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## Malcolm Jeeves, ed., FROM CELLS TO SOULS - AND BEYOND: CHANGING PORTRAITS OF HUMAN NATURE and Hud Hudson, A MATERIALIST METAPHYSICS OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Stewart Goetz

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*From Cells to Souls—and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Malcolm Jeeves. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004. Pp. xiv, 252. \$29.00 (paper); and *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, by Hud Hudson. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 202. \$40.00.

STEWART GOETZ, Ursinus College

*From Cells to Souls—and Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature* is a collection of engaging essays about the nature of a human being. The authors of the essays are professionals in diverse disciplines, including anatomy and structural biology, biblical studies, genetics, neurology, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, and systematic theology. Though the authors are from diverse disciplines, they are all professing Christians who are united by the belief that mind/soul-body substance dualism (dualism, for short) is false and that the human person is best thought of as a single entity (monism) with two kinds of properties, namely, mental/soulish and physical. Simply stated, “[t]here is . . . an irreducible duality . . . , but it is not a duality that rightly calls for dualism” (p. 237). The contributors preferred way of explaining the existence of this duality of properties is in terms of emergence. In virtue of the increasing capacity and interactive complexity of the lower level complex physical systems that comprise the human biological entity, mental properties with their causal powers emerge at a higher (highest) level. The result is the capacity for genuine top-down causation from our mental lives to our physical lives (pp. 63–66).

Though the authors emphasize that their “nonreductive physicalism” (p. 64) makes mental-to-physical causation possible, they are equally emphatic that what recommends their view of the human person over the dualist’s is the existence of intimate bottom-to-top causal links between what goes on in different regions of our brains and our mental lives. For example, the left of the two brain hemispheres is usually dominant for speech so that “[l]eft-sided brain lesions can cause a searching for words, a limitation of vocabulary, a shortening of sentences, or a jumble of meaningless words” (pp. 46–47). Early degeneration of neurons in the hippocampus of the brain (located in the right and left temporal lobes of the cerebral cortex) results in disturbances in “working memory” where persons may have increasing difficulty either remembering where they placed items,



recalling the names of persons to whom they were recently introduced, "or following the narratives of stories they are reading or watching on television" (p. 87). Multiple sclerosis can produce fronto-temporal-limbi damage in the brain which results in an overflow of sadness, mirth, or despair (p. 45). With Alzheimer's disease, neurons die, small holes appear throughout brain tissue, and the cerebral cortex looks shriveled in CT scans of the brain. For Christians with Alzheimer's, the effect of the disease on their spiritual lives is typically devastating. A Presbyterian minister, Robert Davis, reported that his spiritual life was miserable. Because his emotions were dead, he could not experience the comfort of his Savior (p. 89). "[T]he nature of the [causal] interdependence increasingly uncovered by scientific research makes a substance dualism harder to maintain without tortuous and convoluted reasoning" (p. 240).

Because the contributors are Christians and well aware that the Christian tradition has overwhelmingly sided with dualism, they are concerned about whether their view accords with the view of the human person found in Scripture. The consensus of the authors is that while Scripture does not engage in philosophical anthropology as such ("[T]he Bible's witness to the nature of human life is . . . naïve . . . because it has not worked out in what we may regard as a philosophically satisfying way the nature of physical existence in life, death, and afterlife" (p. 194)), what can be gleaned from it is more than hospitable to nonreductive physicalism. "[T]he Old Testament expresses little concern with the question, What happens when we die?" (p. 188), and there is no suggestion that the dead inhabit Sheol because "some essential part of the human being (whether a soul or a spirit, or some other) has survived death" (p. 189). With the onset of Second Temple Judaism (fourth century B.C.E.), a dizzying array of positions about the nature of the human being and the afterlife developed in the mix of Greek, Roman, and Jewish thought (p. 190). Though dualism was included in the mix, nothing Paul says in his letters entails that he was a dualist. Indeed, "Paul affirms a profound continuity between life in this world and life everlasting with God, a continuity whose form is *bodily* existence" (p. 192; author's emphasis). Overall, the Bible gives witness to a deeply relational view of a human being with others of his own kind, creation, and God (pp. 94–101, 166, 173, 194, 199–208, 238), and those today who find dualism in Scripture "read a Cartesian interest in 'the mind' back into the Bible" (p. 184).

Have the authors made their case for nonreductive physicalism? There are three reasons to doubt that they have. First, while a dualist can and should affirm the importance of relationships for being human, what is at issue between nonreductive physicalists and dualists is not the importance of those relationships but the nature of what enters into them. Is a soul one of the relata? Nothing that the authors of *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond* argue requires a negative answer to this question. Indeed, none of them ever mentions the fundamental reason why the dualist believes this question requires an affirmative answer. This reason concerns the apparent substantial *simplicity of the self*: I am aware of myself not having any substantive parts, while I am aware of my physical body (brain) having substantive parts. Hence, I am ontologically distinct from my physical body (brain).

It is because the authors never bring up the issue of the self's substantial simplicity that they never mention one of the most fascinating issues in contemporary brain science, namely, the binding problem. As the authors rightly emphasize, different mental/soul capacities and events (memory, emotion, sensation, thought, etc.) are correlated with events that are localized in different areas of the brain. If we were to make inferences on the basis of this information alone, we would conclude that one area of the brain remembers, another experiences emotion, another hears, another sees, another philosophizes, and so on. This is not, however, what we discover from the first-person point of view. From that point of view, *I, a simple, unified self, simultaneously* now remember kissing my daughter this morning, experience pleasure along with that memory, hear the rain hitting the window, see the computer screen, feel a throbbing in my right foot, and the like. Given this datum, some neuroscientists consider the idea that there is a *single* location in the brain where all of these soul occurrences are bound together into a unified whole. Regardless of whether such a spot is ever found in the brain, what is important to realize is that neuroscientists would not even consider the idea that there might be a physical point in the brain that mirrors our first-person experience of ourselves unless they took seriously the nature of that experience. What the contributors to *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond* do not tell the reader is that if nonreductive physicalism is true, our first-person experiences of ourselves at any present moment as substantially simple, unified selves must be illusory.

In addition to the issue of the nature of our selves at the present moment, there is the matter of our identity across or through time. The contributors devote a good bit of space to elaborating how neuropathologies can disrupt one's experience of self-identity through time (pp. 78, 81–83, 85, 94). For example, Alzheimer's dementia affects one's ability to remember recent and past events. What they do not make clear is why we should conclude from this that the subject whose capacity to remember is undermined by a physical disorder such as Alzheimer's cannot be an enduring soul.

In light of the authors' failure to address the issue of the simplicity of the self, it is important to note that they mischaracterize the justification for holding the dualist position. The contributors repeatedly maintain that the dualist claim that the soul exists is a *postulate* to account for human experiences that cannot yet be accounted for neurologically or biologically (pp. 180, 245). According to the contributors, dualism is a soul-of-the-gaps hypothesis much like the god-of-the-gaps hypothesis that is put forth by some religious believers (pp. 62, 145). Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The justification for the belief in dualism is footed first and foremost in first-person experience. It is not found in the physical world and observations of data from the third-person perspective for which dualism is believed to be the best explanatory hypothesis.

The second reason for doubting that the authors have made their case for nonreductive physicalism concerns the relationship between the first-person experience of the self as a simple soul and the anthropological views of Scripture. While the authors correctly maintain that the Bible does not develop a philosophical anthropology, their claim (pp. 166, 173, 183–184) that dualists have read a Cartesian interest back into the Bible is mistaken. Dualists are simply reading Scripture as an ordinary person

reads Scripture, and because both the ordinary first-person view of the self is thoroughly dualist in character and Scripture is written for ordinary people, it is only natural to assume that Scripture presupposes (and does not argue for) the truth of dualism. In this context, it must be emphasized that Descartes *philosophized* about dualism. He did not *invent* it. Dualism was around long before Descartes and even Plato (who also philosophized about, but did not invent, dualism). Thus, the argument that dualism is a Greek/Hellenistic idea (p. 190) is bogus. The early church fathers drew upon Greek philosophizing about dualism when thinking about matters such as the nature of the persons of Godhead, but neither they nor the writers of Scripture needed to go to Athens to find dualism. The concept of and belief in the soul was also present in such disparate places as India (e.g., Hinduism), China (e.g., Confucianism), and North America (e.g., native American religion). Because dualism arises out of ordinary, first-person experience, the burden is on anyone who would argue that the Bible does not assume dualism.

The third reason for doubting that the authors make their case for non-reductive physicalism concerns the issue of bottom-to-top or physical-to-mental causation. While modern neuroscience has written a more detailed story about what goes on in the brain when mental/soulish events are causally produced, the augmented details in no way change the substantive nature of the story. People have always known that a good knock on the head or the ingestion of various natural substances could produce some remarkable effects. What modern science has enabled us to do (through drugs, electrical probes, etc.) is produce the same, and additional, remarkable effects while bypassing the knock on the head. Moreover, with the aid of sophisticated observational technology (MRIs, PET and CAT scans, etc.), scientists are now able to observe the disparate brain activities that accompany seeing, hearing, dreaming, etc. Why, however, should discovery of the fact that the causal sources of various mental/soulish effects are localized in different areas of the brain, as opposed to the brain as a whole, lead us to conclude that dualism is harder to believe than it was before?

Of course, it is part of the dualist view that the mental/soul-physical relation is not only one-way in nature. Mental events also produce physical events, and the dualist concedes that this relationship is just as mysterious as that which obtains when physical events produce mental/soul events. Nonreductive physicalism, too, acknowledges what it regards as top-to-bottom causation, and its proponents concede that their view provides no greater insights than dualism about mental-to-physical causation. They admit that "we are not claiming that we understand how this [mental-to-physical] interdependence works. Thus far we know of no evidence that gives an adequate [nonreductive physicalist] explanation of how cognition produces changes in brain processes; rather, we can give merely a description" (p. 244). Given that nonreductive physicalism, like dualism, cannot provide an explanation of how the mental produces changes in the brain, one is left puzzled about why dualism should be jettisoned in favor of nonreductive physicalism.

In closing, I emphasize that *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond* is an extremely interesting and at times—e.g., when the authors describe the decline of the quality of life of Alzheimer's patients—emotionally moving

book. While the contributors have not presented a persuasive argument that their view of human nature is superior to and should replace that of the dualist, they have certainly succeeded in putting together an informative collection of essays about the different ways in which contemporary science is helping to give us a picture of what goes on in our brains when different kinds of events occur in our mental lives.

*From Cells to Souls—and Beyond* presents a physicalist view of the human person in light of developments in contemporary science. In his *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, Hud Hudson presents, as the title suggests, a materialistic metaphysical view of the human person. Hudson presupposes that human persons are material objects and develops a materialist account of those persons that “requires some astounding revisions in our commonly accepted metaphysics of the human person” (2). To motivate his revisionist materialism, Hudson has the reader consider the following puzzle about a man named “Legion”:

Legion, who is sitting in a chair at time *T*, is composed of material simples (the Primary Set). A second set of material simples (the Secondary Set) exists at *T* and contains all the material simples in the Primary Set except an outermost simple (called “Righty”) on Legion’s right hand and one additional material simple (called “Lefty”) which is located in the vicinity of Legion’s left hand. Given the assumption (i) that the property of being a person supervenes on the fusion of the material simples in a set (a fusion of a set is an object that is composed of the set’s members) and facts concerning the environment, histories, types, arrangements and intrinsic properties of those material simples (what Hudson calls “Person-Composing Conditions” (13)), and the additional assumption (ii) that the supervenience of the property of being a person is insensitive to an insignificant difference such as that involving the absence of Righty and the presence of Lefty while all the other material simples remain the same, then “we have every reason to believe that if the fusion at *T* of the members of [the Primary Set] is a person at *T*, then the fusion at *T* of the members of [the Secondary Set] is a person at *T*, as well.” (p. 14)

What Hudson calls “The Problem of the Many” is how to avoid the conclusion that there are many persons in the chair when we naturally believe that only Legion is present.

Hudson discusses nine alleged solutions to The Problem of the Many, and after dismissing all of them he considers what he calls the “3DPartist” (three-dimensional partist) solution. According to 3DPartism, it is a mistake to think that a material object has its constitutive (proper) parts intrinsically or nonrelationally. Instead, a material object *O* has a part *p* at (in virtue of its relation to) a spatial region *r* at a time *t* (p. 46). Hence, the shape of *O* (which is a function of the arrangement of its parts) is not an intrinsic feature of it but also is had relative to *r* at *t* (p. 49). 3DPartism implies not only that a material object can be wholly present at more than one time (which is the standard Three-Dimensionalist understanding of material objects), but also that a material object can exactly occupy and, thereby, be wholly present, at more than one region of space at a time (p. 49). Armed with his partism,

the 3DPartist solves the Problem of the Many in the following way: there is (as one ordinarily believes) only one person, Legion, who is sitting in the chair at T. Legion, however, is identical with *both* the fusion of the material simples in the Primary Set (Hudson names this fusion "Tweedledee"), which occupies one spatial region, and the fusion of the material simples in the Secondary Set (Hudson names this fusion "Tweedledum"), which occupies a different spatial region (though the regions completely overlap except for the space occupied by Righty (which is a part of Tweedledee but not Tweedledum) and the space occupied by Lefty (which is a part of Tweedledum but not Tweedledee). Given classical identity, Tweedledee is identical with Tweedledum.

Hudson openly admits that the idea that a material object has its parts and, thereby, its shape relative to a spatial region (one might think of the object inheriting or deriving its parts and shape from a spatial region) is counterintuitive (p. 146). Though this is counterintuitive, Hudson believes it is a different implication of 3DPartism that undermines its truth. To draw out this additional implication, Hudson has the reader consider the puzzle case of Tibbles the cat (p. 54). At time T1, Tibbles has a tail. The proper part of Tibbles excepting her tail is called "Tib". Tibbles and Tib are not identical because Tibbles exactly occupies a larger region of space than Tib, "and nothing [in this case, Tib] exactly occupies a larger region of space than itself" (p. 54). Now, suppose Tibbles loses her tail. Tibbles still exists as does Tib, but at post-accident times Tibbles and Tib seem to exactly occupy the same region of space. Given that two material objects cannot both exactly occupy the same region of space, Tibbles and Tib are identical. Thus, Tibbles and Tib both are and are not identical. The 3DPartist seemingly has a way of solving this problem. Because the very same object can simultaneously exactly occupy different regions of space, Tib could exactly occupy the same (larger region of) space occupied by Tibbles at a time prior to the accident. The trouble now, however, is that if, at a pre-accident time T1, Tibbles and Tib are, as the 3DPartist maintains, identical, then because Tibbles has Tib as a proper part of herself, Tib has herself as a proper part. This, however, is impossible, given the mereological principle that no object has itself as a proper part (57).

To where should the materialist turn? Hudson believes that he should turn to Four-Dimensionalism, which rejects the Three-Dimensionalist thesis that a material object is wholly present at each of the plurality of times at which it exists. According to the Four-Dimensionalist, an object is not wholly present at each of the plurality of times at which it exists but is spread out in time just as it is in space. Just as a material object has spatial parts, so also it has temporal parts. "The principle idea is that necessarily, for each way of exhaustively dividing the lifetime of any object,  $x$ , into two parts, there is a corresponding way of dividing  $x$  itself into two parts, each of which is present throughout, but not outside of, the corresponding part of  $x$ 's lifetime" (pp. 58–59). As applied to the case of Tibbles and Tib (pp. 68–69), Four-Dimensionalism implies the following: The post-accident temporal parts of Tibbles and Tib exactly occupy the same region of spacetime and are identical. Prior to the loss of her tail, however, Tibbles and Tib exactly occupy distinct regions of spacetime, though the second region is a proper sub-region of the first. Thus, while

one and the same spacetime part is shared by both Tibbles and Tib, they are distinct spacetime worms.

The case of Tibbles and Tib, however, is not the only problem that must be resolved. There is also The Problem of the Many. To solve it, Hudson believes that Four-Dimensionalism should be supplemented with the partist insights from 3DPartism to yield 4DPartism (p. 68). Legion, therefore, is a four-dimensional spacetime worm who simultaneously exactly occupies and is wholly present at distinct regions of spacetime. With the inclusion of partism, however, the 4DPartist, like his 3DPartist counterpart, must explain why Tibbles and Tib are not identical. The reason is much the same as that given by the 3DPartist: because the spacetime region exactly occupied by Tib is a proper subregion of that occupied by Tibbles, and no object can have itself as a proper part at a region of spacetime, Tibbles and Tib are not identical but are distinct spacetime worms which share a spacetime part of post-accident regions (pp. 68–69).

What is one to make of all of this? Hudson calls one of the possible responses to 3DPartism the “This view is nuts” objection (p. 53). “Could be,” says Hudson, though “[i]t would be good to say exactly why” (p. 53). Fair enough, though I am sure that Hudson will not find the explanation that I provide the least bit convincing. This is because he says the Partist View “provides the best overall fit with [his] pre-philosophical intuitions” (p. 146). Given that my pre-philosophical intuitions are at odds with Hudson’s, and metaphysics, like philosophy in general, starts with fundamental intuitions (one wonders whether the contributors to *From Cells to Souls—and Beyond* would opt for dualism if they believed their physicalist view required the truth of 4DPartism), I believe that I cannot persuade Hudson that his view is wrong. Nevertheless, because it is possible (indeed, likely) that a reader will share more basic intuitions with me than with Hudson, I will briefly explain why I think his view is nuts. Two reasons are most important.

First, and most basically, and assuming for the sake of discussion that I am a material object, the idea that I am four-dimensional spacetime worm who is not wholly present at each moment that I exist conflicts with my first-person awareness of myself as wholly present at the moment that I am typing this sentence. The belief that I am wholly present at the present moment, which is grounded in this awareness of myself, is basic, and because I cannot envision ever having an awareness of something that undermines it (or the more general belief that I am wholly present at any moment that I exist), I cannot envision ever giving it up.

Second, the idea that a material object can simultaneously exactly occupy and be wholly present at distinct regions of space is counterintuitive because seemingly incoherent. While it makes sense to think that material objects have proper parts that are present in different spatial regions at the same time, material objects themselves cannot be in different spatial regions at the same time. Given that a material object is *wholly* present in a region of space only if *all* of its constituent proper parts are present in that region, the claim that a material object which has *all* of its proper parts in one spatial region that it exactly occupies can simultaneously exactly occupy a different spatial region seems incoherent. The Partist will remind me that I am begging the question against him by assuming that a material object has its



proper parts independent of its relationship to a spatial region. It doesn't. A material object only has its proper parts relative to a region of space. What this entails is that all of its proper parts are located in spatial region R1 in virtue of being related to R1 and all of its proper parts are located in region R2 in virtue of being related to R2. Perhaps it is because Partism seems so absolutely incredible that Hudson suggests that there will have to be "some requirement of significant overlap between the two spatial regions [R1 and R2] in question," (p. 50) for otherwise the one and the same material object could be simultaneously wholly present in Fenway Park and Wrigley Field. Such a requirement, however, seems thoroughly ad hoc in nature and an implicit recognition that the Partist claim that material objects have their proper parts in virtue of their relationships to spatial regions is nuts. (Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the binding problem mentioned earlier seems to be much less of a problem if a version of Partism that does not include the requirement of significant overlap of spatial regions is true.)

The requirement in question, however, does not really explain away the incredible nature of Partism. To see why, consider Legion who, because he is supposedly identical with Tweedledum and Tweedledee, has the requisite significant overlap of spatial regions and, thereby, a significant overlap in proper parts relative to that overlap. Because of Legion's identity with Tweedledee and Tweedledum, however, it also is the case that he simultaneously has Righty relative to a spatial region R1 and Lefty relative to a *different* spatial region R2. It follows, then, that Legion simultaneously has one shape in relation to R1 and a barely discernible though nevertheless genuinely different shape in relation to R2. If, instead of one Righty and one Lefty, there were several billion of each arranged in the right ways, Legion would end up simultaneously having an oval shape relative to R1 and an oblong shape relative to R2. Is that credible?

Finally, one might wonder about the metaphysical status of spatial regions themselves. Are they comprised of atomic spatial points? Do they have their shapes intrinsically? If so, why do they have these metaphysical advantages over material objects? If they do not have such metaphysical advantages, is their ontological status also relational in nature? If so, in relation to what? Material objects? A problem of circularity now rears its head.

Though Partism seems nuts to me for the reasons just given, there is a view in the ballpark that is similar to 3DPartism and, I think, much more plausible. The price of admission, however, requires abandoning materialism and endorsing dualism. In other words, while a person has a material body, he is not identical with it. The view I have in mind is non-Cartesian and more medieval in nature. It was even endorsed by Kant and is the idea that a person is a metaphysically simple soul who is wholly present at each point in space that is occupied by his three-dimensional physical body (that has its parts intrinsically). Like 3DPartism, then, this form of dualism maintains that a person can simultaneously occupy distinct regions of space. Unlike 3DPartism, however, this form of dualism holds that a soul has no substantive proper parts. Hence, it avoids the nutty claims that go with 3DPartism.

Hudson considers dualism as a possible solution to The Problem of the Many (pp. 19–21). He thinks dualism is not only nutty but also claims that

it does not solve The Problem of the Many. It fails to solve The Problem because it asserts that a soul is (causally) related to a human body. Which human body, however? Tweedledee or Tweedledum? At this point, I think it is fair to point out that The Problem of the Many is a problem given a limited, naturalist ontology. If from the outset a metaphysician limits himself to sets of material simples, fusions of them, and relational Person-Composing Conditions, then The Problem of the Many can lead to some pretty nutty positions. Might not such a limitation and the fact that it leads to a development of a view like 4DPartism constitute a *reductio* argument against the materialist view of the human person? If one were to allow for the existence of a soul, form, or some other unifying principle for organisms, then The Problem of the Many simply would not be a problem. Legion's body would be identical with Tweedledee and not Tweedledum because Righty, and not Lefty, would be under the influence of the relevant unifying principle. Hudson's refusal to acknowledge the existence of such a unifying principle is itself puzzling given his willingness to countenance the existence of God. After all, God typically unifies various aspects of the universe. Thus, because God creates and sustains the universe in being, He guides its history and that of the human persons who dwell on the face of the earth. Moreover, because God is just, He guarantees that each person receives his proper reward and punishment. If one allows such a being into one's ontology, is it all that implausible to think that it or something else could be the unifying principle for a human body?

In closing, I want to correct what might be a somewhat negative impression of Hudson's book and make clear that *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person* is an *absolutely wonderful* work. The mark of a truly fantastic book is not whether one agrees with it. It is whether one learns from it and either now understands things that one never understood before or understands them in a wholly clearer light. This book has that mark, and I would be nuts if I did not recommend it enthusiastically. Though you might not be nuts for not reading it, you will certainly be intellectually worse off.<sup>1</sup>

#### NOTE

1. I want to thank J. P. Moreland and Dean Zimmerman for reading parts of this review.

*Why there is Something rather than Nothing*, by Bede Rundle. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 204. \$42 (Cloth). *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*, by Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004. Pp. 280. \$20 (Paper).

BRUCE R. REICHENBACH, Augsburg College

While these two tightly reasoned books provide very different answers to the question, Why is there something rather than nothing, the philosophical