

## Why materialists do not have a point: a brief note

by Titus Rivas

I've been a substance dualist for most of my life. Over the years, I've grown accustomed to anti-dualist rhetoric. To my surprise, one of the main arguments that materialists seem to consider important or even conclusive concerns the fact that the mind may be influenced by the brain. I've never really understood why materialists think neuroscientific data about somatogenic influences are important for the assessment of the coherence of interactionist substance dualism.

Let me explain: Unlike idealism (and parallelist panpsychism), interactionist dualism accepts a *real* interaction between mind and brain or matter. It considers the interactions between the two very different, irreducible ontological realms as natural, but not logically deducible (which could only be the case if one of the realms were reducible to the other, or if both realms were reducible to a third realm). This means that anything that is the case concerning brain-mind interaction can be effortlessly accommodated within dualist ontology, ranging from everyday somatogenic tiredness to Alzheimer's disease to far-reaching psychogenic effects on the brain. According to interactionist dualism, all this is something we get to know empirically, and relates to a natural law or laws of interaction.

In this respect, dualism clearly is superior to materialism, because:

- (a) It does not deny the self-evident irreducible and non-physical existence of the personal mind or consciousness.
- (b) It does not attempt to reduce mind-brain interaction to physical principles, but regards such attempts as incoherent and therefore futile.

Materialism claims that mind-brain interaction can only occur if the mind does not (irreducibly) exist or is physical after all. Thus, it tries to deny that dualism is perfectly compatible with mind-brain interaction, and overlooks the fact that interaction is an *intrinsic* part of interactionist dualism. Also, it does not realize that within the dualist theory of interaction it makes no sense to try to reduce interaction to purely physical laws, simply because the mind is not physical.

In other words, not only do materialists have no point, they don't even have a clue of the inner logic of dualism.

By now, I've encountered this baseless argument so often, that I've decided to refer future opponents to this short note. They must forgive me that I don't give their argument any serious attention anymore.

Titus Rivas, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Also see: [A few remarks on the supposed death of dualism](#)