

Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge, and J.P. Moreland, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018. xiv + 511 pp. (hbk).

In *Philosophia Christi* 21 (2019), 221-225

If people think that substance dualism about the nature of human persons is not a serious view, then this volume evinces how wrong that thought is. Several textbooks in philosophy of mind have an opening chapter that briefly presents some version of substance dualism—some containing an unfortunate caricature—followed by a quick dismissal of it, often rehashing some of the tired objections which indicate that the author was putatively unaware of the substantive work being done by defenders of dualism. If someone wants to reject substance dualism, then they must engage with the kind of work presented in this companion. One of the great features of this book is the debate format for each topic discussed. For nearly every view or argument, there is a chapter that defends it and a chapter that criticizes it, thereby offering a fair appraisal of each issue.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first section presents different versions of substance dualism and includes discussion of two considerations sometimes raised in defense of substance dualism, viz. unity of consciousness and near-death experiences. The accounts of substance dualism presented are emergent dualism, Thomistic (or Thomistic-like) dualism, Cartesian dualism, and non-Cartesian dualism (and there is also a presentation of a another version of Aristotelian-Thomistic hylomorphism by Robert Koons in chapter 25, which may count as a version of substance dualism). Contrary to the kinds of textbooks mentioned at the outset, this section removes any false assumption that there is a single version of substance dualism or that each version of substance dualism is susceptible to the typical objections such as worries

over causal interaction, the violation of physical laws, the pairing problem, etc. Some objections do not apply to certain versions of substance dualism, and critics of substance dualism would do well to specify which version they have in mind. What becomes evident is that the different dualist camps have divergent views on the nature of the soul, its persistence, its relation to the body, etc. Even in this section, proponents of differing accounts of dualism criticize each other, and so an interesting intramural debate occurs.

The second section presents some of the alternatives to substance dualism, in particular animalism, constitutionalism, non-reductive physicalism, and emergent individualism (though O'Connor's commitments here seem to have shifted towards greater sympathy for substance dualism). However, it appears to this reviewer as a bit odd to have nonreductive physicalism as one of the alternatives, especially since the primary focus in the volume is over the nature of the mental subject rather than the nature of mental states. No doubt that acceptance of nonreductive physicalism would conflict with acceptance of substance dualism, but espousing nonreductive physicalism doesn't tell us about the nature of the mental subject in the same way that the other rival views do. Discussions would do well, in my opinion, if questions about (i) what we are, (ii) how we persist over time, and (iii) what mental states are, were conceptually distinguished. For example, some animalists adhere to biological continuity, but animalists need not do so (they could be anti-criterialists or proponents of hylomorphism). Some animalists might adhere to reductive or non-reductive physicalism, but they need not do so (they could accept an emergent or a hylomorphic approach to mental states). That said, the discussion over nonreductive physicalism raises several important issues, especially in Joshua Rasmussen's contribution in chapter

21, and it would have been a significant loss if it were left out. Of course the editors were likely pressed on space, but it would have been nice to include other alternatives such as an embodied mind view (since several dualists discuss views that identify human persons with brains) or a four-dimensionalist approach (which would appear to be a rival to substance dualism since most dualists claim the soul or self is not composed of parts, which should include temporal parts).

The final section considers how issues related to substance dualism are connected with considerations in philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, which is no surprise to find in this companion given the religious affiliation of the editors. The first topic is whether substance dualism or some more materialist-friendly monism fits better with the Bible. The final two topics address dualist or materialist models of the incarnation and resurrection, raising problems and assessing their plausibility. Some may think that these discussions of personhood are highfalutin and have nothing to do with the “real world” (a not so uncommon charge to philosophy in general), but this section demonstrates quite well how one’s view of the nature of human persons may impact the way that we do theology and understand Scripture, and hence it is worthwhile for some Christians to spend time reflecting on these important matters. Rather than thinking of this last section as a gratuitous add-on, the chapters here show the relevance of personal ontology, personal persistence, and philosophy of mind to theological inquiry.

Instead of giving the final word on the subject matter, this volume indicates what some of the future areas of research need to be. For example, while several dualists argue that materialism fails to account for the unity of consciousness, a common materialist retort in the book pointed out that merely positing a simple (i.e., non-composite)

substance also fails to support dualism since no dualist-friendly explanation is provided for the unity of consciousness (some materialists also aver that there is a lack of adequate explanation for other phenomena, such as embodiment or some of the deliverances of neuroscience). Now dualist and materialist approaches may not be exactly on par, especially for theists, since the substance dualist who accepts theism is able to provide actual examples of immaterial conscious subjects, e.g. God or angels (and what is actual is possible). However, citing possibility or actuality is not necessarily explanatory. And even if a full-blown explanation is not (or perhaps cannot be) forthcoming, at least further work into the unity of consciousness and its relation to a simple subject would make this particular case for dualism stronger (and some of this work is going on right now by dualist-friendly philosophers!).

Let me now offer two critical observations. First, just as many materialists were wrong to lump different dualist views together, I would caution dualists not to lump different materialist views together. Some objections to dualism only apply to certain versions (if they are successful at all), and similarly, some of the objections to materialism only apply to certain versions. And yet some of the contributors offer criticisms to materialism that appear to suggest that all materialist approaches are untenable, yet certain materialist options are ignored or unmentioned. For example, in chapter 31, Jonathan Loose suggests that materialists about the resurrection are people “most miserable” (quoting from 1 Corinthians 15) given the failed attempts of the patristic (resurrection-by-reassembly) view, the simulacrum view, the falling-elevator view, and a constitutionalist account of the resurrection. But that’s much too quick, for there are other approaches a materialist can take, such as appealing to location-based

theories, four-dimensionalism, or even hypertime (and attention to Hud Hudson's work would find discussion of these other models). Thankfully this companion is not the end of the discussion but can serve as an impetus for future inquiry; and in that spirit, it would be beneficial to have dualists examine and criticize some of these other models.

Another example is in chapter 26, where Angus Menuge offers a critique of Christian physicalism. But the physicalists he has in mind are those who embrace a form of reductionism or emergentism, but it seems open for someone to endorse a physicalist view of substances while endorsing neither of those positions regarding mental states (e.g., they could endorse the kind of hylomorphic theory of mind offered by William Jaworski). Moreover, he claims that bodies are "aggregates of separable parts" (p. 397), but not so for materialists who steer closer to Aristotelianism. And there is often a shift from talking about bodies to brains, but different materialists have different things to say about brains (and some materialists, such as Peter van Inwagen and Trenton Merricks, even claim that brains don't exist!).

Additionally, if we distinguish questions (i) – (iii), then careful attention needs to be made with the way certain positions are described. For example, in chapter 19, Stewart Goetz maintains that dualists affirm that we are animals accidentally, whereas animalists (such as Eric Olson) affirm that we are animals essentially (pp. 310-312); and Goetz suggests that such expressions are not misleading despite Olson's concerns (see fn. 2). But *pace* Goetz, this *is* a confusing way of stating the views because someone can be an animalist and reject substance dualism while claiming that we are animals accidentally. That is, we can answer (i) by saying that we are animals, but we might answer (ii) by claiming that we can survive as something that is not an animal (e.g. a

cerebrum). But such a view, which claims that we are animals accidentally, would clearly not be dualist. This is not to say that dualists cannot claim that we are animals accidentally; but more perspicuous language or more fine-grained distinctions are needed.

Just as there is no one version of substance dualism, there is no one version of materialism. Just as there is no one version of Thomistic dualism, a species of substance dualism, there is no one version of animalism, a species of materialism (and some people even consider Thomistic hylomorphism as a species of animalism). Greater attention to the actual positions may make it more difficult to quickly reject dualism or materialism, but perhaps this is for the better. While it would be much more convenient to dismiss a larger group, it may be intellectually disingenuous to do so. Some philosophers have been doing it to dualists for decades (perhaps even centuries!), and I would urge dualists not to take an eye for an eye against materialists.

The second observation is regards to what was omitted. Understandably, the editors had to be selective and could not feasibly include every issue pertaining to substance dualism (and the editors even note in response to Nancey Murphy's concern in ch. 20 that the original plan for this volume involved a complement focused on the relevance of neuroscience to these issues). That said, it would have made for a stronger companion if it included engagement or at least mention of some of the advances for dualism (and personal ontology and philosophy of mind more generally) made by philosophers such as Martine Nida-Rümelin, Susan Schneider, or Brie Gertler.

This volume contains rich discussion that not only canvasses many of the main positions and arguments in personal ontology, but it also sets the agenda for future

discussion of substance dualism, both for its proponents and its critics. As such, metaphysicians, philosophers of mind, and even philosophers of religion and philosophical/analytic theologians should have a copy of this book—or at least demand that their library carry a copy!