

According to theists, God is an immaterial thinking self. The main question of this paper is whether theism supports the view that we are immaterial thinking selves too. I shall argue in the negative. Along the way, I will also explore some implications in the metaphysics of mind and self following from the observation that, on theism, God's mentality is in a certain respect magical. One of my main goals here will be to introduce and defend a kind of magical materialism according to which, though we are wholly material selves, our thinking is magical and untethered to the material world. This hypothesis is brazen – even incredible. It might just be true.

TERMS

- Something is wholly material just in the case that it enjoys a decomposition into items, all of which have narrowly physical properties and none of which think.
- Materialism about human persons is the thesis that *we* are wholly material; substance dualism is the denial of materialism.
- Theism is the thesis that God exists.

WHY THEISM AND DUALISM MATTER

- Materialism: orthodoxy under fire
- Theism and materialism: a growing intersection
- Theism and disembodied thought: *possibilities* to be accounted for

INADEQUATE PHILOSOPHIES OF MIND

- Thinking doesn't require a brain.
- Identity theories are false.
- No supervenience or grounding.
- Interaction? No problem.
- In sum: if magical thinking is possible, standard materialism is in trouble.
- Why embrace materialism at all? Common sense might help.

SIMPLICITY ARGUMENT

1. A theory is more likely, all other things being equal, if it's simpler.
2. If theism is true, then dualism is simpler than materialism.
3. Theism is true.
4. All other things are equal.
5. Therefore, dualism is more likely than materialism (from 1, 2, 3, and 4).

	Thinking	Not
Wholly material		
Not		

IMPOSSIBILITY ARGUMENT

1. If materialism is true, then material objects can think.
2. If material objects can think, then a material object's thinking is explained by the activity of its parts.
3. But no thinking can be explained by the activity of a thing's parts.

4. Therefore, no material objects can think (from 2 and 3).
5. Therefore, materialism is not true (from 1 and 4).

A MAGICAL REPLY

There is no how. We are, to be sure, wholly material beings. But, like God's, our thinking is magical – modally and explanatorily independent of the material world.

MYSTERY ARGUMENT

1. A theory is more likely, all other things being equal, if it requires fewer mysteries.
2. If theism is true, then dualism requires fewer mysteries than materialism
3. Theism is true.
4. All other things are equal.
5. Therefore, dualism is more likely than materialism (from 1-4).

MIND: MAGICAL OR TETHERED?

Dilemma: our thinking is, on dualism, either magical or tethered. If magical, then the dualist has no grounds for complaint. If tethered, then the materialist can *appropriate* or even *turn* the dualist's own resources.

Soul Magic. People (who are not wholly material) think, but not in any sense by way of the activity of the parts of their bodies. You have a brain, sure; but in no sense at all is your thinking modally or explanatorily tethered to that brain or the activity of its parts. Your thinking is, instead, magical.

Body Magic. People (who are wholly material) think, but not in any sense by way of the activity of the parts of their bodies. You have a brain, sure; but in no sense at all is your thinking modally or explanatorily tethered to that brain or the activity of its parts. Your thinking is, instead, magical.

Tethered Soul: when an embodied human soul is in a mental state *m*, the parts of her body are in a physical state *p* such that she is in *m* at least partly because the parts of her body are in *p*.

Tethered Body: when a human person is in a mental state *m*, her parts are in a physical state *p* such that she is in *m* at least partly because those parts are in *p*.

CONCLUSIONS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

- The simplicity, impossibility, and mystery arguments are unsound.
- Perhaps ironically, reflection on God's magical thinking tells against a standard genre of argument for substance dualism.
- Are there better arguments from classical theism to substance dualism?
- Are there better arguments from *specifications* of classical theism to substance dualism? (incarnation, *imago dei*, resurrection, etc.).