: §135. Husserl never fell into the (just-mentioned) confusion that Berkeley—and so many other ontological idealists—did not manage to stay clear of.

19. Above (in the section "The Strength of Materialism"), materialism, dualism, and ontological idealism have been formulated in such a way that

they form a complete disjunction. Hence, according to that way of formulation, there is no place for a third monism, *neutral monism*, as it is usually called. Yet the end of the previous section suggests that there is a place for neutral monism *in a manner of speaking*—not *besides* materialism, dualism, and ontological idealism, but *underlying* dualism.

20. See Meixner 2004, Meixner 2006, Meixner 2008.

21. Decision makers are distinguished from mere generators of (genuine) chance events by their (at least rudimentary) rationality.

22. If the confluence of the right causes, under the right circumstances, came about by design, it is still correct to say that the appearance of the mind property is an outcome of natural evolution, that it is, in short, natural; for only its *first*, remote cause is supernatural; its *second*, nearer causes are natural.

23. The desk is a commonsense object. Therefore, according to Moore in 1939, it follows that the desk is a mind-independent object; in other words, according to Moore in 1939, relative to the desk being a commonsense object, it is *necessary* that it be a mind-independent object. But according to Moore in 1928/1929, relative to the desk being a commonsense object, it is *possible* that it be *not* a mind-independent object.

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