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Persons: Human and Divine

Edited by Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman

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Persons: Human and Divine is an anthology of fifteen new papers, most of which were presented at a workshop held in Princeton, New Jersey, in 2004. The list of contributors is an all-star cast, featuring, among others, Robert Adams, John Hawthorne, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, and the editors. The book is divided into five (unequal) parts: the first three parts are the most closely linked, since they are all explorations of the ontology of the human person. The first part consists of two essays (by Adams and Howard Robinson) defending idealism, the second, and longest, part contains five essays defending or exploring dualism, and the third part two essays (by Inwagen and Hud Hudson) defending materialism. The fourth part contains two essays exploring wherein the *value* of the human person might be thought to lie. Finally, the fifth part contains four essays exploring how specific Christian doctrines affect our concepts of personhood.

In his introduction Dean Zimmerman asks three introductory questions: 'Is analytic philosophical theology an oxymoron?', 'Is substance dualism incoherent?', and, whimsically, 'What's in this book, anyway?'. His answer to the first two questions, readers will not be surprised to learn, is 'No', though he supports this answer with, in the first place, some discussion of the history and essence of analytic philosophy, and, secondly, with a detailed discussion of how to define 'dualism' and its varieties.

Section 1: Idealism

Robert Adams, 'Idealism Vindicated' Adams presents a case for 'a sort of idealism', a 'mentalism' according to which 'everything that is real in the last analysis is sufficiently spiritual in character to be aptly conceived on the model of our own minds, as experienced from the inside' (35). Adams's main case rests on two assertions. First, in contrast to scholastic Aristotelian views, modern science is correct in distinguishing primary from secondary properties, such that the latter are produced by, but do not resemble, the former. Thus, qualitative properties like 'colour, sounds, tastes, smells, heat and cold' (as Hume put it, 37) are merely subjective effects produced in our consciousness by objective quantitative properties like size and shape. Secondly, even these latter types of quantitative properties, if they are to constitute the intrinsic qualities of physical objects, are in the final analysis most plausibly construed as qualities of consciousness. Construing them as

unperceived grants them a status that is too 'formal', too thin to be the constitutive properties of substance.

Adams largely assumes the first assertion, about modern science, and focuses much of his argument on the second assertion, about the failure of mere geometrical properties to 'fill out' the nature of substance. He endorses Leibniz's criticism of the Cartesian conception of substance, that defining 'the essence of corporeal substance' in terms of 'extension' does nothing 'to explain the very nature of the substance that is spread out or repeated'. Surely, says Leibniz, 'the notion [of substance] is prior to that of its repetition', and so Descartes's account is unilluminating (40). Adams argues that since extension is a relation, we first need a conception of the relata. Therefore, extension alone cannot define substance. One plausible candidate for that which gets spatiotemporally related by the extension of substance is *colour*, and since this is characteristically regarded as a secondary quality (of consciousness), it follows that physical objects are intrinsically constituted by qualities of consciousness. The nature of substance requires positive content that can be supplied only by such qualities. Adams considers other candidates, such as 'mass', 'actions', and, broadly speaking, 'causal powers or dispositions' (43), but finds them unsatisfactory on account of their presupposing actual, occurrent, states or qualities that they do not themselves explain. We think Adams is right to press this point.

The chapter closes with an explanation of how idealism can be reconciled with a metaphysically 'real causal order' (48) in the world, the recognition of which has proven to be so fruitful in scientific endeavour. Surely reality is not just a figment of our minds! Here the invocation of God (whether by way of Berkeley's occasionalism or Leibniz's pre-established harmony) is not the only view canvassed, although Adams cleverly extends these theistic models by invoking an analogue to materialistic functionalism. In addition, Adams sketches out a 'panpsychism' in which spatiotemporal relations are *not* reducible to internal qualities of consciousness. Thus, in the end, Adams is content to advocate a 'mentalism' (see above) that falls somewhat short of a thoroughgoing idealism as traditionally understood.

Howard Robinson, 'The Self and Time' Robinson's piece, which is divided into eleven sections, is one of the longer essays in the book, rewarding the reader with a carefully crafted, original line of argument about the self's relationship to time. If, as Robinson holds, the self is essentially conscious, then, when we temporarily undergo states of unconsciousness (through sleep or injury), it follows that the self has intermittent existence, which is implausible. Robinson aims to overcome this problem for an immaterial and simple view of the self by questioning traditionally received views about the self's relation to time. He distinguishes the self from the person: the self is the metaphysical core of a person, whereas the person is what results when the self participates in the temporal order. He also distinguishes manifest image time (MIT) from scientific image time (SIT), such that the self participates in both but does not belong to either. MIT possesses secondary, sensible qualities that are experienced – including temporally – that are not present in SIT.

Wielding these distinctions, Robinson argues that the self 'has no intrinsic temporal structure,' and 'therefore, it has no temporal gaps within its conscious life' (77). On Robinson's view, we are not thoroughly atemporal (like God), because we do genuinely participate within a temporal order. But that participation is *discontinuous*. For the human agent 'may act *from within* a different temporal framework from that *on which* it acts' (56). Thus, if selves 'undergo periods of consciousness', this is to be understood not in terms of intermittent existence, but rather as 'intermittent participation in physical time' (57).

Some of Robinson's thought experiments are tricky, perhaps excessively so. For instance, he invokes the metaphor of the 'biological clock', and the notion of different biological clocks for different individuals, as a way of showing that we need not 'be obliged to acknowledge a unified metric of time' (59). But by definition such clocks are said to 'speed up and slow down over time,' and thus (it seems to us) the metaphor presupposes a unified metric of time. (A strict comparison of two biological clocks over time won't reveal which is speeding up and which is slowing down, unless we can compare both to an overarching, common clock.) Or again, Robinson constructs a thought experiment, the major premise of which – 'a creature whose conscious life is normally non-temporal' – he admits may be '*per impossible*' (62). Ordinarily, cases like these gain their persuasive power because they start from what is intuitively obvious, not from what strikes us as impossible. However, criticisms like these are few and far between; they do not cut very deeply into what is a rewarding and well-argued presentation on the relationship between the self and different kinds of time.

Section 2: Dualism

Alvin Plantinga, 'Materialism and Christian Belief' Plantinga's essay, which overlaps with his 'Against Materialism', *Faith and Philosophy*, 23/1 (2006), 3–32, presents two arguments for dualism, rebuts the arguments for materialism, and deals with the relevance of Christian theism to the epistemology of the situation. His first argument for dualism is the replacement argument, which argues that he cannot be identical with his body, any part thereof, or anything co-located with his body, since his body could be replaced bit by bit while he continued to exist; his second argument is a version of the intentionality argument: Plantinga argues that no physical thing, event, or structure, could have propositional content, and therefore, if materialism were true, there could be no beliefs. Plantinga is at pains to stress that he is arguing not merely that we cannot see how if materialism were true there could be beliefs, but that we can see that there could not be. Further, even if it is true that we cannot see how beliefs are possible given *dualism*, i.e. if we cannot provide an explanation of how consciousness works on the assumption that the mind is non-physical, it is certainly not true that we can see that there could not be beliefs given dualism. Plantinga then rebuts seven arguments for materialism: the objection that we don't know of what 'stuff' souls are made; that dualism is 'unscientific'; that dualism is 'explanatorily impotent'; that dualism violates the principle of conservation of energy; the interaction problem; Jaegwon Kim's

pairing problem; and the problem of localization and dependence. Plantinga's answer to the sixth problem is novel and interesting: the reason why events in my soul are paired with events in my body rather than somebody else's is that God concurs with the relationship between my soul and my body and doesn't concur with any relationship between my soul and any other body.

Richard Swinburne, 'From Mental/Physical Identity to Substance Dualism' Swinburne begins his argument for substance dualism by careful definition of metaphysical terms. But we were worried about his definition of 'a mental property' as 'one to whose instantiation the substance in whom it is instantiated necessarily has privileged access on all occasions of its instantiation' (143), and the explanatory comment 'someone has privileged access to whether a property P is instantiated in him in the sense that whatever ways others have of finding this out, it is logically possible that he can use, but he has a further way (of experiencing it) which it is not logically possible that others can use' (143). This has the consequence that properties such as *being a belief* or *being an idea* are not mental properties, since the things in which they are instantiated – beliefs and ideas – don't have any ways of finding anything out. Perhaps this is too pedantic given that the title of the book is *Persons: Human and Divine*, so let us add that the property *being thought about by another* is not, on this definition, a mental property; indeed, it is a physical property ('one to whose instantiation the substance necessarily has no privileged access on any occasion of its instantiation', 143). Swinburne confusingly defines 'mental event' as 'one to which the substance involved has privileged access' (144)—note the absence of the word 'necessarily'. Although Swinburne says that the event of my being in pain or weighing ten stone is a mental event, how can this be since I do not have a further way of finding out whether this event is occurring or not if I am not in pain? It would appear that the event is sometimes mental and sometimes physical.

Swinburne's argument for property dualism is, in essence, that mental properties and events cannot be identical to or supervene on physical ones because the canonical informative descriptions of physical properties or events do not entail those of mental ones. Swinburne's definition of 'mental substance' is 'one to whose existence that substance necessarily has privileged access' (144), i.e. one that has mental properties essentially. He then argues for the existence of mental substances on the grounds that their existence is necessary to do justice to the phenomenon that two experiences can be had by the same subject—a description of the world in purely physical terms would not entail this fact. Finally, Swinburne argues that we are pure mental substances since each of us picks himself or herself out by locutions such as 'I' that pick out a subject of experience and action that could exist independently of any physical thing. Swinburne embraces compound dualism (the view that a person is made up of two separate parts, body and soul), though he does not argue sufficiently for this over the view that one is one's soul, to our satisfaction. Indeed, the volume as a whole exhibits considerable variance from paper to paper on what precisely substance dualism is.

W. D. Hart and Takashi Yagisawa, 'Ghosts are Chilly' This is a 2-page whimsy on how energy might be transferred to and from disembodied spirits in accordance

with the laws of physics. It draws heavily on Hart's book *The Engines of the Soul*. Their solution for disembodied spirits is hardly plausible for God.

John Hawthorne, 'Cartesian Dualism' Hawthorne provides an axiomatic reconstruction of one of Descartes's arguments for the view that humans are composed of a purely mental part and a purely corporeal part.

Hong Yu Wong, 'Cartesian Psychophysics' Wong sets up the pairing problem, following John Foster, and then criticizes Foster's solution to it. Foster's solution is in terms of individual laws that hold for specific minds and bodies; Wong's criticism is that we intuitively think that causation is general in the sense that one event causes another in virtue of the *general* kind of the substances involved.

Section 3: Materialism

Peter van Inwagen, 'A Materialist Ontology of the Human Person' Inwagen's chapter is aptly named. It does not provide any sustained, direct, robustly defended argument for the thesis that humans are material objects. As the author puts it, 'It is not my intention on this occasion to re-hash the arguments for materialism I have already presented or to present new arguments for this conclusion' (206). Rather, Inwagen situates his materialism about persons within a 'metaphysical framework that underlies my discussion of philosophy of mind' (203), and then deploys that ontology in order 'to discuss various logical and metaphysical confusions into which a great many of my fellow materialists have fallen' (206). These include: 'that it is possible to be a materialist and to accept a psychological-continuity theory of personal identity' (206–7); that the mental is to be related to the physical by way of 'some form of the so-called token–token identity theory' (208); and that 'property dualism' is actually a form of dualism (215). Inwagen rejects all of these proposals.

On Inwagen's preferred ontology, humans are 'substances', though not in the style of Thomistic hylomorphism ('something that is the form of a substance' cannot also be a substance) or 'Cartesian unionism' (if I am the union of two substances, one immaterial and the other material, then the necessity of identity shows that I perish when my body perishes). However, in disposing of 'orthodox Cartesianism' (I am a soul that has a body), the argument is a bit thin. Inwagen is convinced that 'Whatever I am, I'm a lot more like a poached egg or a waterfall or a hydraulic jack than I am like a computer program' (203). (We are not so sure; is this really that obvious when we introspect in our own case?) And qualia (which allegedly have colour-properties, for instance) are challenged 'because I don't understand what these qualia are that they're supposed to be properties of' (211). ('Phenomenal aspects of consciousness' would be our answer.) Inwagen goes so far as to deny 'that the mind or consciousness of a person looking at the sky contains a sky-blue quale' (212). In the end, Inwagen's own positive view is that 'we are material substances', although he is only a 'local materialist' (all objects of a particular sort are material), not a 'global materialist' (every concrete thing is material).

Hud Hudson, 'I Am Not an Animal!' Hudson argues that materialists wishing to retain the Christian doctrine of the resurrection should cease identifying the human person with the human animal. To give his argument greater persuasive power, Hudson does not rest his case on the 'controversial mereological claims' (220) that he has defended elsewhere. Instead, he argues that distinguishing the human person from the human animal is the most plausible view to take, whether or not one is a nonmaterialist or a materialist, a four-dimensionalist or a three-dimensionalist (about objects and their parts), has a liberal theory of composition (i.e., is a 'universalist'), has a liberal theory of decomposition (i.e., holds to 'the doctrine of arbitrary undetached parts'), avoids commitment to human brains, or holds either of two plausible theories of the constitution relation (constitution is either 'a relation between two objects' or 'a relation between an object and some stuff').

In addition, Hudson sketches out several views of the resurrection that materialists can take: the replica view, the simulacra view, a constitution view, an anti-criterialism view, a 'jumping animals' view, and the four-dimensionalist universalist view. But, consistently with his main thesis, he argues that these views are either implausible or lead to the view that the human person is not the human animal. The individual sections of this chapter draw heavily upon a variety of positions defended with great technical sophistication in the recent mereological literature. The reader will have to go to these sources in order really to assess Hudson's case. However, Hudson displays great originality in how he has drawn upon these sources and structured his presentation, enhancing the uniqueness of his contribution to this anthology. Of particular interest are his articulation and defence of an 'elimination principle', which he applies throughout the chapter in order to 'find the human person among some plausible human person candidates' (218).

Section 4: Embodiment and the Value of Persons

Philip Quinn, 'On the Intrinsic Value of Human Persons' Quinn's essay attempts to answer 'the question of what makes human persons intrinsically valuable' (237). Quinn assumes that 'what is assaulted when persons are violated is whatever it is that makes persons intrinsically valuable' (243). Thus, if we reflect enough on clear, paradigm cases of violation of human persons, and consider what it is that makes these cases of violation, we will discover what makes human persons intrinsically valuable.

Human rationality seems to be 'the leading traditional candidate for the job', but for Quinn it 'is not the only factor that grounds the intrinsic value of human persons' (258). This is because '[t]here are violations that transgress against the intrinsic value of human persons that do not violate their rationality' (238). Quinn's main examples here are 'cases of sexual violation such as rape', since 'long-term damage to the [rape] victim's rationality' is not ordinarily a consequence of rape (246).

In addition, intrinsic-value-as-rationality should attribute rationality to *all* persons, and *equally* to all persons. But 'the capacity to set ends and the capacity to reason instrumentally are possessed by different human persons to different degrees' (244). In fact, some humans are not 'able *at all* to do something *for a reason*', for example, 'irreversibly comatose humans and severely defective human neonates' (245). And some non-human primates appear able to act for reasons (e.g., chimpanzees). In the end, reducing human value to rationality 'betrays an intellectualist bias' (245).

In the central section of his chapter, Quinn asserts that *the body* is an additional source of intrinsic value, but it is not always clear why he thinks this. In illustration after illustration, what is said to be violated in many cases of killing (such as suicide), maiming (such as genital mutilation), torture, and cannibalism – and thus what seems to be the real source of intrinsic value in human persons – is *the human will*. While engaging in sustained, critical dialogue with Robert Adams's *Finite and Infinite Goods* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), Quinn repeatedly asserts that many instances of these violative acts involving the body are not 'violative of personhood *independently of questions of voluntary consent*' (249, emphasis ours; he makes this point on pp. 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, and 257).

Lynne Rudder Baker, 'Persons and the Natural Order' In 'Persons and the Natural Order,' Lynne Rudder Baker defends a 'Constitution View' of human persons according to which 'human persons are wholly constituted by human bodies (= human animals), just as marble statues are wholly constituted by pieces of marble' (266). This is contrasted with Animalism, according to which 'we are essentially animals and only accidentally persons' (264), and substance dualism, according to which persons 'have two parts linked together, body and soul' (265, citing Swinburne). Baker argues that the Constitution View best satisfies two *desiderata* for a view of human persons. First, it can hold that 'human persons are wholly part of the natural world, produced and governed by natural processes' (269). (The Substance Dualist view fails this test.) Second, it can hold that 'human persons are ontologically unique' (269). (The Animalist view fails this test.) For Baker, then, 'human persons are wholly natural, yet ontologically distinctive' (263), although their uniqueness resides in their first-person perspective, not in the fact that they have immaterial souls or libertarian free will.

Baker explains her first *desideratum*, that 'human persons are wholly part of the natural world,' as an endorsement of 'a kind of quasi-naturalism,' which 'implies only that scientific explanations are genuine explanations, and that most, perhaps all, events have scientific explanations' (270). It is unclear why Baker makes this a condition on a successful theory of persons. After all, she goes on to argue that 'the Constitution View is compatible with a robust theism' (275), and yet quasi-naturalism is not a condition on theism (God is not wholly part of the natural world, and he figures in explanations that are not, ultimately, scientific explanations). In addition, is it really the case that Substance Dualism conflicts with quasi-naturalism (as opposed to, say, naturalism)? Finally, if the Constitution View holds that 'ordinary human persons are essentially embodied' (277), then Baker's later discussion of its compatibility with the orthodox Christian doctrine

of the resurrection of the body should at least have something to say about the intermediate state, which is *prima facie* a difficulty for materialist views of persons.

Section 5: Personhood in Christian Doctrine

Trenton Merricks, 'Dualism, Physicalism, and the Incarnation' Merricks sets out to determine the relationship between the incarnate Son of God and his body on the assumption that this relationship is the same as our relationships with our bodies. (This assumption was rejected, as Merricks notes, by Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham.) Merricks thinks that dualism, which, he suggests, puts the relationship between soul and body as a matter of the former's directly controlling and having epistemic access to the latter, fails to account for the Incarnation, since each of the divine persons directly controls and has epistemic access to every physical object, yet only the Son is embodied, and he in only one body. Merricks thinks that only physicalism does justice to the Incarnation, replying to the objection that a non-physical object like the Son could not possibly become a physical object like a human body, that this is 'to strain out a gnat' (297) after one has 'swallowed the camel' of the divine's becoming human. One might respond that one should not make the doctrine of the Incarnation *more* difficult to swallow than it already is.

Peter Forrest, 'The Tree of Life: Agency and Immortality in a Metaphysics Inspired by Quantum Theory' Forrest attempts to frame a metaphysics that provides 'scope for agency, survival of death and the Resurrection, while cohering well with contemporary science' (316–317). His suggestion is that 'the "worlds" of the Many Worlds interpretation of quantum theory should be thought of as universe-fibers' (317). He suggests that God perceives each 'fiber' from some point of view within it, arguing: 'For if God knows everything and if what it is like to see red is itself something to know, then God must know what it is like to see red. It would be a strange imperfection if God knew what it was like to see red but lacked the capacity to see something red' (315). We find this argument unconvincing: suppose what it is like to sin is itself something to know, then God must know what it is like to sin, but most theists have held that God does not have the capacity to sin. Forrest is not suggesting that God is a physical being; he suggests that Berkeleian idealism is the way to explain God's perceptions of the world (316).

Michael Rea, 'The Metaphysics of Original Sin' In this brilliant essay Rea seeks to explore in what circumstances the doctrine of original sin (i.e. the doctrine that 'all human beings (except, at most, four) suffer from a kind of corruption that makes it inevitable that they will fall into sin, and this corruption is a consequence of the first sin of the first man, [. . . and] are guilty from birth in the eyes of God, and this guilt is a consequence of the first sin of the first man', 319) is compatible with the principle of moral responsibility that one is morally responsible for the obtaining of a state of affairs only if one could have prevented that state of affairs from obtaining. First of all he investigates theories on which we do not have personal guilt for Adam's sin (i.e. theories on which Adam's sin is somehow *imputed* to us as the sin of another). No theory of this sort allows for the compatibility of the doctrine of original sin with the principle of moral responsibility, so he turns to

theories on which we do have personal guilt for Adam's sin. Here Rea discusses in some detail two versions of the theory of Jonathan Edwards that, he argues, *do* allow for the compatibility of the doctrine of original sin with the principle of moral responsibility. The final theory compassed is an ingenious Molinistic theory on which our original sin is a matter of our suffering from Trans-World Depravity (or the variant Conditional Trans-World Depravity) as a result of Adam's sin. This also, Rea argues, allows for the compatibility of the doctrine of original sin with the principle of moral responsibility. Rea doesn't argue for either the the doctrine of original sin or the principle of moral responsibility or consider the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity, according to which it is not in our power without God's help to do good (which would rule out the Molinistic theory that Rea develops), but this can scarcely be held against a fine discussion of the logical relationships between the various doctrines in this part of theology.

Brian Leftow, 'Modes without modalism' Leftow defends the 'Latin view' of the Trinity, i.e. the view that explanation of the Trinity 'begins from the oneness of God' and tries 'to explain just how one God can be three divine persons' (357). Leftow engages in a detailed discussion of Locke on identity, drawing the morals that 'process-based accounts of personal identity can be at least respectable' (365), and that there could be persons in the way that Locke conceives. The payoff lies in Leftow's suggestion that '[p]erhaps the triune Persons are event-based persons founded on a generating substance, God. [. . .] God lives His life in three discrete streams of events at once [. . .] these are streams of mental events, and each such stream is the life of a Locke-person' (373–374). Leftow considers the transitivity argument against the quasi-temporary identity that he postulates for the Trinity (the argument that 'if at t A = B and at t B = C, at t A = C' (374)), responding that '[i]f time-travel is possible [. . .] then the transitivity argument must fail' (375). But this does not seem to us to be a valid inference: if time-travel is possible then one thing can be in two places at once, so not only is it the case that the time-traveller is indeed 'identical both with someone in the machine and with someone outside the machine' (374), but it is also the case that the person in the machine is identical with the person outside the machine. So, this remains an objection to the assertion that God is in two *different* persons at once. In other words, Leftow's ingenious use of ideas from Locke and time-travel does not seem to protect him from the objection that, on his theory, the Father is identical with the Son, and so when the Son suffers, the Father suffers.