

PREFACE

This book is a comprehensive defense of psycho-physical dualism – something that can only be very unpopular with large parts of the philosophical community nowadays. Nevertheless, I was attracted to the project, even driven to it, by a strong sense that dualism has not been accorded philosophical justice in recent times, neither by its legions of often monotonous critics, nor, entirely, by its few defenders.

My offensive defense of dualism has two thrusts. Together they constitute what might be termed *the argument from cultural wholeness*. The first thrust goes to establish that dualism, rightly considered, does not contradict natural science or any other body of metaphysically unbiased rational principles (on the contrary, it is *supported* by such principles). The second thrust goes to establish that dualism, rightly considered, fits better than its rival physicalism (or materialism) common sense and ethical and religious ideas that have been beneficially prevalent among a large part of mankind for thousands of years. Therefore, all things considered (science, common sense, ethics and religion), *dualism is to be preferred* if we are to take a metaphysical stand on the relation of body and mind (and we are not in a position to avoid taking a stand: since our very own nature is at issue, agnosticism is out of the question).

The two thrusts do not follow each other in this book in the order I just named them, and there is no balance of development between them: Chapters I through VII of this book are dedicated to the first thrust, Chapter II alone is also dedicated to the second. Chapters VIII to X, finally, leave the philosophical apology of dualism behind and are dedicated to developing the (bare) outlines of a positive dualistic theory of consciousness, agency, and the self.

I am keenly aware that in philosophical quarters sympathetic readers of this book will be few. Mind-body dualism has been announced dead. So why defend a carcass? Well, one should not declare dead what rightly considered, and in philosophical fairness, is a live metaphysical option. To showing this, this book is dedicated. But even those who do not expect to be shaken in their opinions will get something out of reading this book. If the *advocatus diaboli*, doing his best (or worst), cannot lessen the firmness of their opinions, who will? They should at least be interested in finding out that much.

The reader of this book will soon notice that, among other things, it is a polemical book. There is much in the modern philosophy of mind that I am dissatisfied with – sometimes dissatisfied to the point of indignation (which arises in me mainly when I see intellectual injustice done). I have not tried to mince my words in criticizing opinions I consider false. There are people who have these opinions, and I name them. So in attacking the opinions, I attack them, sometimes sharply. Is this appropriate for an academic book? I do not think it is inappropriate,

considering that philosophy always remains what is ultimately important to me in this book, and considering that those whom I might be said to attack rather sharply “are not made of sugar,” as one says, but are battle-hardened (and well-established) intellectual warriors who have themselves inflicted more than one wound on others in their own academic publications. A reader put off by my aggressiveness should also consider that, in attacking, I certainly expose myself to being attacked in turn. I, too, have opinions that are dear to me; I have not held them back.

I am grateful to the Center for Philosophy of Religion of the University of Notre Dame du Lac for granting me a research fellowship for the 2001/2002 academic year. As Norman Mailer once remarked, one “can use the word ‘soul’ at Notre Dame and they don’t snicker.”¹ During my stay at Notre Dame, a large part of this book was written.

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¹ Found in: William Strode, *Footfalls in Time. Notre Dame – a Pictorial*, p. 21.