

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# Should a Christian Be a Mind–Body Dualist?

Few questions in the philosophy of religion have received as much recent attention as this one. Many Christians answer it in the affirmative, believing that some form of mind–body dualism has the weight of Christian tradition on its side and that it is the view that makes best sense of the doctrine of life after death. Yet an increasing number of Christians reject mind–body dualism in favor of some version of materialism, claiming that dualism is an illegitimate import from Greek philosophy and that its place in Christian thought should be reevaluated. They argue, moreover, that materialism yields most of the advantages that dualism was supposed to provide while avoiding many of dualism's problems. In these essays, Dean Zimmerman argues in favor of mind–body dualism, while Lynne Rudder Baker defends a version of materialism.

## Christians Should Affirm Mind–Body Dualism

*Dean W. Zimmerman*

### 1 Dualism and Christianity

Substance dualism is the doctrine that each human person is an immaterial substance, a soul – or at least, that each of us has a soul as a part of us. For nearly two millennia, dualism's defenders and opponents agreed that Christianity requires some form

of this view. But many biblical scholars, theologians, and Christian philosophers now argue that dualism is not central to Christianity, that it is in fact a “Greek import.”<sup>1</sup>

I believe that Catholics and most theologically conservative protestants have good reasons to resist this trend. Catholics have unequivocal pronouncements of ecumenical councils and the present-day teaching of the Magisterium: the soul is immediately created by God, it survives the dissolution of the body and enters into eternal life, awaiting reunion with its physical body.<sup>2</sup> And very many Christians of all sorts are committed to exegetical principles that *ought* to generate significant biblical support for dualism. Proving this is not a job for which I am at all qualified, so I leave it to others.<sup>3</sup> Here, I shall simply assume that the religious convictions of most Christians provide them with a reason to prefer dualism to materialism, other things being equal. (Many of the adherents of other religions are in a similar position.) Those whose faith is at least not *unreasonable*, not contrary to the evidence they have, may consequently have some genuine *prima facie* evidence, however slight, for judging dualism to be more probable than materialism. To such readers I offer a philosophical case for dualism. First, I articulate a version of “emergent dualism,” and show that it is untouched by traditional objections to dualism. Second, I argue that materialism is at least as hard to believe as dualism, so that those with religious reasons to believe dualism cannot be faulted for letting them tip the scales.

For the structure of the argument of the second part (and for the fact that I have the guts to defend it, and for much else besides), I am indebted to the work and example of the late Roderick Chisholm.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 A Defensible Dualism

### 2.1 Emergent dualism

The empirical facts strongly suggest that human minds are dependent, both for their existence and many of their characteristics, upon brains. Some dualists have denied this. Descartes thought that: (i) no mere brain could produce conscious states without interacting with a soul; (ii) brains are not themselves capable of generating souls nat-

1 Peter van Inwagen speaks for many when he alleges that “the anthropology of the Fathers is the result of an unfortunate marriage between Athens and Jerusalem” (“Dualism and Materialism: Athens and Jerusalem?,” *Faith and Philosophy*, 12 (1995), pp. 475–88). See also Warren Brown, Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Malony (eds), *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

2 See, e.g., the catechism of the Council of Trent, and Pope John Paul II’s Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Oct. 22, 1996.

3 John Cooper, for instance, makes a good case for the following claims: (1) The earliest Christians, including Christ himself, were substance dualists; (2) they (and not the Greeks, as so many claim) are responsible for the centrality of body–soul dualism within the Christian tradition; (3) their dualism is made explicit in the gospels and epistles; and (4) dualism in fact plays a crucial role in passages where *theological* points are being made *non-metaphorically*. See John Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989; reprinted with a new preface, 2000).

4 See, e.g., Roderick Chisholm, “Which Physical Thing Am I? An Excerpt from ‘Is There a Mind–Body Problem?’,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 41/2 (2002), pp. 291–309; and *idem*, *Person and Object* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1976), ch. 3.

urally; and (iii) God does not care to work the miracle necessary to bring a soul into interaction with the brain of a nonhuman animal. But surely, at least the higher mammals *are* conscious; so at least one of these theses is false. Do all sentient creatures have souls, then? If (i) is true, they must. But, by (ii), each animal soul is specially created by God. Rejecting (iii) is a relatively minor departure from fully-fledged Cartesianism.<sup>5</sup> But wouldn't this be a rather sloppy way to make a world?

If the events in the brain of a chimp were causally sufficient to confer conscious states upon its *brain*, the similar events in my brain should do the same for *it*.<sup>6</sup> Denying that they do, the dualist should reject (ii). William Hasker,<sup>7</sup> Richard Swinburne,<sup>8</sup> and other contemporary dualists accept this conclusion, advocating a view sometimes called "emergent dualism: Organisms having nervous systems complex enough to generate conscious states automatically *also* generate nonphysical subjects for those states. Though brains and souls share no parts in common, each soul remains radically dependent upon one brain for its continued existence and for many, if not all, of its powers and dispositions. Since Hasker and Swinburne believe in an afterlife, they affirm that God could (and does) miraculously prevent the dissolution of the soul that would (or at least might) naturally occur when the nervous system upon which it is dependent ceases to function.<sup>9</sup> Hasker (but not, to my knowledge, Swinburne) also supposes that each nonphysical subject is located somewhere within the nervous system that generates it.

Some will say that emergent dualism is not *real* dualism, reserving the name for Cartesianism. But why should the particularities of Descartes's version be *sine qua non*? Emergent dualism deserves the label in at least the following sense: Its persons, unlike plants and the bodies of animals, are not made of the same kinds of stuff as ordinary inanimate objects. And that is what is needed if souls are to provide a pleasing alternative metaphysics of persons, one that is not itself open to the criticisms I shall shortly level against materialism.

Emergent dualism fares well against the usual anti-dualist arguments. In each case the objection either: (a) presupposes that the only viable form of dualism is the most radical kind (i.e., Cartesianism); (b) raises a problem that even materialists face; or (c) presupposes things that are incompatible with Western theism and that a Christian can and must reject.

## 2.2 Problems with body-soul interaction

Dualism's critics often ask: How can bodies and souls interact if they are so different from one another? Well, how can things so different as particles and fields interact? And anyway, why think that only very similar things can affect one another?

5 This is John Foster's response to the trilemma; see his *The Immaterial Self* (London: Routledge, 1991), ch. 6.

6 I suppose one *could* say that the presence of a soul in our case acts as a sort of "consciousness magnet," pulling mentality away from its normal subject, the brain.

7 William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

8 Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), ch. 10.

9 Hasker, *Emergent Self*, ch. 8; and Swinburne, *Evolution of the Soul*, ch. 15.

There are, however, a couple of real problems about interaction.<sup>10</sup> The first turns upon the difference between the properties of the soul and the properties of matter. Since the conscious states of a nonphysical soul are supposed to be at once many, varied, and *fundamental*, how could they possibly enter into law-like relations with the kinds of states that figure in physics?<sup>11</sup> The laws governing fundamental physical properties such as mass, charge, and motion take the form of relatively simple mathematical relationships. It is unclear how the hoary host of conscious states, once construed as fundamental properties of souls, could enter into any such laws. The intrinsic states of souls would have to include phenomenal states, such as smelling an acrid odor or seeing a red after-image. It is not easy to see how the differences between phenomenal color, sound, smell, etc. could be represented as mathematically comparable, as would be required if laws linking the phenomenal and the physical were to be “in the style of contemporary physics.”<sup>12</sup>

But there are powerful arguments to show that the “qualia” of phenomenal states (the felt redishness of the red after-image, the sharpness of the acrid smell, etc.) are not reducible to any physical or functional state of a body. Those of us convinced by them should be singularly unimpressed by this objection to dualism. We already *knew* there was trouble coming for the assumption that physics could catalogue all the fundamental causal relationships without *someday* having to allow for massive complications due to phenomenal qualia.

In any case, no Western theist is likely to be impressed by the claim that mental states cannot be fundamental, that they must always be identical with or otherwise dependent upon the complex physical states of complex systems, such as brains or perhaps computers. However true it may be that “His thoughts are not our thoughts,” God’s thoughts are thoughts, nonetheless. And Christian theology speaks with unanimity on this point: God does not need a body, not even a complex piece of ectoplasmic machinery, in order to think.

The second objection based on interaction, unlike the previous one, is a problem that only substance dualists face: How does my soul come to be paired up with just my body, when there could be *very similar* souls and bodies?<sup>13</sup> Here is an analogy. Suppose you have two similar guns and two similar targets, but each gun can only hit one of the targets. How does each gun come to be paired with its target? The answer inevitably invokes spatial relations among guns and targets. Perhaps one target is closer to one gun, and there is nothing in between them, while the other target is

10 An interesting question which I shall not discuss is whether dualistic interactionism is a coherent hypothesis on the supposition that all causation is a matter of the spatiotemporally continuous transfer of energy, or the transmission of a conserved quantity. See W. D. Hart, *The Engines of the Soul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

11 Cf. Richard Taylor, *Metaphysics*, 4th edn (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall), ch. 3; and Robert Merrihew Adams, “Flavors, Colors, and God,” in his *The Virtue of Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 243–62.

12 Cf. Adams, “Flavors, Colors, and God,” pp. 251–8; Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); and *idem*, *Evolution of the Soul*, ch. 10. For a comprehensive case for the irreducibility of phenomenal qualia, see David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

13 Cf. Jaegwon Kim, “Lonely Souls: Causality and Substance Dualism,” in Kevin Corcoran (ed.), *Soul, Body, and Survival* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 30–43.

farther away, or behind a fence. But the Cartesian can invoke no spatial relations holding between my soul and my body, Cartesian souls not being in space. Are there other, *nonspatial* respects in which my soul could be “closer” to my body than to other bodies? The Cartesian’s souls are so cut off from one another and from the physical world that no answer seems available. But then it is as if there were identical guns paired with identical targets, each always hitting its own target *no matter how one points it!*

There are good reasons to think that the causal dispositions and powers of objects are, in a sense, *general* – that is, that they are propensities to react to certain *types* of objects, as opposed to *particular* objects.<sup>14</sup> If so, there couldn’t be such guns, nor could Cartesian souls discriminate among similar bodies. The emergent dualist grants that souls are in space, presumably within the heads that generate them. She thereby disarms this argument against the possibility of interaction.

### 2.3 The difficulty of knowing who’s who

We cannot keep track of souls by watching them closely, or grabbing hold of them. How do we know, then, that they are not constantly coming and going “behind the scenes,” passing memories one to another like runners passing the baton in a relay?<sup>15</sup> The question leads to another well-known argument against dualism: If persons were identical with souls, it would be reasonable to be skeptical about whether we are dealing with the same persons from one minute to the next.<sup>16</sup> Since this is *not* reasonable, a person is not a soul.<sup>17</sup>

The objector assumes that we *can* know that we are dealing with the same *human bodies* from one minute to the next. But a determined skeptic can call the assumption into question for similar reasons: How do we know that God, or quantum-mechanical whimsy, is not playing similar tricks on the physical plane? Perhaps my body is periodically annihilated, replaced by a duplicate so quickly as to fool even the most careful observer. The right response is, surely, that although it’s possible, it’s not something anyone should lose sleep over. But then why can’t the dualist say the same thing? So it’s possible for souls to be periodically replaced by others, with the replacement seamlessly carrying on the mental life of the original. Why must the dualist *prove* that seamless replacement isn’t happening in order to justify belief in sameness of soul, if it is not necessary to prove that seamless replacement isn’t happening in order to justify belief in sameness of body?

14 John Foster and Peter Unger are willing to countenance radically non-general laws linking particular souls and bodies: Foster, *Immaterial Self*, ch. 6; and Peter Unger, *All the Power in the World* (forthcoming).

15 Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trs. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1965), p. 342.

16 Cf., e.g., John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (LaSalle, Ill.: Hackett, 1978).

17 The argument leaves open the possibility that, although not identical with a soul, a person might yet be *constituted* by a soul, as Locke thought. Perhaps one soul constitutes me now, but another one will constitute me tomorrow. To accept this would require that we say, with Locke, that my soul and I are distinct, but that the soul thinks whenever I do. The paradoxical result that there are “two thinkers” thinking my thoughts is hard to escape given standard materialism, as shall appear. Dualists can, and should, avoid it.

Perhaps the Cartesian need say no more. But the emergent dualist is not quite off the hook. The future states of physical objects depend to a great degree upon their present states. What shape an animal has after it has eaten depends not just on how much it eats but also on its original shape. What color it turns when exposed to sunlight depends in part upon how intense the sunlight is, but also in part on what color its skin was to begin with. In general, the intrinsic characteristics of a persisting physical object narrowly constrain its subsequent intrinsic characteristics (shape, color, mass, etc.). For one thing, they typically change *gradually*. Changes in weight, hairiness, shape, etc. are, in the normal course of things, nearly continuous.

These considerations suggest that our most basic evidence (without which we'd have none) for the persistence over time of individuals is this: observed continuities of intrinsic characteristics, the later ones generally evolving out of the earlier ones only gradually. But the emergent dualist has a hard time finding *any* intrinsic states of souls that can only change gradually. Phenomenal states (experiences of color, sound, etc.) often change radically, even discontinuously; what I've just been experiencing does not narrowly constrain what I might experience next. Emergent dualists admit that the content of my phenomenal experience is more dependent upon earlier states of my sense organs and brain than upon earlier states of my soul. So they are open to the following argument. (i) If the observable characteristics of a kind of thing do not display such continuities, it is impossible to acquire the most basic sort of evidence one can have for the identity over time of such things. (ii) If one cannot acquire the most basic sort of evidence for their identity over time, then it is impossible to acquire *any* evidence about their identity over time. (iii) The souls of emergent dualism do not display such continuities. Conclusion: It is impossible to acquire any evidence about their persistence from one time to another.

Premise (i) is false even for physical objects if it is supposed to mean that, for *all* observable states, the kinds of changes observed must be gradual. A two-sided mirror is a physical object. Its most readily observable states (mirror images) can change in what look to be discontinuous ways, and these states don't depend directly upon previous states of the same sort – that is, earlier images don't *cause* the later images. There are causal dependencies between *other* earlier and later states of ordinary mirrors. But this is not essential to our ability to know about their persistence. Here's a fairy tale. Double-sided "magic mirrors" are detectable only by their impenetrability and powers of reflection. They come into being only within a square formed by four magic wands. When the wands are separated, they disappear, although it is rumored that a powerful, deft wizard once passed a mirror from one set of wands to another. One could acquire good evidence for the presence of a persisting mirror just by noticing that there's a disposition to reflect that is exemplified continuously in a certain region. Analogously, the emergent dualist observes that there is (what she takes to be) a disposition to "reflect," in the phenomenal realm, what's going on in the brain; and she also observes that the disposition is exemplified continuously in the one "place" she can most directly observe. Apparently, the thing with these phenomenal states is dependent upon the presence of a properly functioning brain; but she may be allowed to hope that, perhaps only by a miracle, it could be preserved after the demise of this particular brain.

## 2.4 Are the emergent dualist’s souls worth having?

What kind of afterlife could emergent souls look forward to? If they’re completely dependent upon functioning nervous systems, then none, barring the miraculous. But even if God sustains them, and even if he creates bodies upon which they may once again come to depend, wouldn’t they lack all memory of a past life? Perhaps, if they do not contain within themselves sufficient structure to ground the dispositions upon which memory is based. God could see to it that they *seem* to remember everything they did. Would that be *mere* seeming? Perhaps. But it could be *accurate* mere seeming, only failing as memory because it follows a devious causal route. And one might well wonder, why think that this route *is* devious?

Could such souls be justly rewarded or punished for characters they’d helped to create, even if the primary “carrier” of that character (the original brain) were long gone? I don’t see why not. Some of us would hold a murderer responsible for what he did, even if brain damage has made him a relatively harmless amnesiac. And we wouldn’t think that taking a pill that you knew would cause you to lose your memories and change your character would suffice to absolve you of guilt. Or is this just a hangover from Christian and dualistic ways of ascribing praise and blame? It’s how I think about these matters, at any rate. And if emergent dualism is true, and God restores my memory (or quasi-memory) and holds me responsible for things I did, I’ll appeal to his mercy rather than ask why he allowed me to remember them.

## 3 An Argument against Materialism

### 3.1 The varieties of “standard materialism”

Emergent dualism may not fall to any of the usual objections. But unless there are good reasons to doubt its materialist competitors, one should regard it as no more than a fanciful but unlikely empirical hypothesis.

Dualism and materialism are competing answers to the question that each of us may ask with the words: “What am I?” (spoken in a metaphysical tone of voice, with emphasis on the word “am”). The forms of materialism that can claim to be antecedently much more plausible than emergent dualism say that each human person is a material object that (i) includes among its parts *all* the bodily parts upon which the ability to think most immediately depends, and (ii) has more or less *natural* boundaries. Call any such view a version of “standard materialism.” Obvious candidates for being me that fit the bill are the complete organism I refer to as “my body,” the entire nervous system within it, the brain alone, the cerebrum alone, and perhaps even one or other single hemisphere of that cerebrum. My goal is to show that materialists must be *nonstandard* materialists or must hold some other views as doubtful as dualism.

### 3.2 Defending Chisholm’s “*entia successiva*” argument

Elsewhere, I have defended a variation of Chisholm’s argument against our being what he called *entia successiva*, “successive entities,” things that gain and lose parts over

time. All of standard materialism's candidates for being me are successive entities. New matter is constantly being assimilated by my body and my brain, and old matter being sloughed off, so that the matter of which each is constituted changes. Locke called a particular portion of the world's physical stuff a "mass of matter."<sup>18</sup> Right now, one mass of matter or heap of stuff "does duty for" the *ens successivum* that is my brain or body; and another will "do duty for it" later. These facts suggest an argument against standard materialism:

- 1 If I am a thing that gains or loses parts, such as a brain or a human body, then, each time I undergo a change of parts, there is another thing where I am, a mass of matter distinct from myself but having all the same intrinsic characteristics – e.g., size, shape, mass, and even mental states, like *feeling sad*.
- 2 But it is false that, where I am, there is something else with all the same intrinsic characteristics; there is only one thing here that feels sad, not two.

So I am neither a brain nor a human organism nor any other thing that changes parts.

If materialism is going to be significantly more plausible than dualism, then one of the premises of this argument must be false.<sup>19</sup> What would it cost the materialist to deny either premise? I begin with the second.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.3 Denying premise 2: problems with four-dimensionalism

There is really only one promising strategy for denying the second premise, and that presupposes "four-dimensionalism" – the thesis that things have "temporal parts."<sup>21</sup> The view can best be introduced by describing the way in which a spatially three-dimensional object is generally thought to fill the region it occupies: namely, by having a different part filling each of the many subregions in the region occupied by the whole. My body, for example, fills the man-shaped region it does by having a part filling the head-shaped part of the region, two others filling the arm-shaped subregions, two others filling the leg-shaped subregions, and so on. Four-dimensionalists claim that an object that lasts for a period of time is spread throughout that period in a similar fashion. For each instant, there is a distinct thing, a momentary "temporal part" of the object, something that exists then and only then; and for each longer

18 See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 330 (bk 2, ch. 27, §3); and my "Theories of Masses and Problems of Constitution," *Philosophical Review*, 104 (1995), pp. 53–110.

19 One could, of course, accept the conclusion and reject both materialism and dualism – but only by doubting one's own existence, something even most philosophers have found to be difficult.

20 I defend the claims of the next three sections in greater detail in the chapter on "Personal Identity," in Michael J. Loux and Dean W. Zimmerman (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

21 For a recent defense of this view, see Ted Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). (Warning: In the writings of certain contemporary philosophers, "four-dimensionalism" sometimes means something other than the doctrine of temporal parts, something about the nature of truth – namely, that all truths are eternal truths.)



interval of time, there is a distinct *extended* temporal part of the object that exists just during that period and is composed of all the instantaneous temporal parts falling within the interval.<sup>22</sup>

How does four-dimensionalism help with the denial of premise 2? In some sense, there must be just *one* pain or pleasure located where I am, just one instance of each conscious experience I have. But how could that be if the mass of matter and I are intrinsically identical? Four-dimensionalism provides the only halfway plausible answer to this question. Strictly speaking, the four-dimensionalist says, there is only one thing located *just* here and now: my present temporal part. I am in pain only in virtue of *its* being in pain. And the mass of matter now making me up is in pain in virtue of its *sharing* this selfsame part with me. If First Avenue and Seventh Street each develop a pothole, this may not add two potholes to the number the city must fill – for it might be the same pothole, at their intersection. Just so with my pain and that of my constituting matter.

Four-dimensionalism may have cut down on the number of sadnesses and pains going on where I am. But the cost for the reduction in the number of *local* subjects of experience is a lavish outlay in *persisting* subjects of experience. Every whole that shares a temporal part with me shares my pains and pleasures. Consider: The temporal parts from my first 37 years constitute a persisting thing that will cease to exist sooner than I; likewise for my temporal parts from this last year, or month, or day. In fact, there is a great host of beings here, each equally sad in virtue of sharing the one temporal part. Many strange consequences follow. It is hard to see how I could be sure which one of them *I* am. And it is odd that so many of the thinkers behave in seemingly irrational ways. When I make a small sacrifice now for a greater benefit to myself later, there are ever so many others who make the sacrifice with no hope of reward.<sup>23</sup> On top of these sorts of objections, there are more general problems with four-dimensionalism that have led many philosophers to reject the view.<sup>24</sup>

Four-dimensionalism is, I said, the only feasible way to deny premise 2. But which is harder to believe, four-dimensionalism or emergent dualism? Having survived the usual objections unscathed, the latter seems to me to be at least no *less* plausible than four-dimensionalism has turned out to be – though that might not be saying much.

### 3.4 Denying premise 1: coincidentalism and two-category theories

There are two radically different, initially plausible ways to deny the first premise. One might deny either that there are two things where I am, or that both are sad if one is. I begin with theories that take the latter approach.

22 Though nothing here turns on the issue, one can be a four-dimensionalist while denying the existence of literally instantaneous parts; see my “Persistence and Presentism,” *Philosophical Papers*, 25 (1996), pp. 115–26.

23 For objections along these lines see Eric Olson, *The Human Animal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 162–8.

24 See my “Temporal Parts and Supervenient Causation: The Incompatibility of Two Humean Doctrines,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 76/2 (June 1998), pp. 265–88.

The person who recognizes two things here, the one thinking, the other not, has a choice. She *may* say that each is a physical object composed of microphysical particles. Then I call her a “coincidentalists”: one who posits coincident physical objects made, at some level, of all the same parts arranged in the same way, but differing in their characteristics. But she may say instead that either the human being or the matter is not *really* a physical object in the full-blooded sense of the word – that it does not have particles as literal parts, but “contains” or ‘includes’ them in some other sense. Theories along these lines I will call “two-category theories,” since they imply that the coincident matter and person are really very different, belonging to radically different “ontological categories” – for example, one but not the other might be said to be really an event or process, or a mathematical function from times to physical objects, or a set of particles. Two-category views are adopted to help make the coincidence of matter and person easier to swallow; the two things have properties that go by the same names but are really quite different. I criticize coincidentalism first.

On the coincidentalists view, the matter and the person do not share all their intrinsic characteristics. But, at the microphysical level, the two are intrinsically just alike. One might point out that one is a (mere) mass of matter while the other is a person or an organism. But why does the one get to be the one, the other the other, when they are so similar in every observable respect? What I find most puzzling is how things so alike in their *construction* could differ so radically in their *powers* and *potentialities*. The matter constituting a living body can survive being squashed by a steamroller, while the body cannot. The body can survive the gradual replacement of all its present constitutive atoms, while the mass of matter itself surely cannot. What explains these differences in abilities? Nothing other than the fact that the one is an organism, the other a mere mass of matter; but this is a fact one could never discover by examining their construction.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, it is unclear how the one can be thinking and the other not, given their structural similarity. Certainly both the matter in my body and the organism itself are disposed, right now, to produce the same observable behavior in the same circumstances – to emit the same sounds when my skin is burned, for instance, and to cause the same motions of molecules. If the one is in pain while the other is not, it is hard to see how pain could in any sense be “realized in” microphysical states, since these are shared. The pain must be some further, nonphysical property of the organism, caused by microphysical events (located inside my head) that happen to both matter and organism. But these events somehow fail to cause pain in the physically indiscernible mass of matter, within which they also occur. Again, why don’t they, since the two are intrinsically exactly alike and are located at the same place? No wonder some have dubbed this view “The New Dualism.”<sup>26</sup> I find it at least as incredible as the old.

25 Cf. Michael B. Burke, “Copper Statues and Pieces of Copper: A Challenge to the Standard Account,” *Analysis*, 52 (1992), pp. 12–17.

26 See Michael B. Burke, “Persons and Bodies: How to Avoid the New Dualism,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 34 (1997), pp. 457–67.

Two-category views are meant to explain away the problems associated with distinct but coincident entities by treating the matter and the human being as very different kinds of things – so different that, for any property we should be loathe to attribute to *both* of them, only *one* of them could have it in the most fundamental way, the other one either lacking it altogether or possessing it only derivatively. The most popular theory along these lines is due to Peter van Inwagen.<sup>27</sup> His view implies that when we talk about the matter making up a living body, we're really talking about the particles that are now parts of the body. Although van Inwagen is officially agnostic about whether plural terms like “the particles” denote sets, the implications of his theory are more easily explained on the assumption that they do.<sup>28</sup> Van Inwagen says that “the matter constituting my body now” is a name for a collection of particles – the set containing all the ones in my body now. This collection existed before all its members were parts of my body, and it will continue to exist as most leave my body. Why distinguish between this collection and the matter now constituting my body? Why suppose that masses of matter are physical *objects*? Van Inwagen says that only one object now has these particles as parts: my body (which, according to him, is identical to me). The matter is (at best) just a set or collection with the particles as *members*.

The problem with this clever response to premise 1 is that it depends upon a contingent empirical assumption: that matter consists of partless particles, ultimate simple atoms. If there were persons whose bodies were superficially like ours, but made of infinitely divisible matter (of the sort postulated by Aristotle, Descartes, and, arguably, even Newton<sup>29</sup>), the matter constituting one of them at a moment could not be identified with any particular set of tiny bits of matter. Such a body could continue to be made of the same matter even if the *set* ceased to exist due to the breakup of some tiny bits, as long as the scattered parts remained within the body. On the assumption of infinite divisibility, no particular set of objects will serve as the matter; the matter must be an object in its own right.<sup>30</sup> So the body of a creature just like me but with “electrons” and “quarks” that turn out to be tiny extended solids (with parts inside of parts inside of . . .) will be constituted by a mass of matter that is a physical object in its own right. If I am identical to *this* body, he must be identical with a physical object of the same size. Van Inwagen agrees that there can be at most one physical object made of the matter in this creature. So the poor thing would be a briefly conscious, usually scattered mass of matter. I say that if he is, I am. And maybe I am. But one can be forgiven for hoping that this crazy version of materialism is false, and that emergent dualism, though possibly equally crazy, may be true instead.

27 Peter van Inwagen, *Material Beings* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

28 Those who find set theory unproblematic are not likely to have any complaints about this assumption, and it makes no difference to my criticisms.

29 Newton probably held that matter is infinitely divisible stuff that takes the form of extremely tiny extended spheres that cannot be divided by any *physical* force. This was Boscovich's interpretation, at any rate.

30 For detailed argument, see my “Theories of Masses and Problems of Constitution” and “Personal Identity.”

Other two-category theories lead much more quickly to bizarre conclusions. They are seldom discussed, and I can think of no *living* philosopher who holds one of them (at least not as a theory about how *persons* are constituted). I consider them in detail elsewhere.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.5 Denying premise 1: the case of the disappearing matter

The other way to deny premise 1 is to say that there is only *one* thing here, a human organism that feels sad, say. There is no such thing as a mass of matter distinct from myself but present in the same location, threatening to feel sad if I do.

But surely there is matter in the universe, in this room, in my body. At least there are “fundamental” (so far as we can tell now) particles (which may or may not persist “identically” through time). To be made of some of this world’s matter is, if these particles are ultimate, to be made of some batch of such particles; if they are not ultimate, but are in turn made of smaller, *truly* fundamental particles, then to be made of our kind of matter is to be made of a batch of these smaller things; and if what we *call* “fundamental particles” are made instead of some infinitely divisible stuff that comes prepackaged as tiny solids, then to be made of some earthly matter is to be made of some portion of *that* stuff. Consider, again, a living body like mine but made of such stuff. Since it is like mine, the matter that comes together to form it at a given moment was once scattered. As shown earlier, matter of this sort must be treated as a physical object in its own right, not a mere set or collection of particles. How could there be just one thing where the creature is? There would seem to be just two options: Either there are not two things here, because the living body *is* the mass of matter and was scattered a short time ago and will become scattered again (an option I said was no easier to believe than emergent dualism); or the once scattered matter that comes together to form the body literally *ceases to be* when, as we would normally say, “it” constitutes the body.

The second alternative was suggested by Chryssipus and is defended by Michael Burke.<sup>32</sup> According to Burke, there are such things as masses of matter – physical objects that can survive scattering and arbitrary rearrangement of parts, but not any changes in matter. But he denies that there is one *here*, where my body is. When one of these masses of matter is about to take on the shape of a human being, it suddenly ceases to be, replaced by an organism that *can* survive the gain and loss of stuff, but that *cannot* survive scattering or arbitrary rearrangement of parts.

Many objections can be raised against this sort of picture. Where did the matter go? The change it undergoes when it comes to constitute a human organism seems to be merely a rearrangement of its parts, something a mere portion of matter can easily survive; why should taking on a new shape destroy it? And is it not an undeniable truism that the matter now constituting me was once scattered? But if the matter *now* constituting my body is not the same as the matter that ceased to be

31 Zimmerman, “Personal Identity.”

32 See Michael Burke, “Dion and Theon: An Essentialist Solution to an Ancient Puzzle,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 91 (1994), pp. 129–39; and *idem*, “Preserving the Principle of One Object to a Place: A Novel Account of the Relations among Objects, Sorts, Sortals, and Persistence Conditions,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 54 (1994), pp. 591–624.

as it came to constitute me, what is it? Either there is really no such thing as the matter now constituting me; or else “the matter now constituting my body” is just another name for my body, this human organism that can survive the gain and loss of parts.<sup>33</sup> On either alternative, to make something out of some matter is really to cause the matter to be replaced by something that is *not* made of that matter. Neither alternative does justice to the obvious facts: that there is some matter constituting my body now, and that this very matter does not have a human form at every time it exists.<sup>34</sup>

Each premise of the *entia successiva* argument is, then, quite defensible. If either one is false, then one will have to say some hard things about persons or matter, or else make some rather unintuitive, a priori claims about the nature of the physical world. So I conclude that dualism – emergent dualism, at any rate – deserves to be taken seriously, given the alternatives. Those who, like most Christians, have independent reason to think that it is true, can hardly be blamed for believing it.<sup>35</sup>

## Christians Should Reject Mind–Body Dualism

*Lynne Rudder Baker*

Through the ages, Christians have almost automatically been mind–body dualists. The Bible portrays us as spiritual beings, and one obvious way to be a spiritual being is to be (or to have) an immaterial soul. Since it is also evident that we have bodies, Christians have naturally thought of themselves as composite beings, made of two substances – a material body and a nonmaterial soul. Despite the historical weight of this position, I do not think that it is required either by Scripture or by Christian doctrine as it has developed through the ages. So, I want to argue that there is a Christian alternative to mind–body dualism, and that the reasons in favor of the alternative outweigh those in favor of mind–body dualism.

The version of mind–body dualism that has attracted Christians is substance dualism. Substance dualism is the thesis that there are two kinds of finite substances:

33 This is, I believe, Burke's official view. See Michael Burke, “Coinciding Objects: Reply to Lowe and Denkel,” *Analysis*, 56 (1996); and my “Coincident Objects: Could a ‘Stuff Ontology’ Help?,” *Analysis*, 57 (1997), pp. 19–27.

34 Perhaps, due to the ephemerality of particles obeying quantum statistics, this matter exists only for an instant; but then, once again, it is not at all like the body it constitutes.

35 I thank Ted A. Warfield for his contribution to a joint presentation defending dualism (at the April 2000 Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers) that included elements of this essay; the present paper is better than it would have been in numerous ways due to my collaboration with Warfield. I am grateful to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship, and the Christian Scholars Program for support of my research on personal identity while this essay was being written.

Christian tradition is largely dualistic. I take tradition seriously and depart from it only when I think that the Christian community has made a mistake, and when I have an explanation for how Christians could have made that mistake. Although I think that mind–body dualism is consistent with Christian doctrine, I also think that mind–body dualism is a philosophical mistake. It is easy to see how Christians could have made this mistake if they assumed that the only way to distinguish us sufficiently from organisms is by postulating nonmaterial souls. But the constitution view shows that the dichotomy – either we are identical to animals or we have immaterial souls – is a false one. The constitution view offers a third way. Since the constitution view is also consistent with Christian doctrine, and since the constitution view fits better with what we know about the natural world, I think that, on balance, it is a better philosophical bet than mind–body dualism.<sup>61</sup>

## Reply to Baker

Lynne Rudder Baker’s materialism is a version of the view I criticized under the heading “coincidentalism.” She says that there are (at least) three material objects in the space my body occupies: an aggregate of matter, a human organism, and a person. Although each is made of the very same atoms, arranged in the very same way, they are quite different. The person can survive the death of the organism; the organism can survive a brain trauma that “kills” the person; only the lump of matter can survive being run over by a steamroller. Because of these differences, they have different careers. Apparently the powers and potentialities of a physical object are not determined by its physical structure alone – an odd conclusion. But there are further problems.

Zimmerman (the person), the organism that is his body, and the aggregate of matter that now constitutes it are very similar, at present. Being made of the same atoms, they had better have the same shape, weight, spatial location, etc. But what about the conscious mental states I enjoy? Are they shared, too? Are there three pains when I step on a tack, three things feeling sad whenever I am sad? If so, how do I know which one *I* am? These questions (driven home forcefully by Eric Olson<sup>62</sup>) generate the “too many minds” objection.

Here is my own way of pressing one part of this objection.<sup>63</sup> Consider a defective human organism, a feral child perhaps, that is conscious but incapable of ever acquiring a “first-person perspective.” Compare this creature with a full-fledged human person who, though minimally conscious, is heavily sedated and so temporarily unable to take on a first-person perspective. Suppose blood of their common type is needed; one or the other must be the donor and endure a jab in the arm. You know that, in their present conditions, neither one would remember the pain. According to Baker,

61 I am grateful to Katherine A. Sonderegger for reading a draft of this essay and discussing it with me.

62 See, e.g., Olson, *Human Animal*, ch. 5.

63 For a more thorough presentation, see my “Material People,” in Loux and Zimmerman (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, pp. 491–526.

if you stick the person, there are three things (person, organism, aggregate of matter) each feeling pain; stick the other, and only two (organism and aggregate) feel pain. So, in the absence of other moral considerations, you *must* jab the feral child, so that there will be one less creature in pain. But that's ridiculous.

Some coincidentalists say that, in each case, only one thing is really subject to pain, the others remaining completely insensate.<sup>64</sup> I criticize this response elsewhere.<sup>65</sup> Baker seems to have a different response. She allows that there are three subjects of pain in the one case and two in the other; but insists that, in both cases, *one* of the entities is in pain in a more direct or robust fashion than the others. Only one of the coincidents is in pain “nonderivatively.” The extra entities are only “derivatively” in pain. Feeling pain is a property they “borrow” from the thing that has it in the more robust way. In the case of the drugged person, there are two pain-borrowers; in the case of the feral child, only one. But borrowers of pain do not increase the amount of pain in the world.<sup>66</sup>

Another part of the “too many minds” objection is the allegation that, if coincidentalism were true, I could never be sure of such things as whether I have the persistence conditions of the person, the organism, or the aggregate. Baker's response again invokes the idea that some coincident entities merely borrow properties from others. First-person thoughts, such as one might express in English using “I,” refer nonderivatively to the person, and only derivatively to the animal or aggregate. No skepticism about who one is should arise, since each coincident entity asks the same question: “Do I have the persistence conditions of a person, organism, or aggregate?” with “I” referring (nonderivatively) to the person. If the three answer, “I have the persistence conditions of the person,” no one is wrong. Each coincident entity thereby thinks (derivatively or nonderivatively) that *the person* has these persistence conditions.<sup>67</sup>

If Baker's strategies are to work, derivative exemplification must be a matter of having a property only “by courtesy,” in virtue of standing in an especially close relationship (“constitution”) with something that *really* has the property. If it were more than this, extra coincident entities feeling pain derivatively *would* increase the number of creatures in pain; jabbing the feral child rather than the drugged person *would* be mandatory in virtue of its causing less suffering. Similarly, derivative reference must not be *real* reference. If derivative reference were a *species of reference*, the fact that a first-person thought derivatively refers to the animal and aggregate would be enough to generate first-person thoughts with the animal and aggregate as subject, thoughts with the content “I (i.e., *the animal*) have the persistence conditions of a person” and “I (i.e., *the aggregate*) have the persistence conditions of a person.” If these thoughts were *also* being thought, *even derivatively*, then two out of three things thought are false – the wrong persistence conditions are attributed to organism and aggregate.

64 This is the line taken by Sydney Shoemaker, “Realization, Micro-Realization, and Coincidence,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming.

65 Dean Zimmerman, “Shoemaker's Metaphysics of Properties, Mental Realization, and Constitution,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming; and *idem*, “Material People.”

66 See Baker, *Persons and Bodies*, p. 102.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 203–4.

When confronted with “too many minds,” Baker makes derivative having of properties sound very second-class: “the fact that *y* has such properties at *t* [derivatively] is not a different fact from the fact that *x* has them at *t* and *x* constitutes *y* at *t*.”<sup>68</sup> The animal constituting me thinks the same thought that I do “solely in virtue of constituting something that has the thought nonderivatively.”<sup>69</sup> But if such use of the derivative–nonderivative distinction lays to rest the “too many minds,” it turns her view into substance dualism. If nonderivative having of properties is *real*, and derivative having of properties is merely borrowing them in virtue of intimate ties to things that *really* have them, then persons are not really physical or biological beings. Aggregates of matter are nonderivatively heavy, made of particles, spatially-located, etc.; organisms nonderivatively digest food, grow, etc. Persons only have these properties or do these things “by courtesy.” They may truly be said to be heavy, or growing, “solely in virtue of” constitution relations to things that are heavy or growing; but only in something like the way a hermit crab may truly be said to be white or beautiful in virtue of its intimate relations to the white or beautiful shell it happens to have borrowed at the moment. A Cartesian dualist will typically allow that, although I am a nonphysical soul, in ordinary contexts I may truly be said to be heavy or growing in virtue of being united with a body that is heavy or growing. Wherein lies the difference between Baker and the dualist?

John Cooper argues, persuasively, that Christians should be committed to an “intermediate state” between death and resurrection. And Baker says that her materialism is not inconsistent with the doctrine. On her view, although I must be constituted by *some* kind of body, the utter annihilation of this physical body in a nuclear explosion, say, is consistent with my continuing to exist – albeit constituted by a body made of completely different stuff.

This reinforces my suspicion that her view is dualism-in-disguise. Organisms and aggregates of matter cannot, presumably, lose all of their physical parts at once; and there are limits on the ways in which the subsequent physical states of organisms and aggregates may evolve out of earlier ones. Baker’s persons are free of such constraints. They can, miraculously, jump from one body to another, losing the shape and size and so on of the one body, and instantaneously acquiring those of the other, whatever they might be. Not even a miracle could allow mere hunks of matter or organisms to perform such feats. I would say that, if the current size and shape and physical makeup of an object puts no necessary constraints upon the immediately subsequent size and shape and physical makeup of that object, then the object does not *really* have that size, shape, or makeup – however appropriate it is to ascribe them to it in ordinary contexts on the basis of relations to things that really have them. Persons that can pass instantaneously from organic matter to ectoplasm (or whatever intermediate-state bodies are made of) are “physical” in an attenuated sense at best, able to pass from one body to another like shadows or spirits.

To sum up: Baker uses the derivative–nonderivative distinction to respond to the “too many minds” objection and allows for the doctrine of an “intermediate state.”

68 Ibid., p. 58.

69 Ibid., p. 102.