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Swinburne on 'mental' and 'physical'

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Abstract. This paper examines Richard Swinburne's definitions of 'mental property' and 'physical property'. After some preliminary tidying up (Section 1), the paper introduces eight putative counter-examples to Swinburne's definitions (Section 2). The paper then considers amendments to Swinburne's account of 'mental property' (Section 3) and 'physical property' (Section 4) which deal with these counter-examples. Finally, the paper closes with some brief remarks about the metaphysics of properties (Appendix). Along the way, the paper provides various reasons for thinking that Swinburne's definitions are hardly likely to be acceptable to non-theists.

In *The Christian God*, Richard Swinburne provides a definition of 'physical property' and 'mental property' which has various counter-intuitive consequences. The purpose of this note is to draw attention to these consequences, and to suggest some ways in which Swinburne's account could be improved. (Essentially the same definitions are to be found in *The Evolution of the Soul*; I shall focus on the discussion in *The Christian God* because it is much more recent. All page numbers refer to this later work.)

1

Swinburne writes:

> I understand by a 'physical property' one such that no individual has necessarily a means of discovering that it is instantiated that is not available to any other individual .... 'Mental properties', as I shall understand the term, are ones to which one individual has privileged access, that is, he has a means for discovering whether they are instantiated that is not available to anyone else. (p. 16)

Taking Swinburne at his word, these definitions seem plainly wrong. Consider a straightforward example of what seems to be a mental property, e.g. believing that there are people. Clearly, there is no human being who has a means for discovering that this property is instantiated which is not available to anyone else – many human beings believe that there are people, and (we may suppose) all of these human beings can determine by introspection that the property of believing that there are people is instantiated in their own case.

This objection depends upon taking Swinburne at his word; but the examples which he gives to illustrate his definition of 'mental property' suggest that we ought not to do this.

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> Such properties as being in pain or having a red after-image, are mental, for any individual in whom they are instantiated does seem necessarily to have a way of knowing about them not available to anyone else. For whatever ways you have of finding out whether I have a red after-image … I can share; yet I have an additional way of finding this out – by my own awareness of my own experience. (p. 17)

Clearly, what Swinburne ought to have said, in the case of 'mental property', is something like this: 'Mental properties' are ones to which an individual has privileged access, that is, she has a means for discovering whether they are instantiated *in her own case* that is not available to anyone else.

Unfortunately, this amendment disrupts the symmetry of Swinburne's original definition. It is clear that Swinburne intended his distinction between 'mental properties' and 'physical properties' to be exclusive and exhaustive – every property is either mental or physical, but not both. (Indeed, the most natural way of reading his definition – though this differs from his order of presentation in *The Christian God* – is to suppose that he thinks that the physical properties are precisely the properties which are not mental.) In order to restore the intended symmetry, we shall need to say something like this: A 'physical property' is one such that no individual has necessarily a means of discovering that it is instantiated in her own case that is not available to any other individual.

There are still two respects in which the definitions of 'mental property' and 'physical property' are not symmetrical. First, there is a *de re* modal operator in the definition of 'physical property', and no modal operator in the definition of 'mental property'. However, the second quote above shows pretty clearly that the definition of 'mental property' is also meant to include a *de re* modal operator. (Since *de re* modal operators are more controversial than *de dicto* modal operators, one might wonder whether Swinburne's definitions ought to be remodelled with the less controversial modal operators. However, I shall not worry about discussing this kind of nicety here.) Second, the definition of 'physical property' talks about discovering *that* a property is instantiated, whereas the definition of 'mental property' talks about discovering *whether* a property is instantiated. I think that Swinburne requires the 'whether' reading in both cases. (Here is one reason: Consider the property of being the only person in the universe. Clearly, I can only find out *that* this property is instantiated if I am the only person in the universe. If I have a means of finding out that I am the only person in the universe, then, of course, necessarily, I have a means of discovering that this property is instantiated which is not available to anyone else. But, in the envisaged circumstances – and despite the verdict of Swinburne's definition – being the only person is the universe is not a mental property. Here is a second reason: Suppose that God is necessarily omniscient and necessarily uniquely omnipotent. Consider the property of being omnipotent. Clearly – on standard theological views – God has a means of determining in his own case *that* he is omnipotent that is not available to anyone else. So, on

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Swinburne's account, being omnipotent turns out to be mental. The lesson here is perfectly general. Given that God has a way of finding out *that* properties are instantiated which is unique to God – something which is usually taken to follow from God's omniscience – it will follow from Swinburne's definition that every unique property of God is mental. Of course, this needn't be thought a problem by those who do not believe that there is a God – or for those few among us who are *extreme* idealists – but it clearly would be a problem for Swinburne.)

Taking the above discussion into account, we arrive at the following revised versions of Swinburne's definition of 'mental property' and 'physical property':

(M) Mental properties are properties for which, necessarily, an individual has a means of discovering whether they are instantiated *in her own case* that is not available to anyone else

(P) Physical properties are properties for which it is not the case that, necessarily, an individual has a means of discovering whether they are instantiated *in her own case* that is not available to anyone else

These, I take it, are the principles to which Swinburne intends to commit himself; it is these principles which I claim are subject to numerous counter examples.

II

(1) *Properties of numbers and abstracta* Consider the property of being a prime number (or the property of being the proposition which Bertrand Russell was thinking about when he died, or the property of being wholly present in many places at once, or …). Since no-one has a means of discovering whether these properties are instantiated in their own case which is not available to anyone else, it follows by Swinburne's criterion that these properties are not mental. Consequently, by Swinburne's criterion, these properties are physical. But that seems wrong. The general point here is that there are many kinds of properties – mathematical properties, logical properties, properties of abstracta, modal properties, moral properties, aesthetic properties, etc. – which, at least on some plausible intuitive schemes of classification, are neither mental nor physical. I take it that this is a pretty good reason for insisting that one ought not to say that the physical properties are the properties which are not mental.

(2) *Mental blindspots* Consider the property of being modest. There is some plausibility to the thought that it has to be the case that other people are better judges of the claim that this property is instantiated in one's own case – if one judges that one is modest, then that is pretty good evidence that one is immodest! Even if this case is disputable, the general point is clear: there

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is no reason at all why there shouldn't be mental properties about which one is bound to have a blindspot. (Consider, for example, the property of knowing of some particular proposition both that one believes it, and that it is false; or the property of believing nothing but falsehoods; and so on.) But, if there can be mental blindspots, then Swinburne's account of mental properties cannot be right – privileged access is not a defining property of mental properties.

(3) *Relational mental properties* Consider the property of sharing the thought that there is a draught in the room. This looks as though it ought to count as a mental property, but on Swinburne's account it isn't. For, while I may have privileged access to the information that I'm thinking that there is a draught in the room, and you may have privileged access to the information that you're thinking that there is a draught in the room, neither of us has privileged access to the information that we're both thinking that there is a draught in the room. Once again, the lesson is perfectly general: it is natural to think that there can be relational mental properties – i.e. mental properties which are instantiated by tuples of individuals – but there is no way that anyone has privileged access to facts about the instantiation of these properties.

(4) *Bodily abilities* Consider the property of being able to scratch (a particular spot on) one's own back. This doesn't look as though it ought to count as a mental property, yet on Swinburne's account it seems that it does. For I do have a means of discovering whether this property is instantiated in my own case that is not available to anyone else – namely, I can try it and see. Moreover, it seems that it is necessarily the case that this a method that is available to me and to no-one else *in my case*. Yet again, the point seems to be general – there are all kinds of 'bodily abilities' which I am necessarily in a privileged position to test for. (Can I whistle that tune? Can I ride that bike? Can I cross my eyes? Can I ingest 100 mg of LSD without having hallucinations?) Yet it seems wrong to claim that these are mental properties. (Perhaps Swinburne might object that it could be the case that I am not able to 'try it and see' – e.g. if I don't have a body, I can't try to ride the bike. Maybe that's right; but it does depend on some controversial metaphysical views. It isn't obvious to me that *I* could fail to have a body, since it might be, for example, that I am *essentially* a member of a certain biological kind. Since this case is controversial, I shall not place too much weight upon it.)

(5) *Unconscious mental states* On some views, there can be unconscious mental states and processes. Moreover, on some of these views, people who have these unconscious states and processes do not have privileged access to them; indeed, on some of these views, the people who have some of these unconscious states and processes are particularly poorly placed to discover that they have them. (Your analyst may be able to see quite readily that you have certain kinds of unconscious beliefs and desires; it may take a lot of

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work for you to be able to see that you have them.) Since it is controversial whether there are unconscious mental states and processes, it might be wise not to put too much weight upon this kind of case; however, it does seem to me that it would be very swift to rule the possibility of this kind of case out of court by *fiat*. (There may be connections here to the case of mental blindspots. Also, there are various kinds of pathologies – extreme cases of conflict, weakness of will, etc. – in which one does not have the ability to detect that one possesses certain kinds of mental properties by introspection. It might be that, if one is in perfect psychic health, then one necessarily has the ability to discover whether mental properties are instantiated in one's own case 'just by looking', but that this ability is not guaranteed to be present if one's psychic health is less than perfect.)

(6) '*Logical*' *properties* Consider the property of both believing and not believing that one is currently experiencing a red after-image. It seems that this is a mental property; and it also seems that one has no special means of determining whether or not it applies in one's own case. After all, it is plausible to think that it is *a priori* that the property applies in no case – and that a little bit of reasoning is required in any case (including one's own) in order to determine that it does not apply. (Perhaps Swinburne might try to deal with this case in the following way. Suppose that you are currently experiencing a red after-image, and that you believe that you are. This belief is one to which you have privileged access. From it, you can infer that it is not the case that you do not believe that you are currently experiencing a red after-image; and so you can infer that it is not the case that you both believe and fail to believe that you are currently experiencing a red after-image. No one else can take just this route to the conclusion that it is not the case that *you* both believe and fail to believe that *you* are currently experiencing a red after-image. However, even if this is right, there are other cases which appear more troublesome. Consider, for example, the property of both believing something, and not believing anything, which entails that arithmetic is decidable. More generally, consider any contradictory properties whose 'conjuncts' are properties which already raise difficulties for Swinburne. If any of the previous examples is any good, then there will be 'compound' properties which can be constructed from it which also raise problems for Swinburne.)

(7) *A specious objection?* Consider the property of weighing 65 kg. I have a means of discovering whether this property is instantiated in my case which is not available to anyone else, viz. I can weigh myself. Of course, you can weigh me, and you can weigh yourself – but in neither of those cases are you doing what I do when I weigh myself. It seems that this point generalizes. For pretty much any ostensibly physical property, I have a means of discovering whether it is instantiated in my own case which is not available to anyone else, namely: checking to see whether it applies *in my own case*. (Here,

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I imagine that Swinburne will reply as follows. Granted, if you have any means of discovering whether a certain kind of property is instantiated, then there is a way of individuating 'means of discovery' according to which you have a unique means of discovering whether that property is instantiated in your own case. But there is no guarantee that you will have any means of discovering whether a given physical property is instantiated. So it is not true that, for pretty much any ostensibly physical property, I have a means of discovering whether it is instantiated in my own case which is not available to anyone else, namely: checking to see whether it applies *in my own case*. This reply is not without difficulties. Consider the property of having a whimsical sense of humour. That looks like a mental property – but I doubt very much that my five-year-old son has a means of discovering whether it applies in his own case that is not available to anyone else. More generally, if there are mental properties whose presence can only be detected by those with sufficient experience, intelligence, sensitivity, and the like, then the reply which I sketched to the above objection is unavailable – for it will then be true that there is *no* guarantee that you will have any means of discovering whether some paradigmatically mental properties are instantiated.) Perhaps these 'reflexive' means of discovery should not be distinguished from their 'non-reflexive' counterparts; but there is at least a *prima facie* difficulty to be addressed here.

(8) *Mixed properties* Earlier, I mentioned the property of being able to ingest 100 mg of LSD without having hallucinations. This property seems to be neither fully physical nor fully mental, but nor does it seem to 'factorize' into more primitive properties which are fully physical or fully mental. True enough, 'having hallucinations' is a mental property; and 'ingesting 100 mg of LSD' is a physical property – but the property of being able to ingest 100 mg of LSD without having hallucinations is no 'simple amalgam' of those two properties. Perhaps there is some further analysis of the property in question which will show it to be a 'composite' property, all of whose 'components' are fully physical or fully mental. However, that is not enough to show that there are no 'mixed' properties which do not 'factorize' into more primitive properties which are fully physical or fully mental. If there can be 'unfactorizable' mixed properties, then it seems to be just a mistake to suppose that the classes of mental and physical properties are disjoint and exhaustive.

III

In view of the above objections, some further amendment of Swinburne's definitions is called for. Different cases suggest different lines of amendment; I shall discuss some of the more obvious amendments to the definition of 'mental property' first.

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The case of relational mental properties seems fairly easily handled. It is clear that there is nothing more to our sharing the thought that there is a draught in the room than each of us separately having the thought – and these separate cases are ones which do satisfy Swinburne's definition. So the obvious suggestion is that Swinburne's definition is only intended to apply to a special subclass of mental properties – the *primitive* mental properties from which all other mental properties are constructed, or upon which all other mental properties supervene, or which are in some other way appropriately related to all other mental properties. Of course, this leaves us with two tasks, viz: (i) we need to give a precise delineation of the class of primitive mental properties; and (ii) we need to say exactly how it is that the primitive mental properties are related to all the other mental properties. Neither of these tasks is trivial; I shall not attempt to carry them out here. (There is an assumption being made here. If there are primitive mental properties which are instantiated by tuples of individuals, then this strategy won't work. Some people have thought that there are such properties – e.g. mental properties of crowds which are not reducible to the mental properties of the individuals who make up those crowds. I shall simply note that if there are such properties, then Swinburne's definition of 'mental property' is beyond saving.) As a bonus, this suggestion also handles the difficulty with 'logical' properties, provided that we insist – as it seems we should – that no 'logically compound' properties are among the primitive mental properties.

The cases of blindspots and unconscious mental states and processes also seems fairly easily handled. Even if it is true that there can be primitive mental blindspots and primitive unconscious mental states and processes, there is no obvious reason why we shouldn't insist that these are not typical members of the class of mental properties. Typically, mental properties do exhibit the phenomenon of privileged access – and so we can use the phenomenon of privileged access to fix the reference of the expression 'mental property'. That is, we can amend Swinburne's definition of the mental so that it looks something like this:

(M_1) Primitive mental properties are properties of a kind such that, necessarily, an individual has a means of discovering whether typical properties of that kind are instantiated in her own case that is not available to anyone else. (Mental properties are properties which are related to the primitive mental properties in suitable ways.)

Of course, proceeding in this way has a cost – we are no longer supposing that privileged access is an essential (constitutive, definitional) feature of primitive mental properties, and so our 'definition' no longer carries any information about the essential features of primitive mental properties. It

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seems to me that the cases of blindspots and unconscious mental states require us to pay this price.

If (M_1) is to be of any value, then we shall need to insist that nothing but typical primitive mental properties (and properties constructed from them) are such that, necessarily, an individual has a means of discovering whether they are instantiated in her own case that is not available to anyone else. This means that we shall need to set aside the kinds of cases discussed above under the headings 'bodily abilities' and 'a specious objection?'. In order to meet the difficulty raised by 'a specious objection?', I think that we need to say more about the qualities of the individuals in question – e.g. to stipulate that it is only 'typical' or 'normal' or 'sufficiently well-qualified' individuals who are guaranteed to have privileged access to primitive mental properties. (The other possibility is to further restrict the class of primitive mental properties to those to which anyone, no matter what their mental capacities, has privileged access. I confess to worrying that this strategy is unlikely to succeed. Is it true that I am guaranteed to have privileged access to my currently having a red after-image even though I do not have the *concept* of redness? Is it true that I can only have beliefs if I have the *concept* of belief? Is it true that I can only be conscious if I have the *concept* of consciousness?) Perhaps something like the following will do the trick:

(M_2) Primitive mental properties are properties of a kind such that, necessarily, an individual who has the requisite concepts – more generally, the requisite mental apparatus – has a means of discovering whether typical properties of that kind are instantiated in her own case that is not available to anyone else. (Mental properties are properties which are related to the primitive mental properties in suitable ways.)

Even if this meets the difficulties raised by 'a specious objection?', I see no way to amend the definition further to meet the difficulties raised by 'bodily abilities'. If it is necessarily that case that any individual who has the requisite concepts has a means of discovering whether she can currently hold her breath while she sub-vocally counts to sixty which is not available to any one else – namely, try it and see – then anything at all along the lines of Swinburne's definition of 'mental property' is doomed. However, I admit to some uneasiness about this kind of example – it isn't obvious that conscious creatures have to breathe! – and, in consequence, I am not prepared to put too much weight upon it.

The upshot of this part of my discussion is that it *may* be possible to amend Swinburne's characterization of 'mental property' in a satisfactory way. Although there are still details to be filled out – remember that (M_2) is only a schema for a definition, and that no account of primitiveness for mental properties, or of composition of mental properties, has been given – (M_2)

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does have at least some chance of succeeding. Of course, there are still serious difficulties to confront. First, the conflict between internalist and externalist accounts of content raises hard questions about the 'factorizability' of all properties into purely physical properties and purely mental properties. Second – and far more seriously – there is a large body of recent work which challenges the idea that privileged access is a defining characteristic of typical mental properties. (See, for example, Dennett (1991), and his attack on the notion of 'the Cartesian Theatre'.) Of course, this work belongs to a materialist tradition which is quite at odds with Swinburne's traditional mind/body dualism, so it would be controversial to insist on it in the present context. However, it is worth noting that Swinburne's account of 'mental properties' is not topic neutral – very likely, it will only get things right if traditional mind/body dualism is true.

IV

Given that Swinburne does move to adopt something like (M_2) as his account of 'mental properties', it is not clear what will be left of his account of 'physical properties'. Perhaps the most natural suggestion – given the parallel development of (M) and (P) – is something like the following:

(P_2) Primitive physical properties are properties of a kind such that it is *not* the case that, necessarily, an individual who has the requisite concepts – more generally, the requisite mental apparatus – has a means of discovering whether typical properties of that kind are instantiated in her own case that is not available to anyone else. (Physical properties are properties which are related to the primitive physical properties in suitable ways.)

One advantage of this definition is that it provides a natural way of handling the difficulty involving 'mixed properties'. Even if we insist – as this pair of definitions would have us do – that primitive properties divide exhaustively and exclusively into primitive mental properties and primitive physical properties, we are not thereby committed to the claim that all properties divide exhaustively and exclusively into mental properties and physical properties. For all that our definitions say, there could be 'mixed properties' which are 'compounded' from primitive mental properties and primitive physical properties.

However, it seems to me that the first of the objections raised in section II above – under the heading 'properties of numbers and abstracta' – shows conclusively that we do not want to suppose that primitive properties divide exhaustively and exclusively into primitive mental properties and primitive physical properties. On any intuitive taxonomy of properties, there are all

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kinds of primitive properties apart from primitive mental properties and primitive physical properties: modal properties, mathematical properties (including arithmetical, geometrical and algebraic properties), abstract properties (that is, properties of abstracta such as properties, propositions, states of affairs, facts, and so on), moral properties, aesthetic properties, etc. In the face of these examples, it seems that (P_2) has to be rejected. (As noted earlier, the case of God's primitive properties also seems particularly pressing for Swinburne. Many of God's primitive properties seem intuitively to be neither mental nor physical.)

Perhaps Swinburne might try the suggestion that we are entitled to suppose that all of the primitive properties of people (perhaps excluding God) are either primitive physical properties or primitive mental properties (or primitive modal physical properties – 'being able to run', 'being able to jump' – or primitive modal mental properties – 'being able to think', 'being able to feel'). That is – ignoring the complications raised by modal properties – he might suggest that the primitive properties of people do divide exhaustively and exclusively into the primitive physical properties and the primitive mental properties. But there are kinds of properties in the above taxonomy – e.g. moral properties and aesthetic properties – which clearly seem to be primitive properties of persons, and yet which also seem to be neither mental nor physical properties of persons. (It also seems plausible to suggest that there are primitive mathematical, logical and metaphysical properties of persons which are neither mental not physical. Consider, respectively, 'being (roughly) axisymmetric', 'being self-identical', and 'being a person'.)

Since it seems plausible to think that Strawson's distinction between M-predicates and P-predicates is something of a model for Swinburne's account of mental properties and physical properties, it might be worth noting at this point how Strawson manages to find a binary classification which is both exhaustive and exclusive. On Strawson's scheme, M-predicates are predicates which can be properly ascribed to things to which we would not dream of applying predicates ascribing states of consciousness (see Strawson (1959: 104)); and P-predicates are all the rest – i.e. all those predicates which can only be properly ascribed to things to which we can intelligibly apply predicates ascribing states of consciousness (again, see Strawson (1959: 104)). If we suppose that predicates ascribing states of consciousness are predicates which express properties to which individuals have privileged access, then we can extract something like the following account from Strawson:

(M_3) Mental properties are properties which can only be instantiated by entities which have properties to which the entities in question have privileged access (or, perhaps, to which the entities in question are capable of having privileged access).

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(P_3) Non-mental properties are properties which can be instantiated by entities which do not – and perhaps could not – have properties to which the entities in question have privileged access.

The crucial point, for our purposes, is that there is no reason at all to suppose that all non-mental properties are physical. Even if it follows from Strawson's account that all moral properties – and a good number of other evaluative properties – are P-properties, there are still all kinds of M-properties which it would be very odd to call 'physical'. Strawson does hold that M-predicates should be attributable to material bodies (hence the name); but he nowhere suggests that only physical properties are attributable to (non-conscious) material bodies.

The upshot here is, I think, fairly plain. If Swinburne really does want to distinguish between mental and physical properties – and not merely between mental and non-mental properties – then he needs to give some independent characterization of the physical properties. Very plausibly, the right place to start is with the physical sciences – physical properties are precisely the kinds of properties which are the special province of investigation of the physical sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, etc.). Hence: mass, charge, spin, resistance, pressure, entropy, temperature, and so on are all paradigmatic examples of physical properties. Of course, there are all kinds of tricky questions – are spatio-temporal properties physical? do the primitive physical properties all belong to the domain of microphysics? and so on – but the outlines of the idea seem clear enough.

But does Swinburne really want to distinguish between mental and physical properties, or merely between mental and non-mental properties? I'm not sure; but I do want to insist that he should not be able to make any mileage out of conflation of these two distinctions. If one's aim is to distinguish between mental and non-mental properties, then it seems plausible to think that the case of mental properties is fundamental (and hence, perhaps, that one can rely on claims about privileged access in order to make the distinction). However, if one's aim is to distinguish between mental and physical properties, then it is far less plausible to think that the case of mental properties is 'fundamental' – and it is almost incongruous to think that one can rely on claims about privileged access in order to mark out the boundaries of the two classes. Those of us who are inclined to think that mental properties must supervene on physical properties, or that there must be some sense in which mental properties are reducible to physical properties, or … are going to be deeply suspicious of accounts which seek to characterize the physical in terms of the non-mental, since that clearly gets the order of metaphysical dependence the wrong way around. Again, of course, we have now wandered on to controversial territory – but, at the very least, it does

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seem worth pointing out that there is room for suspicion that Swinburne's far from topic-neutral account of physical properties is an attempt to stack the deck against his materialist opponents.

APPENDIX

(This appendix was prompted by some much-appreciated comments from an anonymous referee for *Religious Studies*.)

In this paper, I have followed Swinburne in making no explicit commitments about the metaphysics of properties *other than* assuming that, mostly, distinct predicates in English correspond to distinct properties. (Swinburne makes just one exception to this general rule, in his analysis of attributions *de se*. This treatment of attributions *de se* might extend to a different reply to the 'specious objection' raised in Section II.) Moreover, I have made no attempt to give precise content to the notion of a primitive property. Perhaps, however, the most promising line of response to some of the difficulties which I raise for Swinburne is to tighten up his account of the existence and identity conditions for properties, and to insist on a particular account of the notion of a primitive property.

For example, one might respond to the claim that logical properties – e.g. either believing or not believing that one is currently experiencing a red afterimage – and properties of numbers and abstracta make problems for Swinburne by denying that the relevant predicates express properties. I do not think that one can do this simply by espousing nominalism: denial of the existence of numbers and abstracta does not entail denial of the existence of the properties which are commonly attributed to them. Nor, I think, can one do this by adopting a radical extensionalism about the identity conditions for properties – the null set is neither a mental property not a physical property (and likewise for the universal set). Perhaps there is some other way of implementing this strategy – but, if so, its nature is not clear to me. At the very least, if Swinburne wishes to go this way, he has some work to do.

Similarly, one might respond to the claim that primitive moral and aesthetic properties make problems for Swinburne by denying that there are any primitive moral or aesthetic properties. If moral and aesthetic properties are compounded from, or supervenient upon, or analysable in terms of, primitive mental and physical properties, then – if the notion of a primitive property can be suitably understood – it may be that there are no primitive moral or aesthetic properties. Clearly, the answer to this question depends upon the precise account of primitiveness for properties – so the main force of my objection here is that Swinburne owes us an account of primitiveness for properties which makes it clear that there are no primitive moral or aesthetic properties.

Finally – on a slightly different point – I want to note that I have not said

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that Swinburne's account must be wrong because it is committed to traditional mind-body dualism. The one point I have made here is that Swinburne's account is hostage to fortune – if traditional mind-body dualism is wrong, then his account is wrong. I do not suppose that this is a reason for saying that his account should be neutral on the mind-body issue; rather, it is a reason for saying that his account should align with the correct account of that issue. As a matter of fact, I think that mind-body dualism is mistaken; but I am not sure that the familiar objections to it constitute knockdown reasons for giving it up. Consequently, I have not tried to press this case here.

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