

Dualism

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Forms of dualism

The word “dualism” is widely used inside and outside of philosophy. For example, in physics, it is common to speak of the “dualism of particle and wave”; in 19th-century German history, it is common to speak of the “Austrian-Prussian dualism”. This article focuses on dualist *philosophical* positions (broadly speaking).

Philosophers propose monist, dualist, and pluralist ultimate explanations of the existence of the world as a whole and of its overall character. Monist world-explanations are called “monist” because they are based on just one explanatory principle. For example, classical materialism is a *monism* because its sole world-explanatory principle is *matter* (that is, matter *in motion*, where this motion is taken to be exclusively ruled by natural necessity and/or chance). Dualist world-explanations are called “dualist” because they are based on two explanatory principles. For example, classical gnosticism is a *dualism* because its two world-explanatory principles are *the good god and the (more or less) evil god* (and their inexorable antagonism).¹

Besides dualisms of ultimate metaphysical explanation, there are, in philosophy, dualisms of ultimate ontological constituents. Such dualisms propose that every entity of a certain (more or less comprehensive) kind is constituted by an A-constituent and by a B-constituent, and by no other constituents. The most famous dualism of ultimate ontological constituents is Aristotle’s dualism of *matter and form* (in material substances). There are, moreover, the dualisms of ontological prime division (or first ontological categorization), for example, Gottlob Frege’s dualism of *object and function*. According to (*Frege 1997, 130–48, 181–93*), every being (in the widest possible sense) is either an object (a “saturated” entity) or a function (an “unsaturated” entity) – and there are, according to Frege, functions as well as objects.

The philosophical dualisms mentioned so far are *purely* metaphysical dualisms. There are metaphysical dualisms which are also epistemological, for example, Kant’s dualism of *things in themselves* (“Dinge an sich”) and *appearances* (“Erscheinungen”). According to (*Kant 1999*), all non-abstract particulars are either things in themselves and unknowable, or knowable and appearances – and there are, according to Kant, objects in themselves as well as appearances. Another metaphysical dualism which is also epistemological is Husserl’s dualism between *primary intentional objects and primary experiences*. According to Husserl (*Husserl and Kersten 1983*), all that is given and known in primary experience, that is, in direct perception, are the primary experiences (direct perceptions) themselves and their intentional objects, and none of *those* intentional objects is an experience.

Forms of psycho-physical dualism

If the word “dualism” is used today to name a philosophical position, usually none of the dualisms mentioned in the previous section is intended. What is intended is, usually, *psycho-physical dualism*. Some justification for this semantic narrowing of the term “dualism” in philosophical usage is provided by the fact that psycho-physical dualism is widely felt to be the philosophically most important dualism. For this reason, this overview will from now on concentrate on psycho-physical dualism.

Just as there are many forms of dualism (in the wide philosophical sense), so there are, in turn,

many forms of psycho-physical dualism. What they all have in common is that they (logically) entail the following proposition:

DUA₁ Some mental entity is non-physical.

This proposition is not in itself dualist. Its dualist character is only revealed if the following (usually tacit) presupposition of psycho-physical dualism (and hence of *every* form of it) is taken into account:

PHY₀ There are non-mental entities, and every non-abstract non-mental entity is physical.

PHY₀ is a thesis which all psycho-physical dualists share with all *physicalists*; PHY₀ logically opposes (ontological) *idealism* – an opponent that physicalists and psycho-physical dualists have in common.²

DUA₁ and PHY₀ taken in conjunction define *weak general (psycho-physical) dualism*. In contrast, *strong general (psycho-physical) dualism* is defined by the conjunction of PHY₀ and DUA₁^{*}, where DUA₁^{*} is the following proposition:

DUA₁^{*} Some entity is mental, and every mental entity is non-physical.

Obviously, DUA₁^{*}&PHY₀ entails DUA₁&PHY₀, but not *vice versa*. Logically opposed to weak general psycho-physical dualism is *weak general physicalism*, which is the conjunction of PHY₀ and

PHY₁ Every mental entity is physical.

Since PHY₁ is the negation of DUA₁, it is obvious that weak general physicalism is (logically) incompatible with DUA₁&PHY₀, with DUA₁^{*}&PHY₀, and with every position that entails DUA₁. In other words: PHY₁&PHY₀ is incompatible with every form of psycho-physical dualism. It is a remarkable contingent fact about philosophy in the English-speaking world that until twenty-five years ago (or so) most of its professional practitioners believed PHY₁ to be true, or very likely true, (in addition to having the belief in PHY₀ in common with psycho-physical dualists), or sympathized with its being true, or at least did not dare to deny it in public. Even nowadays, the majority of them still more or less clings to something that comes as close to PHY₁ as possible. Some of them even went beyond PHY₁, and assumed the following, of which PHY₁ is a trivial logical consequence:

PHY₁^{*} No entity is mental.

The conjunction of PHY₁^{*} and PHY₀ is *strong general physicalism*. Clearly, PHY₁^{*}&PHY₀ entails PHY₁&PHY₀, but not *vice versa*. For obvious reasons, strong general physicalism is often called (general) “eliminativism”. Eliminativism, of the general kind and of a less than general kind, is proposed in Rorty (*Rorty 1970*) and Churchland (*Churchland 1981*). Dennett’s position, too, turns out to be eliminativist, quite explicitly in Dennett (*Dennett 1979, 95*) and in effect also in Dennett (*Dennett 1991*). See Chalmers (*Chalmers 1996, 190*), and Meixner (*Meixner 2004, 231*).

Besides general psycho-physical dualism (weak or strong), there are *category-specific* psycho-physical dualisms (weak or strong). These can be defined by, first, transforming DUA₁, PHY₀, and DUA₁^{*} into *schemata*:

DUA(Φ)₁ Some mental Φ is non-physical.

PHY(Φ)₀ There are non-mental Φ s, and every non-abstract non-mental Φ is physical.

DUA(Φ)₁* Some Φ is mental, and every mental Φ is non-physical.

Then, the weak and the strong version of a category-specific psycho-physical dualism is, respectively, defined by the conjunction of DUA(Φ)₁ and PHY(Φ)₀, and by the conjunction of DUA(Φ)₁* and PHY(Φ)₀, where the schematic variable “ Φ ” has been uniformly replaced in the combined schemata by an ontological category, such as “event”, “state of affairs”, “particular”, “token”, “individual”, “property”, “type”, “substance”. The canonical designations of category-specific psycho-physical dualisms, weak and strong, have the forms DUA(Φ)₁&PHY(Φ)₀ and DUA(Φ)₁*&PHY(Φ)₀. In order to avoid cumbersome, it is advisable to use some abbreviation of the relevant ontological category when “ Φ ” is replaced by it in the dualism-designations themselves.

One category-specific psycho-physical dualism has attained some acceptance in contemporary philosophy: “property dualism”. It comes in two versions, weak and strong:

Weak property dualism [DUA(PP)₁&PHY(PP)₀]

Some mental property is non-physical, and there are non-mental properties, and every non-abstract non-mental property is physical.

Strong property dualism [DUA(PP)₁*&PHY(PP)₀]

Some property is mental, and every mental property is non-physical, and there are non-mental properties, and every non-abstract non-mental property is physical.

Weak type dualism and *strong type dualism* are defined analogously to the property dualisms: Just replace, in the above two theses, “property” by “type” (and “PP” by “TP”). Types are ontologically similar to properties, and to a type there always corresponds a property. Yet types are not properties. Types are non-predicative universals. Properties, in contrast, are predicative (monadic) universals. The main reason, however, why I treat type dualisms separately from property dualisms is that the category-specific physicalism which logically opposes weak type dualism is well-known in the philosophy of mind under the technical name of “type-identity theory”.

The directly opposing category-specific physicalisms are defined analogously to the category-specific dualisms: by first turning PHY₁ and PHY₁* into schemata, and then putting ontological categories into the schemata. Thus, one obtains the following category-specific physicalisms that stand in direct logical opposition to the category-specific dualisms introduced above (for brevity's sake, four theses are written in the form of two):

Weak property/type physicalism [PHY(PP/TP)₁&PHY(PP/TP)₀]

Every mental property/type is physical, and there are non-mental properties/types, and every non-abstract non-mental property/type is physical.

Strong property/type physicalism [PHY(PP/TP)₁*&PHY(PP/TP)₀]

No property/type is mental, and there are non-mental properties/types, and every non-abstract non-mental property/type is physical.

Weak type physicalism can be legitimately identified with the so-called *type-identity theory*. The solid logical fact that makes the identification possible is that PHY(TP)₁ – “Every mental type is physical”, which is the first conjunct of the defining thesis of weak type physicalism – is logically equivalent to a general *identity* statement: “Every mental type is *identical* to a physical type.”

After an optimistic launching, the type-identity theory nowadays looks false even to philosophers who call themselves “physicalists” (see the next section for reasons for this development). Such physicalists consider physicalism to be already adequately expressed by *weak token physicalism*, which is identifiable with the so-called *token-identity theory*:

Weak token physicalism [PHY(TO)₁&PHY(TO)₀]

Every mental token is physical, and there are non-mental tokens, and every non-

abstract non-mental token is physical.

Instead of the word “token(s)”, its ontological synonyms “particular(s)” and “individual(s)” can be used in the formulation of the thesis (and this would make it sound rather more familiar).

“Event”, however, is not a synonym of “token”, not even in the technical language of ontology. Arguably, *all events are tokens* (or: particulars, individuals); the converse, however, seems not to be true. (I, for example, seem to be an individual, a token, but not an event.) In any case, it is wise to distinguish *weak event physicalism* from the token-identity theory (that is, from weak token physicalism); probably, the former physicalism is logically weaker than the latter.

Weak event physicalism [PHY(EV)₁&PHY(EV)₀]

Every mental event is physical, and there are non-mental events, and every non-abstract non-mental event³ is physical.

The category-specific psycho-physical dualism DUA(EV)₁&PHY(EV)₀, which is directly opposed to weak event physicalism (and, less directly, also to weak token physicalism: because every event is a token), has also attained some acceptance in contemporary philosophy, though less than weak property dualism. As will be seen, the considerations that speak in favour of these two forms of dualism, “property dualism” and “event dualism” in their weak versions, are closely related.

One rather prominent category-specific psycho-physical dualism, however, is still utterly in disfavour among Western philosophers, both in its strong and in its weak version (perhaps because, prior to the nineteenth century, it was so much favoured by those philosophers):

Weak substance dualism [DUA(SU)₁&PHY(SU)₀]

Some mental substance is non-physical, and there are non-mental substances, and every non-abstract non-mental substance is physical.

Strong substance dualism [DUA(SU)₁*&PHY(SU)₀]

Some substance is mental, and every mental substance is non-physical, and there are non-mental substances, and every non-abstract non-mental substance is physical.

Later in this article, a separate section will be devoted to substance dualism alone, much the most important and most interesting form of psycho-physical dualism.

Arguments for and against the weak version of type dualism, property dualism, and event dualism

It should be clear by now that the truth of any category-specific psycho-physical dualism not only entails the falsity of the directly and indirectly opposing category-specific physicalisms, but also the falsity of weak and strong *general* physicalism. From a logical point of view, it would seem that physicalism stands a high chance of being false; but from the point of view of modern philosophers – given their pro-physicalistic mind-set – it certainly does not stand a high chance of being refuted.

There are what seem to be very good arguments for weak type dualism, weak property dualism, and weak event dualism. The second parts (conjuncts) of these dualistic theses – PHY(TP)₀, PHY(PP)₀, and PHY(EV)₀ – need no defending, since they are uncontroversial between psycho-physical dualists and physicalists. What needs to be defended are the first parts of these dualist theses:

DUA(TP)₁ *in opposition to* PHY(TP)₁

Some mental type is non-physical. Every mental type is physical.

DUA(PP)₁ *in opposition to* PHY(PP)₁

Some mental property is non-physical. Every mental property is physical.

DUA(EV)₁ *in opposition to* PHY(EV)₁

Some mental event is non-physical. Every mental event is physical.

Now, consider the mental type *pain*, the mental property *being a pain*, and *pains*, which are the tokens of the type *pain*, and the instances of the property *being a pain*. *Pains* are mental events, more specifically they are experiences, events in consciousness. *Pains* are not physical because nothing physical has the phenomenal qualities *pains* have.⁴ These phenomenal qualities, and the phenomenal qualities of other experiences, are called “qualia” – singular: “quale” – in modern philosophy of mind. Qualia are immediately present to experience, and yet they are somewhat hard to describe. They are, however, certainly not beyond all description. Complexes of firing neurons do not display pain-qualia; that is, they do not display the *directedness-of-the-pain-at-a-subject-qualia* (the *being-experienced-as-my-pain*), or the *burning-qualia* (the *what-it-feels-like-if-one’s-skin-is-being-burnt*), or the *cutting-qualia* (the *what-it-feels-like-if-one’s-flesh-is-being-cut*), or the more or less strong *desiring-that-this-go-away-qualia*, and so on; there are many more pain-qualia than the few just mentioned. Thus, *pains* are not *identifiable* with their neural correlates, with the brain events that causally correspond to them. And if they are not identifiable with those brain events, which are the best candidates for identification, then they are certainly not identifiable with anything else that is physical. Therefore, all *pains* are non-physical, and it is doubtlessly true that there are pains, and that they are mental events. This establishes DUA(EV)₁ and refutes PHY(EV)₁; as a corollary, it establishes DUA(TO)₁ and refutes PHY(TO)₁ (because necessarily every *event* is a *token*).

Now, if all *pains* are non-physical, then (logically) *all* tokens of the type *pain* are non-physical, and *all* instances of the property *being a pain* are likewise non-physical. This can only mean that *pain*, the type itself, is non-physical, and that *being a pain*, the property itself, is likewise non-physical, and of course *pain* is a mental type and *being a pain* a mental property. This establishes DUA(TP)₁ and DUA(PP)₁, and refutes both PHY(TP)₁ and PHY(PP)₁. The final outcome is that weak type dualism and weak property dualism are proven to be true, along with weak event dualism (and, to boot, along with weak token dualism: DUA(TO)₁ follows from DUA(EV)₁, because necessarily every *event* is a *token* and because PHY(TO)₀ is as uncontroversial as PHY(EV)₀).

What can physicalists oppose to this devastating dualist onslaught? The first thing to observe is that they do not seem to have been much impressed by it. Their response is, essentially, the following:

True, pain does not seem to be a neural (type of) state. But neither does water seem to be H₂O, or light a type of electro-magnetic oscillation. Nevertheless, water *is* H₂O and light *is* a type of electro-magnetic oscillation. This is what science has taught us, contrary to appearances. Science will also teach us, contrary to appearances, that pain is a neural state.

The rejoinder of dualists to this response is, essentially, the following:

True, in the case of water and light appearances are misleading. But how can they be misleading in the case of pain? Pains – like all conscious experiences – carry their nature on their sleeves, do they not?

However, if a physicalist like Dennett is to be believed, we can even be mistaken about the nature of our own conscious states. In Dennett (*Dennett 1991, 363–66*) it is even argued that the phenomenal qualitative richness that they seem to have is not really there at all. To dualists, allegations like Dennett’s have sounded as if somebody were claiming that it only seems to us that we are conscious (having experiences), but that in reality we are not conscious at all.

The justification of the physicalistic position PHY(TO)₁ – “Every mental token (individual, particular) is physical”, of which PHY(EV)₁, PHY(TP)₁, and PHY(PP)₁ are (broadly) logical consequences – is, according to the physicalists, *science*. How so?

The idea is that science has progressively discovered, and still discovers at an amazing rate, pervasive correlations and ontic dependence relations between mental tokens and physical ones – correlations and dependence relations which are so strong that they justify the identification of mental tokens with physical ones. This is especially so, many physicalists believe, in view of the methodological principle “*Ockham’s Razor*”, which exhorts philosophers not to assume more entities than are necessary. “*Necessary for what?*” is the obvious question to ask here. *Necessary just for science?* But even if science *alone* had to be our guiding star here (and not simply *knowledge*, no matter about what, and no matter how it is obtained, perhaps even introspectively), dualists could still hold, against the physicalistic drive for identification, that not even one-to-one correlations which obtain on the basis of necessity always justify identification. Otherwise, the uneven (natural) numbers could be identified with the even ones: the former *supervene in the strongest possible sense* on the latter (but are not them). And the gravitational forces exerted by material objects could be identified with those material objects themselves.

As a matter of fact, many physicalists have – under the title of *non-reductive physicalism* (or *non-reductive materialism*) recently (that is, within the last thirty years or so) withdrawn from the positions PHY(TP)₁ and PHY(PP)₁, and *a fortiori* from the position PHY₁. Non-reductive physicalists are content with PHY(TO)₁, and still think that they are good physicalists.⁵ A curious side effect of non-reductive physicalism must be mentioned: If one not only withdraws from (that is, no longer believes in) PHY(TP)₁ and PHY(PP)₁ but actually denies either of the two theses (that is, believes in the negation of the one or the other), then one becomes a weak type dualist or a weak property dualist, and *a fortiori* a weak general (psycho-physical) dualist. This is because (a) one then accepts either DUA(TP)₁ or DUA(PP)₁, and in both cases DUA₁, and because (b) the second conjuncts of the mentioned dualistic positions – PHY(TP)₀, PHY(PP)₀, PHY₀ – are uncontroversial. This shows that the “physicalisticness” of non-reductive physicalism is a rather precarious matter: such a physicalism is compatible with forms of dualism. However, there is a far greater threat to its coherence yet.

If non-reductive physicalists *accept* PHY(TO)₁, then how can they *not accept* PHY(TP)₁ and PHY(PP)₁? If every mental token (or mental particular, or mental individual) is physical, then, for logical reasons alone, all the tokens of each mental type are physical, and all the instances of every mental property are physical. But this certainly seems to make the mental types and mental properties themselves physical, at least all those of them that have tokens, or instances. For example, if all *pains* (*pain-tokens*, *pain-instances*) are physical particulars, then the type *pain* and the property *being a pain* themselves certainly seem to be physical universals. One might argue that types and properties are non-physical *qua* universals; but the sense of “physical” that is employed in arguing thus, the sense in which no universal can be physical, is clearly different from the sense of “physical” in the present context: the sense in which some universals are physical.

In this situation, two desperate measures (at opposite extremes) offer themselves to non-reductive physicalists who do not want to return ruefully to the fold of orthodox (hence non-eliminativist) reductive physicalists. I describe these measures – both of them “suicidal” – in the form of two recommendations for an imaginary “you”: (1) Make a radical turnabout and accept strong general physicalism, in other words, wholesale eliminativism: if PHY₁* is true, then all forms of psycho-physical dualism are false, and all forms of physicalism trivially true. (2) Wax even less reductive than you have been so far: withdraw from position PHY(TO)₁ and merely insist, while still calling yourself a “physicalist”, that all mental entities are deterministically dependent on – “determined by” – physical entities. The first measure is desperate because PHY₁* is utterly implausible; the second measure is desperate because it is compatible with strong general dualism (DUA₁*). Was Leibniz, who believed (a) that all mental entities are non-physical and (b) that they are by *pre-established harmony* deterministically correlated with

physical entities, in fact a *physicalist*? This would, no doubt, be a rather astonishing reversal in the history of philosophy.

Causal closure arguments against weak event dualism

There is a group of very popular arguments specifically *against* DUA(EV)₁, or in other words: *for* PHY(EV)₁. These are the *arguments from the causal closure of the physical*. I consider the simplest of these arguments, which is also the most powerful:

CCA₁

Premise 1: Every event that has a causal influence on the physical is itself physical.

Premise 2: Every mental event has a causal influence on the physical.

Conclusion: Every mental event is physical.

Since the logic of CCA₁ is impeccable, it can only be attacked by attacking its premises. Against Premise 2, it can be held that some mental events may have *no* causal influence on the physical. The so-called *parallelists* and the so-called *epiphenomenalists* – sects of strong general dualists that flourished mainly in the 19th century (when many philosophers still felt dualistic, but had already lost all faith in mental causation) – even held that *in reality of fact* no mental event has a causal influence on the physical *because* every mental event, like every other mental entity, is non-physical. To the objection that some mental events may have no causal influence on the physical, physicalists respond that there are *no events* that have no causal influence on the physical: it is simply in the nature of events to have such influence. But even if causation were in the nature of events, one wonders why it must necessarily be in the direction of the physical. May not a non-physical mental event, though it has no causal influence on the physical, cause another non-physical mental event? The problem with Premise 2 is, therefore, that it seems to be a specifically physicalistic assumption, a physicalist dogma, so to speak. If this assessment of Premise 2 is correct, then physicalists themselves can, of course, rest content with CCA₁, but they cannot expect that the argument will rationally convince anybody who is not a physicalist; because CCA₁ “begs the question”, as one says.

That CCA₁ begs the question becomes unquestionable when one looks at Premise 1. Physicalists usually defend Premise 1 by alleging that it is justified by science. Now, it is true that scientists look only for physical causes if they look for the causes of some physical event, or state of affairs. But of course it does not follow from this that Premise 1 is true. It is often claimed by physicalists that Premise 1 is a logical consequence of the conservation laws of physics, in particular, the law of the conservation of energy: “The total amount of energy in the world neither decreases nor increases.” But standard quantum physics, by abandoning the determinism of classical physics and sticking to its conservation laws, shows that the denial of Premise 1 is perfectly *compatible* with physics and its conservation laws. Premise 1, therefore, is not a scientific truth. It is not a scientific falsehood, either; it is an uncertain metaphysical principle with a rather obvious physicalistic bias. This fact (at least) renders CCA₁ question-begging and, therefore, rationally unconvincing to anyone who is not already a physicalist.

Substance dualism

The causal closure argument considered in the previous section has a second version, due to the fact that, at least traditionally, not only events but also *substances* (in view of the history of philosophy, *mainly* substances) are considered to be sources of causation:

CCA₂

Premise 1': Every substance that has a causal influence on the physical is itself physical.

Premise 2': Every mental substance has a causal influence on the physical.

Conclusion: Every mental substance is physical.

CCA2 is hardly less question-begging than CCA1. In fact, CCA2 is not the standard way to argue for PHY(SU)1. The standard way is simply to point to PHY(SU)1* – “No substance is mental”; PHY(SU)1 is a trivial logical consequence of PHY(SU)1*. PHY(SU)1* has seemed true even to philosophers who are in other respects (with respect to properties, events, tokens) dualists. One of the causes for this – not entirely justifiable – attitude is the long campaign against substances in general, and against non-physical mental substances (the traditional name for them is “souls”) in particular, which has been going on for, roughly, the last 300 years. (One of the main forces in this campaign is Hume and his legacy.) This has created an atmosphere which is inimical not only to non-physical mental substances but to substances in general. Not a few philosophers today would hold that not only PHY(SU)1 but also PHY(SU)1* is true simply by being a trivial logical consequence of “*Nothing* is a substance”.

What is a *substance*? The best answer seems to be this:

A substance is an *individual* (particular, token) which has no temporal parts (hence is wholly present at each moment of its existence) and which has a relatively high degree of ontological independence, achieved by its being, to some degree, an independent cause of its own activity.

This definition captures what the word “substance” (or its equivalent in other languages) has meant for most philosophers within, roughly, the last 2400 years. No element in this definition suggests, in itself or in combination with the other elements, nihilism about substances. The concept of substance is certainly coherent. And it even seems to be a concept which applies to something. It applies, for example, to *me*: I am a substance. I am a substance because I am an individual which has no temporal parts⁶ and which has a relatively high degree of ontological independence, apparent in my being, to some degree, an independent cause of my own activity. To boot, I am a *mental* substance, since a great part of my activity is mental and taking place in my phenomenal consciousness (and I am at least to some degree an independent cause also of this mental activity). This is the way I, without my being able to do anything about it, appear to myself, and the way in which readers (I trust) appear to themselves, also without their being able to do anything about it. These subjective appearances may all be grand illusions (but, if so, they are inescapable illusions: we would continue to have them even if we knew with certainty that they are illusions). The so-called “burden of proof”, however, is with those who hold that they are illusions, not with those who believe that, essentially, they show the truth. So far, one cannot say that they have been proven to be illusions, not by neuroscience and not by anything else.⁷

If I am a mental substance, am I then also a non-physical one? The answer to this question is a vehement “No” even from philosophers who admit *substances* and, moreover, *mental substances* in the sense that emerges in the previous paragraph: a mental substance is simply a substance, part of whose activity is mental. If this sense is employed, one need not be a substance dualist for admitting mental substances, just as one need not be a property or event dualist for admitting mental properties or events. In fact, in the case of *substances* there seems to be an *additional* obstacle to taking the extra step from *non-nihilism* about mental items of category X to *dualism* about mental items of the category X, an obstacle that has no equivalent in the case of properties or events. What is this additional obstacle?

As I have indicated before, substance dualism is one of the best-hated and most-rejected forms of psycho-physical dualism. This phenomenon is not explicable by the widespread aversion to the category of substance; for though there certainly is this strong aversion, substance dualism is even rejected by friends of mental substances, for example, by some Christian hylemorphists in the Thomistic tradition. According to Quitterer (*Quitterer 2010*), we are physical substances with a sophisticated mental life, in other words, we are mental substances which are physical.⁸ The explanation seems to be this: Substance dualism is taken to imply not only personal immortality but also the existence of ghosts and angels, items that the average philosopher (of the present) considers to be simply absurd.

But substance dualism has no such consequences. Substance dualism is entirely compatible with

the denial of angels, ghosts, and personal immortality. Therefore, it is not reducible *ad absurdum* in the suggested way. On the contrary, there is a naturalistic, even evolutionary, perspective for non-physical mental substances: see (Meixner 2004, 314–23; Meixner 2008; Meixner 2010; Meixner 2012, 39–40; Meixner 2014b).

The best arguments for weak substance dualism (that is, for DUA(SU)₁) still seem to be, on the one hand, the fact that I, a mental substance, do not experience myself as being a body or being a physical part of a body but as *inhabiting a body*: in short, I appear to myself as non-physical; and on the other hand, the argument that can be, with some effort, reconstructed from Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*:

Premise 1'': I exist and I am a mental substance.

Premise 2'': There is a possible world in which I exist but nothing physical exists.

Premise 3'': If I am physical and exist, then it is the case in every possible world that I am physical or do not exist.

Conclusion: Some mental substance is non-physical.

This is a version of the neo-Cartesian argument for substance dualism, which was originally proposed and defended in Meixner (Meixner 2004, 85–121); see also Meixner (Meixner 2014a, 21–23). From Premise 2'' it follows that there is a possible world in which I am non-physical but exist, and hence it follows by premise 3'' (by *modus tollens*): I am non-physical or do not exist. Therefore, by Premise 1'', I am a non-physical mental substance, and therefore: Some mental substance is non-physical.

The reasons for believing that I am a mental substance have already been pointed out above (and I do not think that I need to convince anybody that I really exist; if anybody has doubts about that, he or she should refer the above argument simply to herself/himself). Premise 1'', therefore, stands. Premise 2'' asserts the possibility (*not* the truth) of a main part of idealism. The case Descartes made (*avant la lettre*) for the possibility of that part of idealism – *via* his methodological scepticism – was so convincing that for roughly three centuries after him many philosophers (famous ones among them: Berkeley, Hume, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Husserl) thought that part not only possible but also *true*: The subject of experience exists and nothing physical – “physical” in a *non-idealistic, prima facie* sense⁹ – exists. We need not (and should not) follow them in accepting this, but that it is at least a possibility still seems rather plausible; if not, scepticism regarding the (so-called) external world would be pointless. Premise 2'', therefore, stands. Criticism of the argument must now focus on Premise 3''. But critics should note that in doubting or denying it, they would make an exception in my (or their) own case which they do not make in other cases. Consider *this table* (or *this stone*, or *this tree*, ...). It is physical and exists. This given, is there a possible world in which *this table* exists and is non-physical? I do not believe there is any.

Dualism in the form of substance dualism is of immediate relevance to the question of special divine action. For it would seem from the point of view of orthodox Christianity, Judaism, and Islam that the *subject* of special divine action is a substance in the sense defined above, and that it is a mental and non-physical substance. Thus, if orthodox Christianity (or orthodox Judaism, or orthodox Islam) is true, then, necessarily, DUA(SU)₁ turns out to be true, too. Moreover, if all mental substances different from God are created in His image, then this strongly suggests that DUA(SU)₁* is true as well. Note that it is part of God's being a substance that He is, to some degree, an independent cause of His own activity (see the definition of *substance*). In God's case, of course, the degree of His being an independent cause of His own activity must be *maximal and infinite*. There is no reason to suppose that His self-caused activity – His action – is always bound to remain within limits set once and for all and cannot be very special indeed, whether in the past, *now*, or in the future.