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## ABSTRACT

The mind–body problem extends beyond a purely metaphysical dispute between idealism and materialism. In contemporary contexts, debates concerning the origin of mind and life have become increasingly politicized, often serving as focal points of broader cultural conflicts. As a result, the philosophical question of whether intellect or matter is ontologically primary is frequently obscured by ideological commitments. This paper examines the mind–body problem from a Marxist perspective and argues that historical materialism, when treated as an exhaustive and universal explanatory framework, assumes a dogmatic rather than evidential status. This critique, however, does not diminish the analytical strength of Marxism in explaining socio-economic and historical processes. Rather, it seeks to clarify the limits of its applicability. In addition, the paper assesses the epistemic scope of Darwinian evolutionary theory, arguing that while it constitutes a robust scientific framework—particularly at the microevolutionary level—it remains limited with respect to questions concerning the origin of life and mind. These limitations justify the continued philosophical legitimacy of non-Darwinian and non-materialist paradigms as complementary or critical alternatives within specific domains of inquiry.

**Keywords:** Mind, Body, Descartes, Christianity, Evolution, Historical Materialism

## The Mind-Body Problem in Times of Ideological Radicalization

### An Eternal Struggle: Idealism vs. Materialism

Within Marxist traditions, historical materialism is often treated as a non-negotiable explanatory framework. Although it is possible to endorse socialist political commitments without adhering strictly to materialism, idealist positions are generally regarded as incompatible with Marxist theory and, within orthodox Marxism, as decisively refuted (Schmitz 2024a, 14–17). Yet, as Schmitz aptly observes, the very notion of orthodoxy warrants critical scrutiny: the term *ὀρθοδοξία*, derived from *ὀρθός* ("correct" or "righteous") and *δόξα* ("opinion" or "belief"), implicitly presupposes the existence of a "right" belief or faith—an assumption that is itself philosophically contestable (Schmitz 2024a, 17). This observation opens conceptual space for idealist positions to recognize and critique bourgeois injustice and social corruption without necessarily adopting a materialist ontology. It also raises a more fundamental question: can a doctrine or philosophy claim validity without a secure foundational justification?

First, the debate between Materialism and Idealism is as old as philosophy itself. While Materialists often criticize Idealists for focusing on an invisible metaphysics that lies beyond empirical verification, Idealists argue that Materialists reduce human beings to their bodies, their labor, their instincts, and their material needs—failing to account for the complexity of the human mind. This tension is vividly illustrated in the rivalry between Neodarwinism and Intelligent Design (ID). Neodarwinists attribute the origin of life to chance and material processes, while proponents of ID emphasize intelligence, order, and purpose, giving primacy to the mind.[1] Both perspectives can be misappropriated: the former by atheist fundamentalists seeking to eliminate spirituality, and the latter by religious fundamentalists aiming to transform

[1] Though Intelligent Design is rejected by a vast majority of scientists, there are scientists who try to demonstrate ID with scientific methodology: "William Dembski and other proponents of the intelligent design movement are attempting to demonstrate with scientific rigor that certain complex features of living cells and lower organisms cannot be adequately explained by evolutionary biology. Their work appeals to many scientists who are religiously inclined, especially within the context of a belief in a transcendent God. Many mainstream scientists, however, hold that although biological organisms may have the appearance of a design in their evolution and function, they can be fully explained in terms of current principles of physics, chemistry, and biology" (Behe, 2007, 95). Yet, branding Intelligent Design as pseudoscience instead of properly dealing with their theories or trying to degrade scientists with these views is not helpful, but rather the result of a politization and cultural wars in some societies. Philosophically spoken, both are just different paradigms of seeing the world (idealism vs. materialism), based on the evidence found by science. The question, which one is more likely does not play a role in this paper, but this is rather something which natural scientists have to answer and which is beyond my competence.

belief into fact. Yet the central philosophical question remains: is there purpose in life? If so, what is its source? Purpose, order, and systematization imply a guiding intelligence capable of shaping chaos. For Marxists, this poses a challenge. While Materialism effectively diagnoses socio-political problems and motivates action, it is not an unassailable foundational proof *(Letztbegründung)* and remains contestable. Marxist Materialism represents a radical stance at the opposite extreme from Historical Idealism, which, as Schmitz demonstrates with the example of Hinduism, can serve to institutionalize social hierarchies: "an Idealism passed along from generation to generation" (Schmitz 2024, 97).

Between these extremes lies a spectrum of ideas exploring the relationship between body and mind. Examining this relationship is crucial: the body is commonly associated with the physical, while the mind represents intellect. To explore alternatives to Materialist extremes, it is first necessary to consider the range of Materialist thought, identifying its contributions and its limits regarding the mind-body problem. These insights must then be contrasted with the most immediate Idealist counterparts. (This discussion will not extend to more elaborate forms of Idealism, as that would exceed the scope of this paper.) Next, attention must turn to the mind itself, addressing common misconceptions and limitations. Finally, the resulting analysis will be situated within a Marxist framework.

**Different Standpoints of Materialism**

Historically, two primary approaches have addressed the mind-body problem: monism and dualism. Monism emphasizes oneness, while "Dualism is the claim that there are two, essentially different kinds or types of objects or categories in the world" (Alison n.d., 1). Regarding body and mind, René Descartes exemplifies dualism: minds "are intangible, un-extended, and metaphysically prior to bodies," whereas bodies "are tangible physical objects in the external world, have extension, and in some sense are seen to be reliant on minds for their existence" (ibid.). Aside from the interaction between mind and body, every entity falls into one of these two categories (ibid.).

Monism, in contrast, has two main forms: Idealism and Materialism. Materialism, which "has enjoyed a massive surge in popularity" (Agius 2015, 98), includes several variants: (1) behaviorism, which regards the mind as the totality of behavioral dispositions, with logical behaviorism attempting to formalize these patterns (Agius 2015, 98–99); (2) identity theory, subdivided into type-type and token-token identity theories, which reduce the mind to the brain and, by extension, the body (Agius 2015, 100–101); and (3) functionalism, an enhanced form of token-token theory, which interprets the mind mechanistically as input-output patterns within the organism (Agius 2015, 101). These materialist theories prioritize matter over mind, making consciousness dependent on physical substrates. In contrast, Idealism asks whether mind can exist independently of matter, transcending bodily constraints.

Lyotard provides a critical perspective on this issue, stating: "Once we were considered able to converse with Nature. Matter asks no questions, expects no answers of us. It made us the way it made all bodies—by chance and according to its laws" (1988/89, 77). This perspective has profound implications, suggesting that technology is not uniquely human: "Any

material system is technological if it edits information useful to its survival […]" (ibid.). Human beings, in this sense, are not fundamentally different from other living beings in their absorption of data: "The body might be considered the hardware of the complex technical device that is human thought" (Lyotard 1988/89, 78).

This raises the question of the "software" of thought. For Lyotard, human language functions as this software, expressing thought; however, "this software, human language, is dependent on the condition of the hardware" (Lyotard 1988/89, 79). If humanity and the Earth were to disappear, thought could no longer be physically expressed, yet does thought itself vanish? Lyotard's reflections provide two key insights: first, "Perceptual 'recognition' never satisfies the logical demand for complete description" (1988/89, 82), and second, "Thinking and suffering overlap. […] The body and the mind have to be free of burdens for grace to touch us. That doesn't happen without suffering" (1988/89, 82–83). Thought, therefore, requires emptiness in order to exist authentically. This insight resonates with the Buddhist concept of *shunyata*, or emptiness, which is not mere absence but the condition through which meaning and perception arise. Lyotard suggests that thinking already engages symbolism—expressed through language and constrained by patterns and rules—but this is distinct from "eternal thinking": "This kind of thinking has little to do with combining symbols in accordance with a set of rules" (Lyotard 1988/89, 84).

I must admit that my understanding of Lyotard may be imperfect. As a reader, I can only interpret his symbols and arguments through my own mental framework, which may distort his intended meaning. We each process thought individually; even if the mind exists independently of the body, we cannot directly access another's consciousness. Misunderstanding is inevitable, particularly in complex subjects. In everyday life, such misunderstandings occur routinely, though we often remain unaware of them. Complexity and novelty demand caution and careful reflection, whereas routine situations encourage overconfidence.

But this is not the only problem. Another fundamental limitation is that humans are never complete: complete in the sense of embodying "everyone." Individual distinctions inevitably produce innate imperfections, which Francis Bacon termed "idols." Some of these idols are generic, inherent to all humans, while others are more individual, shaped by education or experience. Lyotard highlights one particular dimension of incompleteness in relation to gender: "It's an accepted proposition that sexual difference is a paradigm of an incompleteness of not just bodies, but minds too" (1988/89, 85). While it is unclear how Lyotard establishes this as a universally accepted proposition, the notion reflects a widespread cultural dualism. In Chinese philosophy, for instance, this dualism appears as yin and yang, representing complementary female and male energies. In Judaism, it is expressed through *zahur* and *shamur*, with *zahur* signifying male and remembrance, and *shamur* female and observation (Franklin 2016). Franklin provides an extensive overview of the religious context, though a detailed discussion exceeds the scope of this analysis. It suffices here to note that metaphysical interpretations of sexual difference recur across diverse civilizations.

In Chinese thought, yin and yang encompass not only female and male but also cosmic and elemental attributes, such as moon and sun or cold and warmth, reflecting an oppositional

dualism. Lyotard extends this insight to the unconscious, arguing that "Sexual difference isn't just related to a body as it feels its incompleteness, but to an unconscious body or to the unconscious as body. That is, as separated from thought—even analogical thought" (1988/89, 85). This resonates with the Biblical view, where completeness is found only in God. Genesis 1:27 asserts that God created human beings in His likeness, "male and female," implying that God embodies both aspects, not one alone. In contemporary discourse, some societies have recognized a third gender, but traditionally, gender has been understood in dualistic terms rather than a *μεταξύ*.

The Bible emphasizes complementary relationships and the importance of companionship rather than establishing patriarchy. Certain passages even challenge established gender norms, highlighting that men cannot live alone, that males are not inherently superior, and presenting women as heroes within societies traditionally regarded as male-dominated. In this sense, the biblical perspective can be seen as surprisingly progressive. Marxists, however, may question its authority, arguing that the Bible is not grounded in empirical evidence but in narrative. Idealists, in contrast, rightly insist that the Bible should be interpreted as *μῦθος*, as a meaningful narrative rather than a scientific account. Reliance on historical materialism without critical reflection risks turning Marx into a quasi-messianic figure: his vision becomes a secular "Biblical Kingdom," where righteousness prevails and his followers uncritically accept his authority.

Lyotard's analysis emphasizes the fundamental incompleteness of human understanding. Individuals are limited by their gender—or, in modern terms, by their gender identity—and no human can embody all perspectives. Moreover, the content of thought, language, and discourses further constrain the mind, expressing human suffering since the eternal mind cannot be fully captured by language. Perceptual recognition alone is insufficient for complete understanding. As Lindsay notes, "for Lyotard all discourse is rhetorical. Language cannot really represent the libidinal body because that body never was and will never be present as an object to be represented. The libidinal body is hypothesized and imagined only retrospectively from the 'live body' we inhabit and encounter in society" (1991, 35). This does not mean that Lyotard dismisses the body as an illusion; rather, it cannot be empirically apprehended in its entirety (ibid.). The theme of incompleteness is not merely modern: it is evident across ancient civilizations and continues to influence contemporary thought, including biblical traditions. Both the Bible and Marx's writings illustrate a critical point: they should not be read literally or divorced from historical and cultural contexts. Although they belong to different genres and serve different purposes, Lyotard's framework demonstrates why purely materialist accounts remain unsatisfying—they are restricted to the body and fail to capture the mind's broader, irreducible dimensions.

Furthermore, materialism exhibits a significant weakness that calls all of its variants—including Marxist materialism—into question. As Agius observes, "materialist accounts are brilliant at explaining how the 'the mind' [sic] works in a quantitative and objective sense. However, they cannot account for the qualitative and subjective aspect of the mind" (2015, 102). Materialism thus fails to account for *qualia*, which are essential for any holistic understanding of mental phenomena. Yet this difficulty is not confined to materialist

frameworks; traditional Idealism encounters related problems. Plato, for instance, draws a strict distinction between the world of perception and the world of knowledge: the former is associated with becoming, the latter with being. Being, in this framework, transcends sense perception, whereas the very notion of *qualia* presupposes perceptual experience. Consequently, a purely Platonic account struggles to accommodate subjective experience as it is lived.

At this point, it is necessary to step back from modern interpretations of ancient philosophy and turn instead to Descartes' method of radical doubt. René Descartes "begins by eliminating the reliability of all sense perception" (Alison n.d., 1), thereby aligning himself with Plato's skepticism regarding perception as a source of truth. True knowledge, on this view, must concern intelligibles—entities that remain invariant. Mathematics provides a paradigmatic example, since propositions such as 2 + 2 = 4 appear universally and necessarily true, independent of sensory input. However, Descartes extends his doubt even here, questioning whether such logical truths might themselves be the product of deception (cf. Alison n.d., 2). Nevertheless, he concludes that the very act of doubting presupposes a thinking subject: even if he is deceived, there must be something that thinks. Accordingly, "Descartes can only hold that he exists insofar as he is a thinking thing" (ibid.).

From this follows the conclusion that mind does not require attachment to a body in order to exist. While Descartes cannot be certain that his body exists, he can be certain that a thinking mind exists; thus, "his mind is not the same as his body" (ibid.). Such dualistic reasoning has played a significant role within the Abrahamic religious traditions, which commonly conceive the human being as composed of body and soul. As Agius clarifies, within a Cartesian framework, "the best way to understand the notion of the different essences would be to think of the mind as equivalent to the soul" (2015, 97). In contrast, materialist or physicalist approaches regard human beings as "strictly material or strictly physical substances" (Wong 2020, 2), whereas dualist positions maintain that the human person consists of an immaterial soul and a material body (Wong 2020, 2f.). Because the soul exists prior to and independently of the body, this position aligns with Idealism. Indeed, "if we believe in an immaterial, incorporeal God (e.g., John 4:24), then it just seems obvious that all of reality cannot be exclusively physical" (Wong 2020, 3). Nevertheless, Wong also acknowledges the possibility of theistic physicalism. The rationale is that even if human beings are strictly physical in composition, this does not necessarily exclude the existence of immaterial dimensions of reality (Wong 2020, 3). Within this framework, "someone is not made up of a body and soul, but rather exists in bodily and soulish manners" (Wong 2020, 6). In contrast to Idealist paradigms, body and soul are not assigned distinct ontological substances but are understood as different modes of existence.

It is also important to recognize that the Bible emerged from a Semitic cultural context. Although the New Testament was written in Greek, Greek functioned primarily as a universal lingua franca—analogous to the role of English or French today—rather than as an indicator of philosophical orientation. As James D. G. Dunn notes, "while Greek thought tended to regard the human being as made up of distinct parts, Hebrew thought saw the human being more as a whole person existing on different dimensions" (cited in Wong 2020, 6). Similarly, Daniel

Heinz distinguishes between two classical worldviews: the Greek-philosophical and the Hebrew-prophetical (2022, 5). The biblical texts are clearly situated within the latter tradition. However, as noted elsewhere, neither the Bible nor the patristic tradition developed in isolation from Greek philosophical influences. The philosophical and prophetic trajectories intersect rather than remain wholly independent. Even within Greek philosophy, divine intervention plays a role—for instance, the Delphic oracle that motivates Socrates' philosophical vocation, as described in Plato's *Apology* (cf. Schefer 1996).

Some scholars nevertheless claim "that dualism is a Greek import into, or corruption of, Christianity" (Wong 2020, 6). While it is accurate to describe dualism as an import—not only into Christianity but also into certain strands of Old Testament and Jewish thought—it should not be characterized as a corruption. Rather, it reflects a broader paradigm shift within a civilization. Just as the emergence of workers' movements transformed the self-understanding of the working classes by introducing class consciousness, the introduction of Hellenic thought reshaped earlier worldviews. Such transformations are not corruptions but historical developments. Cultural and philosophical exchange is a constant feature of history. Indeed, Persian and Egyptian ideas influenced early Greek thought; Homer's worldview differs markedly from that of Thales, and the Milesian school emerged within a multicultural Ionian context. Intercultural exchange, therefore, is not an anomaly but a constitutive element of intellectual history.

It is therefore plausible that in the earlier strata of the Old Testament, life was not conceived in terms of a strict body–soul dualism. Wong illustrates this by examining the Hebrew term *nefesh*, which is commonly translated as "soul" but "also refers to the throat (Ps 105:18; Jonah 2:5[6]), blood (Gen 9:4; possibly 35:18), and even corpses (e.g. Lev 19:28; Num 6:6), suggesting that the human person's essential being is inseparable from that one's physicality" (Wong 2020, 7). In Genesis 2:7, the human becomes a *nefesh ḥayyāh*, meaning a "living creature," prompting Wong to observe: "No mention of a soul here" (ibid.). At the same time, life is described as being breathed into the human's nostrils by God; prior to this divine act, Adam's body existed but lacked life and vitality. This indicates a distinction between corporeality and vivacity, even if not yet articulated in terms of a fully developed soul concept.

Across cultures, the soul is frequently imagined as a life-giving force rather than as a discrete metaphysical substance. This idea is not unique to Greek philosophy but appears in religious and philosophical traditions worldwide. In Chinese thought, for example, *qi* (气) denotes a vital force that animates all living beings; life, on this view, is characterized by the presence of force within matter, whereas matter alone is inert. Similarly, the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels observed among the Bantu peoples of the Congo that "force constitutes being," such that the degree of vitality corresponds to the amount of force a being possesses (Tempels 1959). These perspectives naturally incline toward Idealist interpretations, in which a primordial force gives form and vitality to reality. Unlike the biblical tradition, however, such frameworks do not necessarily posit a personal God as their foundation; instead, they may appeal to impersonal dynamics as the source of being. An example of this approach can be found in Leo Koguan's pantheistic synthesis of quantum physics, computer science, and Chinese philosophy (cf. Leo 2014; 2015).

Wong (2020, 9) extends the discussion by arguing that the doctrine of resurrection is more coherent if human beings are understood as primarily bodily. If resurrection entails the renewal of the body, its significance becomes clearer, whereas a soul conceived as eternally self-identical would seemingly have no need of resurrection, as it would simply return to its proper place. While many Christian traditions envision a continuous transition from life to death through the soul—such that existence is not interrupted—Adventist and Millennial streams tend to affirm not only bodily death but death as a total condition, with life being restored only at Christ's return. In this framework, death is often compared to a sleep-like state. This interpretation is frequently supported by Ecclesiastes 9:5, which states that the dead "know nothing." However, as Centeno (2011) demonstrates, this passage is often taken out of context; it does not claim that the dead cease to exist, but rather that they no longer participate in earthly life. Death, in this sense, signifies separation rather than annihilation or non-being (ibid.). From a philosophical perspective, physicalism maintains that it "has no need for elaborate theories of how the person relates to her body; she simply is her body" (Wong 2020, 13). This position seeks to avoid metaphysical dualism altogether, yet it raises further questions regarding vitality, consciousness, and personal identity that remain unresolved within a purely material framework.

Interestingly, Wong explicitly positions himself in opposition to naturalism and physicalism. Arguing from a biblical perspective, he suggests that dualists may "point out the common conflation between holism and monism as well as the overturning of the so-called Hellenization thesis" (Wong 2020, 15). While it is difficult to deny that Hellenistic concepts influenced biblical interpretation, it remains legitimate to question whether pre-Hellenic perspectives were fundamentally different in this regard. Notably, the idea that being is fundamentally spiritual originates not primarily in Greek thought but rather in Near Eastern, Persian, and Egyptian traditions. In Homeric literature, for example, the soul was still conceived in largely corporeal terms, whereas Orphic and Pythagorean traditions—likely imported into Greece—emphasized a more mystical anthropology (Hirschberger 1976, 14–17). Similarly, the pre-Socratic natural philosophers cannot be characterized as physicalists in any strict sense; Thales, for instance, famously maintained that the world is "full of spirits" (cf. Schmitz 2022). Against this background, Wong is justified in asserting that "dualism simply is not a corruption of Judeo-Christian anthropology" (2020, 15).

From a theological standpoint, Wong emphasizes the value of embodiment, stating, "My body is important to me even if I am not my body […]" (Wong 2020, 15). Accordingly, biblical references to the body should not be interpreted negatively within Christian theology, as creation is affirmed as fundamentally good; the body, therefore, cannot be reduced to sinful flesh alone. This affirmation of bodily value, however, does not preclude the existence of a soul distinct from the body. Philosophically, neither physicalism nor dualism has been conclusively demonstrated, and the natural sciences have so far failed to provide a fully satisfactory explanation for either position. This is evident, for example, in speculative proposals such as "the fascinating proposal that quantum entanglement implies that so-called spooky action at a distance requires an immaterial mind" (Wong 2020, 16). Consequently, Wong concludes, "Ultimately, I think Christian physicalism is wrong. But I do not think that it is obviously wrong. That is to say, Christian physicalism may be wrong, but it is not crazy" (2020, 17).

It follows that materialism itself encompasses a variety of forms, including Historical Materialism, Behaviorism, Empiricism, Type–Type Identity Theory, Token–Token Identity Theory, Functionalism, and Christian physicalism. Despite their internal differences, all of these approaches ultimately reduce reality to matter as their primary explanatory principle. As demonstrated through Lyotard's discourse, an empiricist approach remains insufficient insofar as it fails to account for full recognition and meaning. Conversely, Wong's proposal shows that by modifying ontological assumptions, it may be possible to overcome mind–body dualism by reconceiving the soul not as an independent entity. Such a framework could even offer an intriguing account of resurrection. Nevertheless, Wong himself remains unconvinced by this materialist solution, and, moreover, materialist or physicalist interpretations of resurrection appear to lack robust biblical grounding.The difficulty with Idealism, by contrast, is that although it transcends the limitations of empiricism, it necessarily entails metaphysical commitments and therefore cannot be conclusively demonstrated to a skeptic who accepts only what is empirically observable. For this reason, a more precise analysis of what the mind is—and how it is conceptually framed—is required in order to clarify the underlying dilemma.

**So, what about Mind?**

David Berlinski has addressed the question of the origin and nature of mind by identifying three dominant similes operative within evolutionary psychology (2004, 26). The first proposes that the human mind functions analogously to a computer; the second suggests that the individual human mind is comparable to organs such as the kidney, insofar as it is newly generated within each organism; the third maintains that a universal human mind—understood as the material expression of human nature—arose through random variation and natural selection, like other complex biological structures (ibid.). From the outset, it is evident that none of these approaches offers a direct account of what mind *is*; rather, they rely on analogical reasoning. Berlinski is therefore justified in characterizing these accounts as similes rather than explanations. The critical question is thus not whether these similes are evocative, but to what extent they illuminate the nature of mind and where their explanatory limits become apparent.

With regard to the first simile, Alan Turing's conceptualization of an abstract machine in 1936 aimed at modeling a smooth imitation of human cognition (Berlinski 2004, 28). Yet a Turing machine is fundamentally constrained in its operations, acquiring its imitative capacities only through externally supplied programs or algorithms (Berlinski 2004, 29). Contemporary developments in artificial intelligence have not altered this basic limitation. No convincing case has been made that AI systems possess understanding, awareness, or subjective experience. Computational performance, even at advanced levels, remains qualitatively distinct from human cognition. The term "artificial intelligence" is therefore misleading insofar as it attributes intelligence to systems that merely execute programmed operations. Unlike human minds, machines are not self-determining; they do not act for themselves or upon themselves in a reflexive manner.

In this respect, Morozov is correct in emphasizing that generative AI large language models, such as ChatGPT, "draw their strength from the work of real humans: artists, musicians, programmers and writers whose creative and professional output is now appropriated in the

name of saving civilisation. At best, this is 'non-artificial intelligence'" (2023).He further traces prevailing conceptions of machine intelligence to Cold War paradigms, in which pattern recognition was valorized for strategic purposes (ibid.). While AI systems excel at pattern matching, this capacity bears little resemblance to human intelligence understood as self-aware, interpretive, and normatively oriented cognition. Even when machines perform tasks resembling human activity, these performances remain algorithmic simulations rather than manifestations of genuine understanding or knowledge. Berlinski reinforces this point by invoking Albertus Magnus and Isaac Newton, arguing that "a machine is a material object, a thing, and as such, its capacity to do work is determined by the forces governing its behavior and by its initial conditions" (2004, 29). His critique of the first simile is therefore both philosophically and empirically compelling, especially in light of contemporary research highlighting the immense complexity of the human brain.

At this point, the argument may be extended further. If a machine can act only in accordance with what it has been instructed to do, and if the brain itself were merely a machine, then this would necessarily imply the existence of an intelligent source responsible for its design. Such reasoning would point toward a Creator and thus constitute an argument for the primacy of intellect over matter—provided that this Creator is not reducible to material substance. Consequently, the mind cannot be fully explained within a strictly physicalist.

Although artificial intelligence in general, and large language models (LLMs) in particular, are currently promoted as having the potential to approximate or even surpass human intelligence, the reality is considerably more limited. As Alang explains, "units of meaning, such as words, parts of words and characters, become tokens and are assigned numerical values. The models learn how tokens relate to other tokens and, over time, learn something like context: where a word might appear, in what order, and so on" (2024). This description indicates that such systems lack cognition in any substantive sense. Whereas human beings perceive information through sensory organs and at least believe themselves to have recognized something—remaining within Lyotard's conceptual framework—AI does not recognize anything at all. Its operations are purely algorithmic, and the patterns it "identifies" bear no meaningful resemblance to human recognition.

Similarly, what is often described as AI "knowledge" is entirely dependent on human input. For this reason, AI systems are particularly prone to bias, whereas human beings possess the capacity to reflect upon information and correct bias once it is recognized. More radically stated, AI merely orders and systematizes information provided by humans. Although it may establish connections between data more rapidly than humans, it does not recognize or think for itself, which constitutes a fundamental limitation. AI is not even aware of its own "discourses," despite functioning as a conversational "partner." This absence of discursive self-awareness entails a lack of human-like understanding and precludes the capacity to reason beyond its programming.

By contrast, the human mind exhibits a metaphysical dimension characterized by self-awareness and autonomy. Human beings are capable of refusing to perform actions on ethical grounds, whereas AI lacks an intrinsic moral compass. Even if moral understanding is assumed

to be culturally conditioned, a human being comprehends the meaning of a command such as "Thou shalt not kill" and is able to internalize it as a moral prohibition. AI, by contrast, can reproduce such a statement as output without any awareness of its meaning or conviction regarding moral right and wrong. Consequently, AI is neither epistemologically intelligent—since it lacks self-recognition and self-awareness—nor ontologically intelligent, as it does not generate action from itself but merely executes instructions. This absence of volition may explain why AI is sometimes characterized as a "people-pleaser."

From a Cartesian perspective, AI consists solely of material substance and is therefore incapable of mindful reasoning, functioning instead through mechanical processing; in this sense, it does not possess a mind. Alternatively, following Wong—despite his rejection of Christian physicalism—intelligence presupposes "soulish" capacities that enable ethical orientation and moral responsibility, capacities that AI lacks. Human beings can be touched by grace; AI cannot. AI has no concern for whether Jesus Christ is the savior, whereas human beings are capable of wholehearted religious commitment and conviction, including the belief that justification occurs through divine grace. If AI lacks any understanding of sin, it cannot experience a need for justification. Knowledge, therefore, cannot be reduced to data storage alone. As already suggested in biblical contexts, knowledge is understood as something holistic and intimate (cf. Vogel 2010).

This insight resonates with other philosophical and cultural traditions. If one follows Descartes in maintaining a strict distinction between mind and body, the spirit nevertheless expresses itself through the body. Similarly, in traditional Chinese thought, mind is located in the heart, reflected linguistically in the term *xin* (心), which denotes both heart and mind. In this worldview, reason is not detached from affectivity but expressed through it. These perspectives further undermine the simile that equates the human brain with a computer and, by extension, challenge materialist attempts to mechanize mind.

The second simile identified by Berlinski also fails to provide a satisfactory explanation. As he observes, "where biochemical and quantum chemical accounts of development are similarly clear and compelling, they extend no farther than a few large molecules. They defer what they cannot explain" (Berlinski 2004, 32). Other explanatory approaches, according to Berlinski, often presuppose what they aim to explain, leaving a remainder unaccounted for (ibid.). His examples are convincing, and the argument itself is sound. Biological and chemical processes are frequently described through metaphors, yet such metaphors do not genuinely explain underlying mechanisms; rather, they function as heuristic models for organizing observations.In examples such as those provided by Berlinski (2004, 32), expressions like "produce voluntary responses" implicitly attribute volition to biological patterns, while genes are said to "influence" or "create" as though they possessed agency. Such descriptions anthropomorphize biological processes and obscure unresolved explanatory gaps. While these accounts offer valuable insights into bodily mechanisms, they ultimately circumvent rather than resolve the fundamental questions at stake. It is conceivable that a comprehensive understanding of these complexities may one day allow us to explain the brain and, by extension, the mind. At present, however, we remain far from such an achievement.

When addressing the third argument, the discussion enters a particularly contested terrain. Scholarly perspectives on Darwinism are deeply divided, and opposing camps frequently attempt to discredit one another rather than engage in substantive debate. Many Neo-Darwinists go so far as to dismiss non-Darwinian theories as pseudoscientific without seriously examining their arguments. In this way, the strengths and weaknesses of Intelligent Design (ID) are often not assessed at all, as the position is rejected *a priori*. Such radical stances overlook the fact that proponents of Intelligent Design and Darwinism largely agree on at least one fundamental point: the empirical reality of microevolution. This agreement, however, is frequently obscured in public and academic discourse.

It is therefore instructive to recall that the term *evolution* itself has long been subject to semantic ambiguity. As early as 1975, Bowler analyzed the historical development of the concept, showing that it originally referred to the embryological development of an individual organism and only later acquired its broader meaning as a theory of the origin and transformation of life (Bowler 1975, 95). As Bowler notes, "Yet it is not generally realized that in both of these senses, the word meant different things to different people. It has been used to describe embryological development by workers who held fundamentally different views as to the nature of that process, and similar complications may be recognized in the later use of the term to describe transmutation" (ibid.). This historical analysis demonstrates that *evolution* has never had a single, unambiguous meaning, a problem that persists today.

Currently, three distinct meanings of evolution are commonly distinguished: (1) change over time, (2) common ancestry, and (3) natural selection acting through random mutation (West & Luskin 2018, 4). In the first sense, evolution denotes the observable fact that contemporary life forms differ from those that existed in the distant past. It may also refer to relatively minor changes within species occurring over short periods of time. As West and Luskin emphasize, even critics of Darwin's theory acknowledge that such changes occur (ibid.). This phenomenon is well documented at the microevolutionary level, and no serious scientist—whether working within a Darwinian or non-Darwinian framework—denies its existence. The second definition refers to the idea that all present-day organisms descend from a common ancestor. While this claim is debated, disagreements typically concern specific mechanisms or historical pathways rather than the general concept itself.

The primary point of contention lies in the third definition, which understands evolution as a wholly undirected process of natural selection and random mutation capable of explaining the origin and complexity of life. This perspective is commonly referred to as macroevolution, as it attempts to account for large-scale biological developments by extrapolating from microevolutionary processes. As Meyer explains, Neo-Darwinists argue that such extrapolation provides a "designer substitute" capable of explaining the appearance of design in biology without invoking intentionality (Meyer 2006). On this view, the emergence of complex life—including human beings capable of ethical reasoning, technological innovation, and cultural achievement—is ultimately the result of chance. This interpretation is strictly materialist and bottom-up, presupposing that increasingly complex forms of life arise without direction or purpose.

Intelligent Design represents the opposing position. As an idealist approach, it presumes that intellect precedes matter. According to the Discovery Institute, Intelligent Design "is a scientific theory that holds that the emergence of some features of the universe and living things is best explained by an intelligent cause rather than an undirected process such as natural selection" (Luskin 2015). Meyer further clarifies that ID does not challenge evolution understood as change over time or common ancestry, but rather disputes the claim that biological change is entirely blind and undirected (Meyer 2006). Even critics of ID acknowledge this distinction. Neill, for example, notes that unlike creationists, ID proponents accept many core conclusions of modern science, including the age of the universe, geological timescales, and the role of mutation and natural selection in shaping aspects of the natural world (Neill 2005).

The question then arises as to why ID proponents accept "many of the conclusions of science." One reason is that ID can be understood as a scientific paradigm whose researchers accept empirical evidence but offer alternative interpretations where Darwinism remains inconclusive—particularly with respect to macroevolution. If Intelligent Design rejected established scientific findings, it would not qualify as a scientific discipline. The tendency to dismiss ID as unscientific often stems from a methodological commitment to naturalism, according to which all phenomena must be explained exclusively through physical causes. From this perspective, any non-materialist explanation is disqualified by definition. As a result, some natural scientists assume that their discipline can provide a complete account of life and its origins by extrapolating observed data to broader, speculative frameworks.

This methodological absolutism parallels the stance of religious fundamentalism, which rejects scientific evidence when it conflicts with scriptural interpretation. In both cases, explanatory claims extend beyond what can be empirically demonstrated. Natural scientists are tasked with describing observed phenomena, yet at times they move beyond interpretation into speculative reconstruction of the entire cosmos by interpolating from micro-level evidence to macro-level conclusions. Such extrapolations, however, remain assumptions rather than established facts. As Kreiml, drawing on the work of Harald Schöndorf, observes, "the claim that natural science has proven that evolution as a whole is due to pure chance and has no purpose whatsoever is false. Darwin's theory of evolution cannot do without purposiveness" (2022; translation from German mine). Nonetheless, public discourse often reduces evolution to randomness alone, as though mutation constituted the entirety of evolutionary explanation. This reduction contributes to the widespread perception that evolution is synonymous with the third definition alone, leading to the dismissal of Intelligent Design on the mistaken assumption that its proponents reject evolution entirely. In summary, there is broad scientific consensus regarding evolutionary change over time. Observable modifications within populations across generations—such as viral mutation in response to treatments or adaptive changes in animals to shifting climates—are well established and uncontroversial. These processes are naturalistic and empirically verified. The fundamental point of divergence between paradigms concerns the origin of life itself. Put differently, the unresolved question is whether the world—and human existence within it—is ultimately the product of chance, or whether it presupposes an originating intellect.

Some churches, as well as certain researchers, attempt to address this tension by proposing that God exists *alongside* evolution. This position poses little difficulty with respect to microevolution, since one may argue that God is the ultimate source of life while biological systems sustain and transform themselves through adaptive processes. However, this approach becomes untenable when applied to macroevolution. A conception of God who initiates an evolutionary process governed entirely by randomness raises the question of what kind of deity this would be—arguably one that is nearly powerless. This leads to the central problem: which account is correct? Is there an originating intellect—whether conceived as God or as some impersonal force—or is there nothing intelligent at the beginning at all?

Some seek to avoid this conflict by insisting on a strict separation between science and religion, maintaining that one may believe in God in a religious context while simultaneously endorsing Darwinism, according to which all biological development is subject to natural selection and random mutation. Yet fully embracing Darwinism in this sense while affirming belief in God entails a deep conceptual tension. One cannot consistently believe in both a creator and non-creation, since the absence of creation negates the very notion of a creator. In such a case, God would be anything but a creator, insofar as He does not create. This contradiction often goes unnoticed in everyday discourse, where the incompatibility of the two paradigms is obscured. Idealism and materialism are mutually exclusive at the level of first principles: the former assigns primacy to intellect, while the latter assigns primacy to matter.

At the same time, neither paradigm has yet established itself as ultimate truth. Evolutionary theory—understood not in the colloquial sense of "theory" but as a scientifically grounded framework—is well supported at the lower levels. Anyone who denies the validity of microevolutionary processes by insisting on a literalist scriptural account is not arguing scientifically. Nevertheless, the question of origins remains unresolved, which is why idealist schools of thought have not been rendered obsolete and remain philosophically viable. Theism typically rests on an idealist foundation, although physicalist variants are conceivable, as Wong has shown. This raises the further question of whether God himself could be physically constituted: is God material, and did He become divine by chance? Such questions illustrate the conceptual challenges faced by physicalist theologies. There are also clear motivational interests on both sides of the debate. Religious institutions benefit from Intelligent Design, insofar as it supports the plausibility of theism; if no divine intellect existed at the beginning, the foundation of theistic religion would be undermined. Conversely, staunch atheists have an interest in discrediting Intelligent Design as "pseudoscience," often claiming that its proponents merely seek to scientize the biblical creation narrative in order to resist Darwinism. As a result, even limited empirical support for Darwinism is sometimes interpreted as a decisive confirmation of Darwinism as a whole. This tendency is reinforced by the ambiguous use of the term *evolution*, which often obscures whether microevolution or macroevolution is being discussed. For example, Gregory writes: "It has been noted many times that evolution is both a fact and a theory (Gould 1981; Moran 1993; Futuyma 1998; Lenski 2000). It can also be considered in terms of a historical path (Ruse 1997). The fact of evolution, that organisms alive today is related by descent from common ancestors, is fundamental to an understanding of biology. As Dobzhansky (1973) famously stated, 'nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution'" (2007). In this context, evolution is treated as a fact primarily in terms of

microevolution, a position no serious scientist dispute. To Gregory's credit, he immediately adds: "Nevertheless, a great deal remains to be determined regarding the mechanisms that have created (and destroyed) biological diversity since the emergence of life on Earth. Put in another way, modern evolutionary biology rests upon an extraordinarily solid foundation supported by multiple pillars of evidence, while its theoretical framework remains under construction" (ibid.). For readers unfamiliar with the multiple meanings of evolution, however, claims such as "evolution is a fact" may be misleading.

My interpretation of Gregory's argument is that microevolution rests on a solid empirical foundation and *could* lead to further confirmation at the macroevolutionary level. Yet this also implies that such extrapolations could turn out to be incorrect. I acknowledge the possibility that I may have misunderstood his position, since communication is mediated through language and interpretation always involves the risk of misreading. What remains indisputable is that no definitive resolution has yet been reached. This unresolved status is precisely why the mind–body problem remains unsettled. If a materialist origin were conclusively demonstrated, mind would necessarily depend on the body and be confined to individual organisms. Yet the issue is not so straightforward.

One might argue that only what is visible should be accepted as real; however, gravity provides a clear counterexample. Although gravity itself is invisible and lacks a concrete form, its effects are observable and undeniable. The same may apply to other non-visible forces. Analogously, the existence of God cannot be dismissed as inherently irrational, nor can Christian physicalism be categorically rejected. Idealist theories may ultimately prove incorrect, but there is no decisive evidence demonstrating that they are. Consequently, the insistence on materialism by orthodox Marxists functions as a dogma in much the same way as the belief in an immutable caste order functions within conservative Hindu traditions. Both claim necessity on the basis of historical interpretation, yet arrive at divergent conclusions. Interpreting evidence through different paradigms is therefore not only unavoidable but also philosophically legitimate.

In this context, Darwinism and Intelligent Design have increasingly become entangled in the broader radicalization of U.S. society, where a sustained cultural conflict between left-leaning and conservative positions shapes public and academic discourse. As early as 2005, Chris Mooney published *The Republican War on Science*, a work that may be read as a critique of conservative political forces and their alleged undermining of scientific inquiry. Conversely, David Horowitz's *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America* (2006) identified a significant number of allegedly "dangerous" academics who are predominantly associated with the political left. This dynamic reflects an ongoing pattern: conservative actors often perceive universities as dominated by leftist ideologies, while left-leaning groups tend to interpret conservative positions as threats to scientific autonomy and freedom. Without engaging here in a detailed evaluation of the merits or shortcomings of either publication, this simplified overview nonetheless illustrates the longevity and intensity of U.S. cultural conflicts surrounding science and ideology.

Both political camps operate largely within self-reinforcing interpretive frameworks. Since Intelligent Design tends to resonate more strongly with conservative audiences—particularly those with theistic commitments—while Darwinian macroevolution, often accompanied by implicit or explicit atheistic assumptions, is more appealing to left-leaning groups traditionally critical of institutional religion, the question of whether materialism or idealism holds explanatory priority has become highly instrumentalized. Each side frequently characterizes the other as being driven by ideological or religious motives. This polarization has not remained confined to the United States. In Europe, for example, the Council of Europe Assembly Resolution 1580 (2007) against creationism also classifies Intelligent Design as non-scientific. Such a determination constitutes a political judgment rather than a scientific one and may therefore be interpreted as an intervention that potentially restricts academic freedom.

As Wald aptly observes, "Anyone who is once exposed to the accusation of fundamentalism can hardly defend themselves in a media-driven world of communication. Despite the obvious differences from creationism, the Intelligent Design Movement (ID) is suspected of being just as anti-modern and anti-scientific. […] My thesis will be that the accusation of fundamentalism is being used to cover up explanatory weaknesses [of Neo-Darwinism] and to keep uncomfortable questions at a distance. ID theorists such as Michael Behe and William Demski use not biblically supported beliefs, but solely findings from the field of molecular biology to argue against the completeness claim of naturalistic explanations" (2016; translation from German mine). It can therefore be concluded that a potentially legitimate scientific paradigm is being contested at the political level, leading to increasingly entrenched positions. This development is troubling, as scientific inquiry depends on open, ideology-independent debate, grounded in mutual respect—even for perspectives deemed controversial or inconvenient. Where ideological commitments or political interventions dominate, academic freedom is inevitably placed at risk.

**Mapping Historical Materialism to Understand the Fundamental Problem**

Historical materialism constitutes the Marxist theory of history, according to which material conditions form the foundational precondition of social life, while phenomena such as culture, religion, and ideology emerge subsequently. On this view, the material conditions of existence fundamentally shape human consciousness. The explanatory strength of historical materialism lies in its capacity to account for historical conflict through economic relations. Marx demonstrated with considerable analytical precision how economic interests structure historical development, and how a wide range of social phenomena can be meaningfully interpreted through a materialist framework. His analysis elucidates the mechanisms of exploitation, the conditions under which it occurs, and the struggles undertaken to overcome it—often resulting, however, in the reemergence of new class formations and persistent forms of injustice.

Nevertheless, Marx does not provide a sufficient *Letztbegründung* for the origin of life or existence as such. From the premise of the primacy of matter, he inferred that all phenomena, including consciousness, must ultimately arise from material processes; mind is thus understood as emergent from matter, rather than matter being the product of mind. In this

respect, Darwinian evolutionary theory holds particular appeal for Marxist thought, as it appears to offer a complementary explanatory framework—albeit within a distinct domain. If life itself is the result of natural selection and random mutation, then consciousness may likewise be understood as an evolutionary product. Under a fully established Darwinian account, belief in a transcendent creator would appear irrational. However, evolutionary theory has not conclusively demonstrated its explanatory sufficiency at the macroevolutionary level, leaving open the possibility of alternative interpretations. This unresolved tension presents a challenge for Marxist theory. If historical materialism is rejected or relativized, its claim to explain history as a coherent totality is weakened. Yet this limitation points to an important distinction: while Marxism offers a powerful account of socio-economic development, it does not purport to explain the history of existence in its entirety. The scope of historical materialism is therefore necessarily restricted to human societies and their material conditions.

In summary, when historical materialism is treated as an all-encompassing and final explanation of reality, it risks overextension beyond its legitimate domain. If elevated to the status of an ultimate and eternal truth, it assumes a dogmatic character by claiming explanatory authority over questions for which no definitive empirical or philosophical evidence currently exists. Consequently, historical materialism must be applied with methodological caution and evaluated according to the specific level of analysis at which it is employed. Its validity and utility depend on the field of inquiry in which it functions as an explanatory framework.

**Results and Conclusion**

By engaging with Lyotard, I arrive at the conclusion—though I cannot determine with certainty whether this follows Lyotard's own position or results from a misinterpretation—that mind as such and mind as embodied are not identical. Mind in itself is not restricted to the human being but must be conceived as more comprehensive, since human beings are not absolute entities and therefore lack completeness. This becomes evident when one asks in which language a disembodied mind would think. Given that language is a conventional system of symbols, one may assume that such symbolic limitations do not apply to mind in itself. A mind independent of bodies would therefore have to be understood as absolute mind. The difficulty, however, is that this hypothesized pure and eternal mind remains inaccessible to us; there is no empirical evidence for the existence of such a primordial mind. By contrast, evolutionary biology tends to conceive of mind as singular and individuated, existing within each body for itself, with some accounts even likening its functioning to that of a computer. If absolute mind is reduced to such restrictions and bound to a body or any form of hardware, then mind itself risks becoming mindless—particularly in a Marxist context that regards Historical Materialism as an absolute truth, a view that has at times been enforced as such by historical regimes. This does not imply that Marxist explanations of history are incorrect; on the contrary, they are often highly convincing. Yet they cannot be extended to explain realities beyond human beings and their material conditions. As such, they do not provide an ultimate answer to the question of origins, and, as shown above, materialist explanations alone remain insufficient.

If mind is universal, it must transcend language; if it is not universal, then its mode of functioning must be clarified. What is evident is that mind does not function like a computer: it

is not merely a mechanical process of pattern matching. Mind is instead something irreducibly complex. From this perspective, artificial intelligence is not even remotely comparable to the human brain, as it lacks the capacity to analyze perceptual impulses in a reflexive manner. Its "thoughts" are not genuine thoughts, since AI is not aware of its own discourses. This lack of discursive self-awareness—particularly through language—demonstrates that AI is significantly weaker than human cognitive capacities. Human beings are aware of their discourses; they can analyze their content and make ethical decisions grounded in deeply inherited moral convictions. AI, by contrast, is programmed to fulfill human instructions and thus functions primarily as a people-pleaser. Moreover, AI lacks a soul and therefore possesses neither self-awareness nor a life force. As discussed through Wong, the concept of soul or mind may be physicalized within a Christian framework, yet this approach is no more fully satisfying than secular alternatives. Nonetheless, Christian physicalism remains a valid paradigm and cannot be dismissed as irrational. Similarly, Neodarwinism, as a materialist framework, has produced substantial evidence for microevolution, but its extrapolation to macroevolution remains problematic. To date, the fundamental question—the origin of life—remains unresolved. Consequently, whether one aligns with idealism or materialism ultimately rests on conviction rather than definitive proof. While I hold my own convictions, they are not relevant to the aims of an academic paper and are therefore bracketed here.

Class consciousness and an understanding of historical processes do not preclude an idealist position, nor do they render one a deficient socialist. Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and Buddhist forms of socialism, to name only a few, can collaborate with classical Marxism in efforts to transform society, as they share the diagnosis that the means of production are concentrated in the hands of a few who exploit the working class. Likewise, the historical shift from industrial capitalism to financial capitalism constitutes a common analytical concern. The primary divergence lies in the grounding of awareness—which presupposes mind—and thus in its source and legitimation within religious and non-religious frameworks. This divergence, in turn, shapes differing understandings of the origin and function of religion. Nevertheless, the identification of injustice remains shared. The remaining question for both perspectives concerns whether particular churches align themselves with imperial power or with the common people, and what concrete contributions they make to the lives of those people.

A central problem of contemporary political and intellectual life appears to be a growing radicalization, characterized by the tendency to delegitimize opposing positions rather than to engage with viewpoints fundamentally different from one's own. This dynamic fosters the ideologization of societies, disproportionately strengthening extreme positions and undermining pluralism. Such tendencies are observable across political systems, regardless of whether a state situates itself within the tradition of Western liberal democracy, socialist governance, or non-democratic structures. Even the concept of democratic centralism, as formulated by Lenin, contains a democratic dimension insofar as it permits extensive internal pluralism and open debate prior to decision-making, while requiring unity in action once a decision has been reached. A comparable principle operates within Western parliamentary systems: legislative proposals are subject to open deliberation, yet once a vote is concluded, its outcome is accepted as binding. However, when the range of views considered legitimate becomes excessively restricted, political discourse narrows and democratic processes stagnate.

As illustrated by debates surrounding materialism, philosophical positions often exist in multiple forms, encompassing diverse assumptions and conclusions. Avoiding intellectual stagnation therefore requires acknowledging the coexistence of multiple paradigms rather than rigidly adhering to a single framework. While evolutionary theory provides powerful explanations for many natural processes, it does not fully account for the origin of life or the existence of reality itself. In this context, idealist theories remain philosophically legitimate, and their dismissal as "pseudoscience" constitutes a threat to scientific pluralism—much as societal ideologization threatens democratic pluralism. In periods of heightened ideological polarization, science itself becomes vulnerable to instrumentalization by opposing forces, including both militant atheism and religious fundamentalism, each seeking to impose restrictive agendas that compromise scientific freedom. The long-standing philosophical debate over the primacy of matter or mind, spanning more than two millennia, has increasingly been appropriated by political agendas and cultural conflicts. In light of this development, Marxists and socialists, notwithstanding their internal differences, should seek solidarity in defense of intellectual openness, scientific pluralism, and a free society.

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