
Being Without Doing

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For those of us for whom substance dualism is not an option, emergentism has to be the most desirable stance about the mental. We remain within the limits of a broadly naturalistic worldview and at the same time keep a special place for our minds, which means for ourselves. Still, our desires are not always (not even in philosophy) easy to fulfill. Producing a convincing, even coherent emergentist view has not been easy. Samuel Alexander, for instance, struggles to explain what the mental is under emergentism:

Mental process is therefore something new, a fresh creation which, despite the possibility of resolving it into physiological terms, means the presence of a so specific physiological constitution as to separate it from simpler vital processes. [. . .] I mean that such processes though they may be reduced to the class of vital processes are so distinct from the remainder of the class that they hold a privileged position in it. Precisely in the same way the king is a man and belongs to the same class with his subjects. But he is not one of his subjects.¹

A crucial component of emergentism is the claim that the mental has autonomous causal powers. This autonomy is essential to be “something new”, and Alexander thinks that this autonomy is just essential to be real or to exist. He illustrates this point while dismissing the idea that the mental might be epiphenomenal in an often quoted passage:

[Epiphenomenalism] is not simply to be rejected because it supposes something to exist in nature which has nothing to do, no purpose to serve, a species of *noblesse* which depends on the work of its inferiors, but is kept for show and might as well, and undoubtedly would in time be abolished. It is to be rejected because it is false to empirical facts.²

Obviously, Alexander thought there was factual evidence against *mental* epiphenomenalism. But what has survived is his conceptual point, what Jaegwon Kim has called the “Alexander Dictum”: If something has nothing to do, no purpose to serve, it should be abolished. Perhaps Alexander is only suggesting that it is

unreasonable to accept epiphenomena. In any case, what Kim and others have reconstructed from Alexander is that having causal powers is a necessary (and sufficient) condition for existence. In Kim’s words, “to be is to have causal powers”. Kim insists that this dictum, at least for the case of concrete existents, has to be accepted by emergentists and non-reductive naturalists. And under the dictum, of course, epiphenomena are impossible.

The current, renewed interest in epiphenomenalism comes mostly from a series of arguments threatening the causal efficacy of the mental for non-reductive naturalism. Some of these contemporary worries leading to attributing an epiphenomenal character to mental or psychological properties have been Davidson’s anomalism, content externalism, the irreducibility of consciousness, causal-explanatory exclusion, and what we may call the structurally-based feature of functional properties.³ The debates have focused on psychological properties, but it can be shown that the last two sources carry a more general import, involving the epiphenomenality of properties within other special sciences. There have been recent attempts to alleviate those worries but, perhaps as an indication of how challenging some of the problems are, most of the attempts embrace rather extreme positions.⁴ On the other hand, some philosophers seem to be ready to settle for epiphenomenalism.⁵ In this paper I shall not discuss the sources of epiphenomenalist worries. I shall assume that, given the seriousness of (at least some of) the problems, epiphenomenalism is not less attractive than some other views about the mental, and perhaps the biological, the geological, etc. My purpose is to explore whether epiphenomenalism, and in particular the kind of epiphenomenalism that I think results from some of the sources above, can be a realist theory of the mental (and, in general, of other special science realms). Obviously, the answer to that question has to be negative if we defend



the view that a property can be real or “genuine” only if it is causally efficacious, i.e. the Alexander Dictum. My aim here is to discuss some arguments for that view and to consider some alternatives that would make room for the reality of epiphenomenal properties. This should not make epiphenomenalism an attractive theory, but might make it a contender. A naturalist should welcome this given the difficulties that emergentism has encountered.

1. Epiphenomenalism and isolationism

Let us begin by distinguishing among several epiphenomenal notions. There is a dictionary sense according to which an epiphenomenon is a secondary phenomenon resulting from and accompanying another. I am assuming that this is not the meaning the philosophical discussion concentrates on.⁶ The philosophical meaning involves some lack of causal efficacy. With that common denominator, the following are some possible epiphenomenalist claims.

First, epiphenomenalism about properties⁷ of a certain kind can be partial or global. It is partial just in case it contends that properties of a certain kind are causally inefficacious *vis-à-vis* properties of some other kinds. For example, within a Leibniz-style property parallelism, mental properties would be epiphenomenal with respect to physical properties but not with respect to other mental properties. And physical properties would be epiphenomenal with respect to mental properties but not with respect to other physical properties. On the other hand, it is global just in case it claims that properties of a certain kind are causally inefficacious *tout court* (including, of course, inefficacy with respect to properties of that kind). For example, within a Malebranche-style property occasionalism, mental properties (as well as physical properties) would be totally inefficacious and would be caused by God.

Second, epiphenomenalism can be understood in a loose and in a strict sense. It is loose just in case it defends merely that properties of a certain kind are causally inefficacious. It is strict just in case it claims that properties of a certain kind (i) are causally inefficacious but (ii) are themselves causally produced.⁸ We can use this second distinction to shed light on another epiphenomenal notion I want to consider. Let’s say that a theory is isolationist regarding a certain kind of properties just in case it claims that properties of that kind

(i) are causally inefficacious and (ii) are not causally produced (alternatively: just in case properties of that certain kind are not involved in causal relations whatsoever). Now, isolationism is a form of epiphenomenalism understood in the loose sense, but it is clearly not a form of *strict* epiphenomenalism. It is in fact a more radical claim: isolated properties are not just impotent but also lonely.

What version of epiphenomenalism is suggested by the different problems of mental causation? First, it seems clear that global epiphenomenalism is what most authors have in mind. One way of expressing this would be to say that mental properties are causally impotent with respect to physical or natural properties and with respect to mental properties (and, as some add, with respect to social or other higher-than-mental properties).⁹ Second, the version of epiphenomenalism that seems to be the conclusion of most epiphenomenal arguments is the strict version. In some cases there is no explicit reference to whether the mental is itself caused and so what we get is an unspecified loose epiphenomenalism. In any case, what we don’t find – as far as I can tell – is explicit isolationism. The difference between strict epiphenomenalism and isolationism in the context of a theory of the mind may be seen as a minor one. But when we ask about the plausibility of a (loosely) epiphenomenal view’s being realist the difference may become more important.

As I mentioned above, I shall not survey the several sources for mental epiphenomenalism; let me just say a few general words about them. While content externalism, anomalism and the irreducibility of consciousness challenge only the causal efficacy of particular kinds of mental properties, the other two problems threaten the whole mental domain. It can be argued that these two remaining problems share a common structure.¹⁰ But while the problem of functional properties emerges also within a *particular theory* (what is perhaps the orthodoxy in the philosophy of mind, namely, functionalism), the exclusion problem involves a *family of theories* (which plausibly includes functionalism) defending a non-eliminative but naturalistically-oriented view of the mind. Given the two-fold generality of the exclusion problem, I shall for the most part present epiphenomenalism as a result of it, but I shall occasionally compare exclusion with other problems.

Let’s first agree that the following are the minimal commitments of a naturalist but realist theory of the

mind: (a) there are just physical objects (there are no mental substances), (b) there are two distinct kinds of properties: physical and mental (Mental properties are genuine or real properties which are instantiated in physical objects with a certain level of complexity), (c) mental properties supervene (non-causally depend) on physical properties, and (d) the physical domain is causally closed.

Can mental properties¹¹ be causally efficacious within this picture? The exclusion problem gives a negative answer. This problem can be presented in many different ways; I am liberally following here one of Kim's formulations.¹² When do we say that a mental property is causally efficacious? When it has the potential to cause the instantiation of other properties.¹³ These other properties can be mental properties, physical properties or higher-than-mental properties. Suppose that a mental property *M* is said to cause another mental property *M**. But *M** is, according to the supervenience commitment, dependent on a physical property *P**, and thus *P** is by itself sufficient to bring about *M**. So unless we accept that mental properties are generally overdetermined we have to conclude that the only way in which *M* can be in some sense responsible for the occurrence of *M** is being causally responsible for the occurrence of *P**.¹⁴ Still, according to the causal closure commitment, *P** must have a complete generating causal chain composed of physical properties. And it seems entirely plausible to suppose that *P*, the property constituting the physical base of *M*, is the cause of *P**. But if *P* is sufficient for the instantiation of *P**, *M* has no causal role in this picture unless we claim that *P** is overdetermined.¹⁵ Finally, *M* can be said to be the cause of a higher-than-mental property. *M* may be causing *S**, a higher-than-mental property that depends on another mental property *M**. But by an argument analogous to one considered above, we can show that mental to higher-than-mental causation presupposes mental-to-mental causation, which in turn presupposes mental-to-physical causation, which in turn has been shown to be implausible. So there is no hope for this first candidate. Or *M* may be causing *S*, a higher-than-mental property that depends upon it. But this is surely unacceptable. Causal relations are a kind of dependence relation, but synchronic dependence relations such as mental-physical supervenience are non-causal relations. If all we can show of a property is that it is the dependence base of a higher level one, we are not entitled to claim it is causally efficacious.¹⁶ So there is no hope for this second candidate either.

In the three cases we considered, a basic, physical property "preempted" the causal efficacy of the mental one.

Compare this with the problem of functional properties. According to functionalism, mental properties are second order properties that are realized in structural, first order properties. But these first order, base properties are the ones that produce the effects; functional properties are epiphenomenal. Jackson and Pettit say:

[. . .] on any account of efficacy, it is Pickwickian to describe the [functional] property as efficacious, given that any efficacy it is alleged to have exercised would have been screened off by the influence of the [realizer] property. No conception of efficacy, no matter how debunking, should allow that efficacy can be exercised across such a screen.¹⁷

In fact, this problem(s) might generalize over other special science properties. Claim (b) of naturalism may be seen just as a simplification of a general ontological view which structures properties in levels or layers, with physical properties as the basic level. In this case, a similar problem arises for other non-basic properties. If we are functionalists not only regarding the mental but also regarding many biological, geological or social properties, we might have a pervasive epiphenomenalism in perhaps every special science.¹⁸ If epiphenomenalism generalizes, the discussion about the reality of epiphenomenal properties seems even more urgent. But let's go back to *mental* epiphenomenalism.

Let us suppose that the problem of exclusion (or the problem of functional properties) is irresolvable and that every mental property is epiphenomenal in the strict sense. Now, which properties *cause* these epiphenomenal mental properties? Obviously, other mental properties cannot do the job since, as we have seen, they are causally inert (and the same of course applies to higher-than-mental properties). Mental properties have to be caused by physical properties. But this is not possible. For suppose we say that a mental property *M** (my perceiving a red object) is caused by a physical property *P* (the redness of the object that is on the table). Now, by the supervenience commitment, for *M** to be instantiated there must be a physical base *P** (an appropriate neural property) on which *M** depends, and which is then sufficient for *M**. So unless we admit overdetermination, *P** preempts (via dependence) the causal role of *P* on *M**. And we already know, from the formulation of the exclusion problem, that overdetermination cannot be an option.

It might be replied that P has a causal role in this picture, since it is surely causing P*. However, as it was shown, M* cannot be caused by P. A property need not be a direct cause of M* (or, in general, of a given property) to be causally efficacious for it. But it needs to belong to a *causal chain* which ends up causing M*. Since P* is not causing M*, we don't have the causal chain required to say that P causes M*. Now, it is more than a terminological question whether M* is caused by P*.¹⁹ Note that if this dependence relation were admitted as a kind of causation, mental properties could be efficacious after all, since plausibly higher-than-mental properties depend on them. Also, as was noted, the formulation of the exclusion problem seems to presuppose from the outset that causation is a kind of dependence relation, but not all dependence relations involve causation. In the case under consideration the relation between M* and P* is a relation of non-causal synchronic dependence. Thus, by the same standards used in the original exclusion argument, mental properties cannot be (strict) epiphenomenal properties.²⁰ So we have this moral: those who are committed to epiphenomenalism should be ready to embrace isolationism.

Another way of illustrating how epiphenomenalism leads to isolationism is in relation with the problem of anomalism. Davidson's critics have argued that, within Davidson's theory, the mental is epiphenomenal since there are no psycho-physical laws. But Davidson's argument for anomalous monism excludes not only psycho-physical laws (mental-to-physical laws) but also any law connecting the mental with the physical, including physical-to-mental laws. Thus, if there are no physical-to-mental laws, there cannot be – if we accept what Davidson's critics say – physical-to-mental causation. Therefore, mental properties cannot be effects and strict epiphenomenalism has to be replaced by isolationism.

Let's go back now to the question of whether an epiphenomenalist/isolationist can be a realist about the mental. Those attacking epiphenomenalism from different perspectives (emergentists and reductive materialists, for instance) claim that epiphenomenalism is an unstable and even contradictory view. Eliminative or at most "preservative" irrealism²¹ about the mental should follow from epiphenomenal positions. And of course the isolationist is not in a better situation. Those attacks assume the Alexander Dictum. Kim has championed this line of argument:

The reality of the mental is closely tied to the possibility of mental causation, and anyone who takes a realist attitude towards the mental must be prepared with an account of how mental causation is possible.²²

Epiphenomenalists have not addressed this charge, and I want to explore if they can do it successfully.²³ But let's briefly clarify a bit more what is behind the "Alexander dictum" and the charge of mental irrealism.

2. Epiphenomenalism and mental realism

First, a few words about what "realism" means in "mental realism". "Realism" is a label with multiple uses in philosophy. The use of realism I am interested in is the one carrying an existential claim about entities of a type.²⁴ Thus, "centaur realism" amounts to the claim that there are centaurs, "moral realism" the claim that there are moral properties or facts, and "mental realism" (granted substance naturalism) the claim that mental properties are actually instantiated. In this sense of "realism", and since we are concerned with mental *properties*, we need to say, first, what it would mean for a property to be real or exist, and second, under which conditions we would consider a property to be real.

We can agree that properties are expressed by predicative expressions (predicates for short). In a broad sense of property, every predicate expresses a property, since we can correlate each predicate with a set of actual or possible objects (or, more precisely, with a function from possible worlds to extensions). But most would agree that many properties so understood are not real or genuine properties, but arbitrary constructions sometimes called "mere-Cambridge" properties. On the other hand, we have real or genuine properties which in some sense exist in nature. We can say, following David Lewis, that among all the properties in the broad sense, most are "miscellaneous, gerrymandered, ill-demarcated. Only an elite minority are carved at the joints, so that their boundaries are established by objective sameness and difference in nature".²⁵ And this minority constitute the real or genuine properties, or properties in a strict sense.²⁶

Once we adopt a non-egalitarian view we need to say when a property-candidate is in fact a real or genuine property. A first family of criteria that might do the job express some kind of independence claim,²⁷ usually mind-independence. This means that for an entity to be

real it has to exist even if minds did not exist.²⁸ We have:

(MIC) A property P is real only if it can be instantiated regardless of there being no mental phenomena.

This criterion might work for physical properties but of course it begs the question against the reality of the mental: nothing mental could exist if there were no mental phenomena. A related criterion might be proposed to avoid this problem. It says:

(AIC) Property P is real only if it can be instantiated regardless of its being attributed to any object by anyone.

There is, however, a second family of criteria that has been widely adopted, and which appeals to the causal ability of a property-candidate to enter into causal relations with other properties. The most prominent among these criteria is the one requiring causal potency or efficacy: The “Alexander dictum”.

(CPC) A property P is real only if it contributes to the (active) causal powers of the object that (putatively) has it.²⁹

While the Alexander dictum is, as noted above, formulated by Kim as a biconditional, it is not at this time relevant for my purposes whether causal efficacy is a sufficient condition for property reality. In fact, (CPC) and (AIC) (and the families they represent) are not necessarily competing criteria. It might well be that they supplement each other or that one reduces to the other given some assumptions. My point here is not that we have to accept these criteria. I take it that (CPC) and (AIC) (or closely related criteria) express the orthodoxy for considering a property real, and that they exemplify the kind of requirement that a property has to meet in order to be considered genuine.

(CPC) is a good weapon to combat undesired mere-Cambridge properties that “include such as being grue (in Goodman’s sense), historical properties like [. . .] having been slept in by George Washington, relational properties like being fifty miles south from a burning barn, and such properties as being such that Jimmy Carter is president of the United States”.³⁰ As Shoemaker puts it, “it is natural [. . .] to feel that such properties are not real or genuine properties”³¹ and the causal criterion surely would rule them out. Still, (CPC) also denies reality to (strict) epiphenomenal

properties and this is something that may seem too drastic. A related, more liberal causal criterion accepts properties that are impotent but are caused by other properties:

(CRC) A property is real only if it contributes to the *active or passive* causal powers of the object that (putatively) has it.³²

Strict epiphenomenalism is compatible with (CRC) (but not with (CPC)). Isolationism is incompatible with both criteria. If in our quest to find a line between real and mere-Cambridge properties we are compelled to adopt one of the causal criteria, Alexander, Kim and Malcolm would be right when they claim that epiphenomenalism/isolationism leads to irrealism. Conversely, if we want to support the rights of epiphenomenalism and isolationism to be realist theories, we have to reject the causal criteria.

Two strategies can be followed to resist the Alexander Dictum expressed as the causal powers criteria (CPC) and (CRC). One would be to reject any priority of the notion of causal potency in the formulation of a criterion for the reality of properties. We can argue that the notion of causal potency already presupposes the notion of genuine property and develop an alternative, non-causal account of “real property”,³³ plausibly accompanied by some independence claim. We might then show that causal potencies can be accounted for within an alternative approach. The second strategy would be to undermine the arguments for a causal criterion and to motivate a wider criterion which includes the causal one as a special case. Since I find (CPC) and (CRC) too restrictive, but I also find that they reflect a natural and plausible intuition which can be honored by a wider criterion, I shall pursue the second strategy here.

3. Epistemological arguments for the Alexander Dictum

It is somewhat surprising that, in spite of the wide (explicit and implicit) support for the Alexander Dictum, and for a causally-based criterion for property reality, it is not easy to find explicit arguments for it. The most compelling of them are those grounded in epistemological reasons; I shall call them epistemological arguments. They share the following structure: once we deny (CPC) – or the weaker (CRC) – we face unac-

ceptable epistemological consequences, so we are well advised to adopt a causally-based criterion. The following is an epistemological argument in which Shoemaker defends (CPC) by extracting some corollaries from its negation and trying to show that these corollaries lead us to absurd results.³⁴ Shoemaker says:

If there can be properties that have no potential for contributing to the causal powers of the things that have them, then nothing could be good evidence that the overall resemblance between two things is greater than the overall resemblance between two other things.³⁵

Let's suppose that two objects A and B have the same (or similar) causal powers and two other objects C and D do not. Shoemaker claims that if we deny (CPC) "[i]t might be (for all we know) that C and D share vastly more properties of the causally impotent kind than do A and B." And surely this consequence is inadmissible.

But does this consequence strictly follow from denying (CPC)? That depends, I think, on the kind of causally inefficacious properties we are willing to countenance. Recall that if we accept an isolationist but naturalist view of the mind, mental properties are causally impotent properties which are dependent (supervenient) on causally potent (physical/natural) properties. Suppose that A and B (let's say two persons) share all (most) of their causally potent physical properties at time *t*. If so, they will have the same (similar) potential to cause other physical properties at subsequent times. Moreover, given the dependence (supervenience) thesis, A and B will have the same (similar) mental properties at *t* (the same "supervenient effects"). And further, A and B will have the same (similar) potential to contribute to other mental properties which will be dependent on A's and B's physical effects (the same potential to contribute to "indirect supervenient effects"). Thus, identity (or similarity) of causal powers is still good evidence for the overall resemblance between two things despite the fact that those things have causally inefficacious properties. Of course, these causally inefficacious properties are not randomly chosen putative properties, but properties depending on causally efficacious ones. But these are the properties we shall probably want to keep. At any rate, this seems enough to reject the generality of Shoemaker's first argument.

Does multiple realizability of mental properties generate a problem for this line of reply against Shoemaker? If A and B share *all* their physical proper-

ties and so their causal powers, there is no way in which C and D can share "vastly more properties of the causally impotent kind than do A and B" (insofar as we take causally impotent properties which depend on potent ones). If A and B share *most* of their causally efficacious properties but C and D don't, it seems conceivable that C and D may share more of the multiply realizable impotent properties than A and B do. It is not clear to me what import this case may have for our *evidence* of overall resemblance of the two pairs of things. But if we are persuaded that the same property cannot be realized in wildly heterogeneous physical bases,³⁶ it is unlikely that this case is troublesome.

A second and related argument offered by Shoemaker runs as follows. Suppose that there are causally inefficacious properties. Then,

[. . .] if the properties and causal potentialities of a thing can vary independently of one another, then it is impossible for us to know [. . .] that something has retained a property over time, or that something has undergone a change with respect to the properties that underlie its causal powers.³⁷

Again, the argument does not apply to all causally inefficacious properties. The reason is that the premise is not true with full generality. When we have causally inefficacious properties that do depend on causally efficacious ones, an object's properties and its causal potentialities cannot vary independently, for the causally inefficacious properties cannot differ if the causally efficacious ones do not differ. Thus, we don't have, for the case of epiphenomenal but supervenient properties, the unacceptable consequence that we cannot know whether an object has retained a property over time.

Regardless of how persuasive my replies to Shoemaker's particular arguments are, there might be a general way of opposing them. Both arguments assume that if causal powers cannot be good evidence for the presence of a property, nothing can be. This is the main presupposition of all epistemological arguments for causally-based criteria, not just of Shoemaker's. I want to examine this assumption in relation with an argument advanced by David Armstrong as a defense of his claim that "(i)f a particular has a property, that property must endow the particular with some specific causal power." He says:

[e]very property bestows some active and/or passive power upon the particulars which it is a property of. It must be conceded here that it seems possible to conceive of a property of a thing which bestows neither active nor passive power of any sort. But if there

are any such properties, then we can have absolutely no reason to suspect their existence. For it is only in so far as properties bestow powers that they can be detected by the sensory apparatus or other mental faculty.³⁸

This seems a *prima facie* strong epistemological argument for a causal account of properties, an argument which makes essential use of the notion of detectability.³⁹ Interestingly, the criterion that Armstrong is defending is not (CPC) but its more liberal cousin (CRC). What he requires for a property to be real is either for it to have the potential to cause other properties or the potential to be caused by other properties. This means that a property that *is caused* by other properties may be detectable regardless of whether it *causes* other properties. According to this view, non-isolated totally epiphenomenal properties would be candidates to be real properties.

Now, is Armstrong's argument a good reason to rule out isolated properties? I don't think so. If a property's being (causally) brought about may make it detectable, why couldn't a property's being generated by non-causal dependence relations make it detectable too? Suppose that Q is a property that is caused but is itself causally inert. Q will just "be there" without any possible effect. Suppose also that S is a property-candidate that is causally isolated but is supervenient or dependent upon a causally efficacious property. Why should we think that Q, but not S, can be detected by "the sensory apparatus or other mental faculty"? There are two possible reasons: Either for its "being there" or for our ability to follow the causal path which brings about Q. If we adopt the first answer, supervenient properties such as S have the same right as caused but causally impotent properties such as Q to "be there": the detectability argument cannot rule them out without begging the question. If we adopt the second answer, we lose the intuitive appeal of the argument. For the ability to follow a causal path is something that seems much more complex than – and epistemologically posterior to – the ability to detect the instantiation of a property. Moreover, it wouldn't be clear why a non-causal dependence "path" (the one generating S) is not as easy to detect as a causal path (the one generating Q) or, more to the point, as *possible* to detect as a causal path. Thus, there seems to be no justification to claim that Q is detectable while S is not. Therefore, detectability is not a good reason to prefer (CRC) over a dependence-based criterion which countenances (at least some) causally isolated properties.

Still, Armstrong's argument can be narrowed so as to defend (CPC). The key premise of this modified argument will say: a property can be detected only if it has (active) causal powers. This premise parallels Shoemaker's assumption that (active) causal powers are the only evidence for the existence of a property. Now, suppose that a property P is causally efficacious. Its merely "being there" doesn't differentiate it, regarding its detectability, from putative non-efficacious properties such as S (and for that matter, Q). Neither does P's being caused, since P shares this characteristic with Q and as we have just seen Q cannot be distinguished from S in this respect. P is detectable, and *a fortiori* recognizable as existent, because it causes other real properties, let's say P*. So we have to be sure that we can detect P* since it is P*'s being caused by P that enables us to detect P (recall that this is the only relevant difference between P and inefficacious properties regarding detectability). But we cannot detect P* unless we detect P*'s causal effects, let's say property P**. And so on. So if detectability requires causal effects, we have to go all the (causal) way in order to detect a single property! This, I think, is not something that a friend of the causal powers criterion wants to defend.

Note that I am not alleging a problem of ontological regress for (CPC).⁴⁰ I am just pointing out that the epistemological priority of the detectability of causal powers over our ability to recognize a real property is anything but obvious. Thus, Armstrong's epistemological argument, even modified as to defend (CPC), is far from establishing that causal powers are a necessary condition for a property to be real.

So far we have interpreted the arguments for (CPC) and (CRC) in a straightforward way (let's call it the "natural interpretation"), i.e., taking it that the ability to cause *other properties in general* is the requirement for property reality. There might be, however, another way of interpreting these arguments for the causal criteria – in particular for (CPC) – which deserve attention. What if the mere fact of my ability to *perceive* a property is seen as a requirement for that property's being real? We cannot find clues for such an interpretation in Armstrong's formulation (in fact, this interpretation would undermine Armstrong's liberality towards *passive* powers), but it can be thought that this is the interpretation behind Shoemaker's arguments. So let see how the argument would be under this "perception interpretation".

Perceiving something is, after all, being causally influenced by it. So the argument would be not that we have to detect a property through its causal effects on other properties, but rather that we can determine that a property is real only if we are able to perceive it. Probably most defenders of (CPC) wouldn't be happy with this argument since those properties whose only causal powers are their capabilities of being perceived would pass the test. First, it seems that what supporters of (CPC) have in mind is the ability of a property to be involved in different kinds of causal chains, not just in causal chains involving perception. Second, and perhaps more important, the "perception interpretation" of (CPC) goes against the spirit of the other family of criteria mentioned in section one, the independence criteria. This interpretation contradicts the mind-independence criterion (MIC): a property is real only if it can be instantiated even if there are no minds. Of course, (MIC) is too restrictive since it leaves out *mental* properties. But given the perception interpretation of (CPC) *every* property that is a candidate for being real depends on a mind perceiving it. This is something that many realists may not be ready to accept.

There is, moreover, a related problem for the perception interpretation.⁴¹ The present interpretation of the argument seems to depend on a principle like the following: "a property is real only if it can be perceived by a (human) perceiver". But this unqualified principle is surely unacceptable, even if we allow perception aided by instruments. For it seems to presuppose an impressive confidence in us as perceivers. Even the most recondite property, if it is to be real, must be accessible for us. This is something that many would question.

But setting aside these general obstacles, there is a specific problem for the perception interpretation that emerges in the context of our discussion of mental properties. Suppose we perceive a piece of paper's property of being square. Perceiving that such a piece of paper is square is, after all, a mental property, and as such it is suspected of being causally isolated: this is the result of the epiphenomenal arguments that generated our discussion. And according to (CPC) – or even to the weaker (CRC) – causally isolated properties cannot be real. So it is dangerous to appeal, in order to determine the reality of properties in general, to dubious causal powers that such properties might express by "causing" a type of putative property which is itself suspected of

being unable to engage in causal relations, and thus plausibly non-real. In other words, given the interpretation under consideration, we need real perceptual properties, which happen to be exactly some of the properties whose reality we want to evaluate.

The "perception interpretation" of the arguments involving the notion of detection faces, therefore, serious problems. But we have previously seen that the "natural interpretation" of those arguments can also be attacked. We may conclude, then, that what seem the most promising family of arguments for causally motivated criteria of property reality are not conclusive. Still, as I shall discuss in section 5, causation may well play an important role within a wider criterion. But let's discuss first other possible arguments for (CPC) and the Alexander Dictum.

4. Other arguments for the Alexander Dictum

Epistemological arguments for causal criteria directly or indirectly based on the notion of detectability are perhaps the only explicit arguments for (CPC). Nevertheless, it is possible to provide a different kind of argument for (CPC) based on admissible explanatory practices in science.⁴² Consider the following, already classical, "egomaniacal fantasy" entertained by Fodor:

I define "is an H-particle at t" so that it's satisfied by a particle at t iff my dime is heads-up at t. Correspondingly, I define "is a T-particle at t" so that it's satisfied by a particle at t iff my dime is tails-up at t. By facing my dime heads-up, I now bring it about that every particle in the universe is an H-particle . . . thus! And then, by reversing my dime, I change every particle in the universe into a T-particle . . . thus!⁴³

We will agree that "being an H-particle" and "being a T-particle" are not real or genuine properties. And we will also agree that these "properties" are unlikely to figure in scientific taxonomies and scientific explanations. The reason can be attributed to the fact that an object's being an H-particle (or a T-particle) is wholly irrelevant to its causal powers.⁴⁴

Along these lines we might be tempted to provide a general argument for distinguishing between real and non-real properties in terms of causal powers. It would run as follows:

- (i) a property is real only if it can figure in scientific explanations (alternatively, only if it is included in a respected scientific taxonomy).

- (ii) a property can figure in scientific explanations (scientific taxonomies) only if it has causal powers.

Therefore,

- (iii) a property is real only if it has causal powers.

In absence of a direct reason linking reality and causal powers (to prove this was the burden of the previous section) this argument proposes the intermediary role of scientific explanations and taxonomies to defend (CPC). Still, this indirect argument is not stronger than the previous ones.

Premise (i), at least as it is formulated, cannot be accepted. We don't want to say that the legion of macro properties that we would never find in scientific explanations are not real. "Being a bench", "having two doors" or "being a racquet" are properties that are unlikely to figure in scientific explanations. These properties are unlikely to be included in the taxonomic apparatus of any science. However, we are surely inclined to say that "being a bench" or "having two doors" are real properties of real objects. It seems reasonable to me to say that what counts as a taxonomically relevant property for scientific purposes does not necessarily coincide with what counts as a real property. It can be replied that a reformulation of the premise fixes this problem. For if we eliminate "scientific" from premise (i) we can avoid the counterexamples since properties like "being a bench" or "having two doors" are candidates to figure in everyday explanations (and everyday taxonomies). But this move would not satisfy many. On the one hand, if we eliminate "scientific" we lose the motivation the Fodorian argument carries. On the other hand, even the modified premise will still be unacceptable for many. For the idea that what is real *depends* on our everyday (plus scientific) explanations and taxonomies is something that a realist has to reject.⁴⁵

We don't have to grant premise (ii) either. Premise (ii) is grounded in two assumptions that are far from obvious. How can we justify that a property having causal powers is necessary for the property to figure in scientific explanations? This answer rapidly comes to mind: First, we need to assume that having causal powers is a necessary condition for figuring in causal explanations; second, we have to accept that causal explanations are the only explanations there are.⁴⁶ The first assumption discards the possibility that

causally inefficacious properties which are in some sense causally *relevant* figure in causal explanations. This is a possibility that has been suggested by some authors,⁴⁷ but I shall not insist on this. (In fact, it seems to me that non-*efficacious* properties might be, at most, *explanatory* relevant but never *causally* relevant.)⁴⁸

What I challenge is the second assumption: that there are no non-causal explanations. Fodor himself qualifies this second assumption. He says about every explanation being causal:

No need to dogmatize, however. There may be scientific enterprises that are not – or not primarily – interested in causal explanation; natural history, for instance. And in these sciences it is perhaps not identity and difference of causal powers that provide the criterion for taxonomic identity.⁴⁹

If some scientific enterprises allow non-causal explanations premise (ii) loses the generality that is needed to support a global causal powers criterion. This conclusion is what we could expect once we weigh the reasons that have been given for a wider, pluralistic conception of explanation in which causal explanations are just one (though central) species of explanation.⁵⁰ Moreover, as I argued elsewhere, non-causal explanations are as possible in psychology as in other special sciences. Thus, if this second assumption is unfounded, premise (ii) lacks support. Therefore, neither premise of the explanatory argument looks reliable enough to support (CPC).

Still the following question can be raised: if we reject this explanatory argument, how are we to rule out, then, unwanted "properties" such as "being an H-particle"? And how are we to make sense of the idea that scientific explanations and taxonomies exclude these "properties"? The criterion I shall explore in the next section seems to allow us to do that: It seems to exclude undesired property-candidates and to be compatible with explanatory practices in science.

Let us consider one more argument for (CPC), an evolution-based argument that rules out the reality of epiphenomenal and of causally isolated properties. This argument claims that evolution excludes the possibility of causally inefficacious properties. It may be reconstructed as follows:

- (iv) evolution does not allow for the existence of (characteristically biological/mental) properties without adaptive value.
- (v) causally inefficacious properties lack adaptive value.

Therefore,

- (vi) evolution rules out causally inefficacious (biological/mental) properties.

It is not clear to what extent this argument applies to the cases that are relevant for our purposes: mental properties which are supervenient or dependent upon causally efficacious physical or neural properties. For suppose that evolution only allows for (causally efficacious) properties with adaptive value. Then, neural properties are presumably adaptively valuable efficacious properties. But mental properties depend (supervene) on them. Each time we have such and such neural properties we necessarily have the corresponding mental properties. The properties in question accompany, as a matter of law, those that are adaptively valuable, so the argument doesn't seem strong enough against epiphenomenal properties that depend on adaptively valuable ones. The only sense in which we have a problem is if we question the adaptive value of the laws that relate mental properties with their neural correlates. But this is a very different problem and it seems that an adaptive requirement is not the kind of requisite that should be imposed to (diachronic or synchronic) natural laws.

But regardless of these previous considerations, there is an obvious way of attacking the argument. Premise (iv) seems an unacceptably strong assumption.⁵¹ As a general premise, it amounts to saying that there cannot be properties which play no role in evolution. As a general claim this is plainly false, for it would be strange to say that geological or microphysical properties play a role in the evolution of the objects that possess them. And this would be enough to discard the argument as a general reason for a causal criterion of property reality. However, the claim may be restricted to biological/mental properties. This wouldn't give support to (CPC) as a general criterion, but it could be claimed to be sufficient to rule out inefficacious mental properties. The claim that no feature of an organism that presents an adaptive deficiency or is adaptively useless can survive should confidently be rejected: surely organisms possess many features "bearing the stamp of inutility".

If none of the arguments for (CPC) or (CRC) is decisive, and in particular, if none of them leads us to prefer (CPC) or (CRC) over a more comprehensive, dependence-based criterion, we don't have to accept the argument from causal inefficacy to the non-reality of the mental, and in general, the leap from epiphe-

nomenalism to irrealism that the Alexander Dictum suggests.

5. How would a wider, dependence-based criterion look?

If I am right that we are not epistemologically compelled to accept causal powers as the only mark of real properties, and that none of the other arguments for the causal criteria are conclusive, we might be tempted to consider less restrictive criteria. In what follows I shall briefly explore this possibility. My aim is not to provide the only or the best criterion available, but rather to sketch how a plausible candidate may look. Such a candidate has to make room for the reality of epiphenomenal/isolated properties and so be consistent with a realist theory of the mental that accepts the causal inefficacy of mental properties. Moreover, it has to be able to discard intuitively "non-genuine" properties (such as the ones listed by Shoemaker). Finally, if possible, it has to keep some important intuitions that lie behind the causal criteria previously discussed. In this way it would explain the appeal that the Alexander Dictum has.

Recall that our worry is with epiphenomenal (in fact, causally isolated) properties that are supervenient or dependent upon natural (neural, physical) properties. An obvious starting point would be a dependence-based criterion like the following:

- (DC) A property is real only if it is involved in dependence relations.

This criterion is wider than the causal criteria. Properties engaged in causal relations will of course meet the criterion since causal relations are a kind of dependence relations. But causally isolated properties may also meet the criterion provided they are engaged in dependence relations. In particular, (DC) makes room for mental properties since, within the family of theories of the mental we have been considering, mental properties depend on physical properties. Obviously, however, (DC) is unacceptable since it does not rule out mere-Cambridge properties such as the ones exemplified by Shoemaker. It seems that (DC) can be met by almost any property-candidate.

Consider the "property" of being such that my dime weighs one ounce. Call this merely stipulative property W. (This is the kind of property that motivated the explanatory argument we discussed in the previous

section.) An electron in Venice, a gene in Buenos Aires and a rock in Austin have *W* – if my dime weighs in fact one ounce. But the property of being such that my dime weighs one ounce depends for its instantiation on the property of my dime of weighing one ounce. So after all *W* would be a real property since it depends on another property, in this case on a *bona fide* one. To answer this objection, (DC) should be qualified.

Many think that “where there is causality, there must be a law”, and so some kind of nomological necessity has to be involved in causation. There is also agreement that the kind of necessity involved in causation cannot be conceptual necessity. Perhaps there is no agreement whether mental/physical and macro/micro dependence or supervenience involve nomological necessity or a stronger metaphysical necessity. But there seems to be coincidence among many naturalists in that it cannot involve conceptual necessity either.⁵² On the other hand, “properties” such as *W* are dependent upon other properties *only* through the conceptual necessity that comes with stipulation.⁵³ The obvious way of limiting (DC) is:

(NDC) A property *P* is real only if it is involved in (at least some) non-conceptual dependence relations.

(NDC) allows us to discard the kinds of properties generated by Fodor’s “egomaniacal fantasies” without appealing to the stronger (CPC), and, in particular, without establishing a tight connection between scientific taxonomy and property reality. At this point, it may be useful to compare it with the other family of criteria traditionally conceived as a test for an entity’s reality: its attribution-independence. Recall that (AIC) affirms that a property is real only if it can be instantiated regardless of its being attributed by a subject. We can say that any relation stipulated or merely attributed by a person or group of persons establishes a conceptual relation between predicates. And a conceptual dependence relation between predicates is not enough to assure that those predicates in fact denote real properties. Thus, if we want attribution-independence we have to ask for at least some non-conceptual relation. This is exactly what (NDC) does, so it may be covering the independence claim expressed by (AIC) also. This suggests that (NDC) might be formulated using a biconditional instead of the conditional we have been using until now.

So (NDC) rules out merely stipulative “properties”.

But (NDC) may still be too broad. Given (NDC) we could generate tiers of mere-Cambridge properties that are dependent on other mere-Cambridge properties of the same object. All we need is to choose a mere-Cambridge property of an object (say the “property” of being such that my dime weighs one ounce) and postulate properties of the coin having non-conceptual dependence relations with our chosen mere-Cambridge property.⁵⁴ But surely we don’t want to allow as real the countless families of properties so construed.

What we surely need is to narrow the kind of properties that can be dependence *bases* for real properties. And here we meet again the right intuition about causality. Only causally efficacious properties can legitimate other properties through dependence relations. And this is perfectly consistent with what I take to be the motivation of causally inspired criteria. Comparing two objects, Shoemaker says:

Suppose [. . .] that all of their causal powers and potentialities, all of their dispositions to influence other things or be influenced by other things, were exactly the same. Then I suggest, they would share all of the properties in the narrow sense [. . .].⁵⁵

The properties we want to recognize as real are those properties that won’t change unless the properties which are causally efficacious change. This is the idea that motivates the mind-body supervenience claim and the idea that frames our criterion for property reality:

(CDC) A property *P* is real if and only if *P* is involved in non-conceptual dependence relations with causally efficacious properties.⁵⁶

Of course we have to be careful not to rule out the causally efficacious properties which are themselves the basis for all the other properties. We can assume safely that every property depends on itself. But perhaps we cannot assume safely that every property non-conceptually depends on itself. If so, we have to make the last adjustment by providing a more general criterion which countenances the basic, causally efficacious properties. This is the general causal-dependence criterion:

(GCDC) A property *P* is real if and only if (i) *P* is causally efficacious, or (ii) *P* is involved in non-conceptual dependence relations with causally efficacious properties.

Since dependence is a transitive relation, the causal-dependence criterion (CDCG) allows for properties “indirectly” depending on causally efficacious ones. We

can generate levels of real properties insofar as properties in each level directly or indirectly depend on the properties we are ready to consider causally efficacious. This causally oriented, but dependence-based criterion retains the virtues of the causal ones, incorporates the intuition of attribution-independence and can be fruitful for the mental causation debate if it turns out that epiphenomenalism and isolationism are more than unwanted and avoidable ghosts. In Alexander's terms, we would allow some kind of "noblesse", but only that which depends in the right way on its inferiors. Alexander wouldn't be happy with this; if I am right there may be existents that defy the Dictum by being without doing.⁵⁷

Notes

¹ Alexander (1920), vol. 2, p. 7.

² Op. cit., p. 8.

³ For anomalism as a source for epiphenomenalism see, for instance, Sosa (1984) and Heil and Mele (1993, part 1). For externalism as a problem for mental causation see, for instance, Kim (1982) and Stich (1983). For epiphenomenalism regarding consciousness see Jackson (1982) and Chalmers (1996). For the exclusion problem see Malcolm (1968) and Kim (1979), (1998). For the problem of the structurally-based feature of functional properties (hereinafter the problem of functional properties), see Jackson and Pettit (1990a) and Block (1990).

⁴ I have in mind mainly, but not only, a tendency to go back to type-type identity theories. Cf. Kim (1993c, 1998), Jackson (1995) (see also Crane (1995) for the conclusion that the best way a naturalist can deal with the exclusion problem is a type-type identity theory).

⁵ For instance Jackson and Pettit (1990a), Bieri (1992), Chalmers (1996), Kim (1984), perhaps Block (1990) and Segal and Sober (1991). Explicit adoption of the label "epiphenomenalism" to characterize one's own position might be a different thing, though. Kim currently sees his former "supervenient causation" model as outright epiphenomenalism (cf. his 1998 and Horgan (1997)), but didn't use the label in the 1980s. Even Chalmers, who considers that alternatives to epiphenomenalism are more counterintuitive than epiphenomenalism is, and who admits that his view "implies a weak form of epiphenomenalism and might end up leading to a stronger form" does not describe his view as epiphenomenalism (cf. his 1996, chapter 4).

⁶ It may well be that other (non-philosophical) technical uses of "epiphenomenon" follow closely that dictionary meaning. Olshavsky (1994), for instance, explicitly follows this dictionary meaning and claims that attention is what results from information being stored in short term memory or working memory.

⁷ I will frame the discussion about causal efficacy (both in general and regarding the mental) in terms of properties. This perhaps should not bother those who are closer to a Davidsonian view about causation and events. As Jackson and Pettit put it: "Surely not even the most robust defender of a concrete conception of events supposed

that featureless events might do some causing. Their events caused what they did because of how they were – that is to say, because of which properties they possessed" (1990b), p. 197. See also McLaughlin (1993) for a strong argument against the causal ability of featureless events.

⁸ I take that most traditional and contemporary references to epiphenomenalism are in fact references to global epiphenomenalism understood in this strict sense (see, for instance, Broad (1925), Huxley (1901), Alexander (1920), Kim (1995)). But in some recent discussion "epiphenomenalism" is understood in a loose sense (see Block (1990)). Since we are phrasing these versions of epiphenomenalism in terms of properties, all these claims belong to what McLaughlin (1989) calls "type-epiphenomenalism".

⁹ A caveat here: some formulations of the problems stress the inability of the mental to cause *behavior*. But these results are easy to generalize.

¹⁰ Elsewhere (cf. Sabatés (2001)) I try to show that the problem that Jackson and Pettit and Block present is just a particular version of the problem of exclusion.

¹¹ See note 7.

¹² In particular his (1993b).

¹³ I shall simplify the presentation by eliminating in many contexts expressions like "the instantiation of" and "has the potential to".

¹⁴ See Kim (1979) and (1989) for detailed reasons against overtermination and other options such as partial causation.

¹⁵ Strictly speaking, even if M were able to cause P* it wouldn't be *causally* responsible for M*, since the relation between P* and M* is non-causal.

¹⁶ See note 19 for more elaboration on this.

¹⁷ (1990a), pp. 110–111.

¹⁸ The generality of the problem has been explicitly accepted by some (cf. Jackson and Pettit (1990a), Conee (1995), and Kim (1998)). For others, it just means that there must be something wrong with the assumptions that generate it (cf. Burge (1993) and Baker (1993)).

¹⁹ We could appeal to authority and majority regarding this issue: With the exception of John Searle (1992), philosophers of mind defend (or assume) that a relation of supervenience or synchronic dependence such as the one between P' and M' is a non-causal relation. Some general defenses of this claim include Segal and Sober (1991), Jackson and Pettit (1990a) (they explicitly deny that a supervenience relation can be considered causal and this denial plays an important role in their formulation of the problem of functional properties), and Kim (1974), (1998). How causal and non-causal dependence relations differ is a difficult and neglected issue (but see Sosa (1980) and Sabatés (1999)).

²⁰ A similar point can be raised for the problem of functional properties.

²¹ This view would reject the reality of mental properties while keeping higher-order discourse (cf. Horgan (1993)).

²² Kim (1993d), pp. 285–286. Malcolm, in the first formulation of the exclusion problem, also warns us that mental irrealism is an unavoidable consequence. He says: "the total absence of behavioural effects would mean the *total absence of purposes and intentions*" and he adds: "A mechanist must hold, therefore, that the principles of action have no application to reality, in the sense that *no one has intentions or desires or beliefs*" (1968, p. 143, my italics).

²³ Another potentially devastating charge against epiphenomenalism is that without mental causation psychological explanations might

turn out to be irrelevant. This charge has been addressed, at least in part, in Bieri (1992), Jackson and Pettit (1990a) and Sabatés (1997). A defense of the explanatoriness of epiphenomenal properties in biology can be found in Sober (1985).

²⁴ This sense of realism is nicely illustrated by David Lewis in this way: “[Modal realism] is an existential claim, not unlike the claim I would be making if I said that there were Loch Ness monsters or red moles in the CIA, or counterexamples to Fermat’s conjecture, or seraphim. It is *not* a thesis about our semantic competence, or about the nature of truth or about bivalence, or about the limits of our knowledge. For me, the question is of the existence of objects – not the objectivity of a subject matter” (1986, p. viii).

²⁵ (1984), p. 227.

²⁶ Some would deny that a distinction can be drawn between genuine and gerrymandered (or mere-Cambridge) properties, affirming that there is no special status that the former have and the latter lacks. This view has been called the egalitarian position. I will be assuming that egalitarianism is false, and that the distinction can be drawn (cf. Hirsch (1993)).

²⁷ Cf., for instance, Sober (1982). He says: “Realism is a declaration of independence” and entertains criteria such as independence of human thought, linguistic conventions, our ability to discover the truth value of a proposition, etc.

²⁸ Mind-independence, as well as all the other criteria of this family, are expressed here as necessary conditions. This leaves open the possibility of supplementing them with other conditions (see below).

²⁹ Explicit defenders include, among others, Shoemaker (1980), (1979), Kim (1993b), and Fodor (1987); implicit defenders are legion.

³⁰ Shoemaker (1980), p. 207. The inclusion of all relational properties among the mere-Cambridge properties is controversial. More on this on section 5.

³¹ Shoemaker (1980), p. 208. Shoemaker has a more liberal view in his (1988).

³² Something like (CRC) is to be found in Armstrong (1979). “Having passive powers” in this context means “being caused”.

³³ In a different context, the view that causality requires a previous notion of real (or natural) property is defended by David Lewis (1983a). A formulation of this view, including a similarity analysis of “genuine property” can be found in Hirsch (1993). Another non-causal account of properties is developed in Chisholm (1989).

³⁴ While Shoemaker doesn’t explicitly support the Alexander Dictum as such, this argument and the next one are part of Shoemaker’s larger argument for an identity criterion for properties based on identity of causal powers (cf. his 1980). According to Shoemaker, the negation of such an identity criterion would imply the negation of what I have called (CPC) (p. 214), which in turn would imply the two unacceptable consequences I shall address (p. 215) (Shoemaker extracts a third consequence but, as far as I can see, it is directly implied by the negation of the identity criterion and doesn’t seem relevant for our purposes).

³⁵ (1980), p. 215.

³⁶ Cf. Kim (1998).

³⁷ Shoemaker (1980), p. 215.

³⁸ (1979), pp. 44–45. It is interesting that Armstrong concedes that causally isolated properties are conceivable before proceeding to offer the present epistemological argument – the only one he offers. This is close to conceding that there are no metaphysical arguments for (CRC).

³⁹ As Armstrong himself recognizes, however, there is a gap in this argument. It would need a premise like: a property-candidate that we have no reason to recognize as existent cannot be a real or genuine property. The plausibility of this premise, that I shall not challenge, probably depends on the difficult general question of whether (and to what extent) we can extract ontological conclusions from epistemological reasons.

⁴⁰ The objection of ontological regress would run as follows: “you require a property’s having causal powers for it to be real or genuine; but this is in turn conceived as the potential to cause real or genuine properties. And this is patently circular.” But see Shoemaker (1980) § VII for a reply to this objection.

⁴¹ I owe the following point to Ernest Sosa.

⁴² This argument is inspired by (but not, strictly speaking, reconstructed from) Fodor’s discussion on causal powers, explanatoriness, and scientific taxonomy in his (1987) and (1991). Fodor adopts something like the “Alexander Dictum” but he does not explicitly argue for a criterion for property reality.

⁴³ (1987), p. 33.

⁴⁴ Fodor says: [. . .] what you need in order to do science is a taxonomic apparatus that distinguishes between things insofar as they have *different* causal properties, and that groups things together insofar as they have the *same* causal properties. [. . .] whether something is an H-(T-) particle is irrelevant to its causal powers. To put it a little more tersely, if an event *e* is caused by H-particle *p*, then the same event *e* is also caused by *p* in the nearest nomologically possible world in which *p* is T rather than H” (1987, p. 34).

⁴⁵ In fact, this idea seems to go against the “independence-claim” that we may want to incorporate as a necessary condition for reality.

⁴⁶ Fodor seems to support these two assumptions (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 34), but see below for a qualification.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jackson and Pettit (1990a).

⁴⁸ Cf. my (2001)

⁴⁹ (1987), p. 157, n. 3.

⁵⁰ Cf., for instance, Cummins (1983), Ruben (1990), and Kim (1994). That explanatory pluralism can be easily accommodated within a general realism for explanations is argued in Ruben (1990) (This kind of pluralism *does not necessarily involve* the recognition of an autonomous category of reason-giving explanations).

⁵¹ I shall not challenge the other premise (v), which seems plausible to me.

⁵² A related way of making this point is to say that for a naturalistically oriented *realist* about the mind, the supervenience claim linking the mental and the physical has to be ontological supervenience and not merely adscriptive supervenience (cf. Klagge (1988) for the distinction between ontological and adscriptive supervenience). The issue of whether the modal force of a mental-physical supervenience claim has to be weaker than conceptual is, however, controversial (cf., for instance, Yablo (1992) and Kim (1998)).

⁵³ Of course, it is the “only” that is crucial here. For *bona fide* properties do also stand in conceptual dependence relations.

⁵⁴ Jaegwon Kim and Loretta Torrago independently raised this objection.

⁵⁵ (1979), p. 246. Here “properties in the narrow sense” should be understood as “genuine or real properties”.

⁵⁶ I am not addressing here the potential claim that a good criterion has to rule out relational properties too. Shoemaker seems to think this when he includes properties such as “being fifty miles from

a burning barn” in his list of gerrymandered properties. Most won’t have problems allowing those properties as real. But if we wanted to rule out those properties we would need a revised criterion since plausibly they are not merely stipulative properties and plausibly they non-conceptually depend on real properties of respectable objects. A candidate would look like this:

(ODC) A property P is real if and only if, if P is a property-candidate predicable of object x, P is involved in non-conceptual dependence relations with properties instantiated by x.

⁵⁷ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at University of Notre Dame, Kansas University, University of Austin at Texas and the Argentinean Society for Analytical Philosophy. Thanks to B. Glymour, T. Horgan, J. Kim, D. Perez, D. Sosa, E. Sosa, L. Torrago, and T. Warfield among others for helpful discussion and comments.

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