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*Persons, Animals, Ourselves*. By PAUL F. SNOWDON (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 260. Price £30.00.)

Mary suffers a traumatic brain injury, and loses all memories and the ability to think. Does she still exist? In the shadow of John Locke, many of us think that she does not. In *Persons, Animals, Ourselves*, Paul Snowdon counteracts the Lockean pull. Snowdon focuses not on imaginary people but actual people we care about. Consider the case again. Your mother, say, suffers a traumatic brain injury, and loses all memories and the ability to think. Does your mother still exist?

Snowdon argues that our behaviour is evidence that we think that she does. We tell our friends that mother suffered mental loss, not that mother ceased to exist. We discuss her prognosis and progress with her doctors, visit her, make arrangements on her behalf. If she no longer existed, we would not do these things, nor would the doctors continue to supervise her care. We do not speak literally when we say things like, 'Mother is no longer there' (p. 135).

Paul Snowdon defends the thesis that 'Each of us is identical with, is one and the same thing as, an animal'. He argues that mental features are not essential to us, that animalism is the 'default conception of ourselves', and that there are no good objections to animalism (p. 106). For these reasons, we should accept animalism.

To establish animalism as the default view, Snowdon points to the massive overlap in properties between you and the human animal that you are associated with. He describes key facets of our self-conception, including details of our births, where we have lived, physical appearance, personality and memories, accomplishments, social relations, and expectations for our future (p. 83). We attribute these same features to the human animal. In fact, 'we would regard someone who did not accept [these

features] of themselves as deviant and odd, as in need of treatment or diagnosis'. In contrast, we would not think deviant someone who denied the Lockean view that the person goes with the brain in an imagined brain-transplant case (p. 85).

Snowdon is meticulous in his inventory of objections. He tells us that many psychiatrists think that there is no such thing as Multiple Personality Disorder, but to cover his bases, he devotes chapter 7 to answering an objection based on the disorder. At points throughout the book, he discusses arguments for his position that he finds wanting (including arguments premised on the impossibility of persons and animals occupying the same space and Kathleen Wilkes's argument against using brain-transfer cases). The casual reader who is interested in the most worrisome objections and in the arguments that Snowdon himself endorses will be glad for the guidance of subheadings.

Here are some highlights of the book: Snowdon argues in Chapter 4 that animalism is the natural view. In Chapter 5, he enters the animalist debate about whether we continue to exist as corpses. Snowdon convincingly argues that we do by drawing parallels with how we recognize dead non-human animals as still being the same animal. In Chapter 8, Snowdon saves the most pressing objection for last – the case of extensively conjoined twins, such as Abigail and Brittany Hensel, as a single organism and thus a counterexample to the claim that we are each identical to an organism. Snowdon proposes that animalists could say either that (1) conjoined twins have a different ontological status from the rest of us or (2) conjoined twins are two organisms, fused. Both suggestions are sketched lightly, so neither puts the objection to rest. Anyone who works out the first proposal should expect a heavy burden of proof. The second suggestion sounds promising, if it can be supported with good biological evidence.

The most prominent neo-Lockean thought experiment is the brain-transfer case, and here, Snowdon's conclusion is both bold and modest. Imagine that your brain, along with its mental content, is transferred into your neighbour's body. Many people think that you are now in your neighbour's

body. Snowdon's bold conclusion is that this intuition should be trumped by the strength of the animalist theory (p. 209–10). His modest conclusion is that the best assessment of brain-transplant cases is that we 'don't know if the original donor survives' (p. 223).

When Snowdon works to weaken the brain-transplant intuition that we go where our brains go, he faces an uphill battle. This intuition is not only a common philosophical one, but it has captured the imagination of novelists and movie writers, who call for the suspension of disbelief in the *mechanics* of the body switch, not in the storyline that the person inhabits whichever body houses her thoughts and memories.

He tries to soften the brain-transplant intuition by explaining why, if the intuition is wrong, we so reliably conclude that you go with your brain. He suggests that (1) we feel pressure to make a judgment call in the case, instead of saying that we do not know, and (2) we are influenced by the emphasis on continuities between you pre-op and the brain-transplant recipient post-op. The first seems doubtful. Compare brain transplant cases to trolley cases. In the trolley cases, when people are pressed to answer, as undergraduates are every year, we see some of them waffle on their answer and hem and haw. But we do not see the same ambivalence in the brain-transplant cases. Snowdon's second explanation is more plausible: perhaps we are influenced by the presentation of the case.

He offers this variation of the brain-transplant case: imagine being the *recipient* rather than the donor. Your body receives a new brain with new memories and mental features. If you were a soccer player, your 'physical skills will be preserved' (p. 234). The claim about physical skills is not obvious – yes, the transplant recipient would have toned soccer legs, but the person might not know strategy or all of the rules. Snowdon rightly points out elsewhere that what would carry over in a brain transplant is an empirical question (p. 225). With this presentation of the transplant case, Snowdon expects that 'the natural verdict appears different' (p. 234). Time will tell whether readers agree, but this case does not seem to pass the test of our behaviour that he used to good effect earlier in the book. Faced with

receiving a brain transplant, many of us would say our goodbyes and make the plans people do when preparing for death – plans for who would raise the children and take the pets, plans for what will become of the projects we cannot complete. I would prefer my sister to raise my children rather than a person who has no knowledge of my children’s histories and might not care for them. But if we imagine a loved one receiving a brain transplant, maybe the intuition that it is not our loved one anymore softens.

*Persons, Animals, Ourselves* will be of interest to those who want a sourcebook on motivations for and objections against animalism. On a metaphysics syllabus, the selections that reorient readers on Lockean thought experiments would pair well with Locke or Sydney Shoemaker.

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