

The Emergent Self. WILLIAM HASKER. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. Pp. 240 + xi.

The aim of *The Emergent Self* is "to present and defend a particular stance on the mind-body problem." (ix) Hasker's strategy is to consider various versions of materialism (or physicalism—he uses the terms interchangeably), then to present objections that, he argues, are fatal to them. After a chapter defending libertarian free will, he critically surveys dualistic alternatives to materialism, and then offers his own version of dualism, 'Emergent Dualism.' He concludes with a discussion of the metaphysical possibility of life after death.

The Emergent Self is valuable not least because it runs so thoroughly against the grain of contemporary philosophy of mind and metaphysics. Hasker defends a kind of substance dualism. In motivating this now-neglected approach, he ranges over a considerable field, discussing, among other things, Kim on supervenience and mental causation, Frankfurt on alternative possibilities, Nagel on panpsychism, Swinburne on the soul, O'Connor on agent causation, van Inwagen on the impossibility of "re-creation," and Searle on emergent features of systems.

In the first two chapters, Hasker develops a "best version" of materialism, based on a combination of strong supervenience and token identity. Along the way, he discusses (and rejects) many arguments about positions on the mind-body relation from the past half century. Some of these will be familiar to old hands (anti-eliminativism, property-identity theory); others are more current (e.g., mental causation, emergence). Although Hasker's criticisms are not always new, it seems to me that they have not been sufficiently taken to heart by the philosophical community.

Chapter Three ("Why the Physical Isn't Closed") is an assault on the thesis of the causal closure of the physical, which, Hasker says, is necessary for any materialist view whatever. The causal-closure thesis is claimed to make "a materialistic explanation of rational thought impossible." (p. 58) I'll mention only the second of Hasker's two arguments for this conclusion. Hasker argues that there is a tension between evolutionary epistemology, according to which our mental capacities confer an evolutionary advantage on the one hand, and a physicalist interpretation of Darwin's theory on the other. On a physicalist account of Darwin's theory, tied to the causal-closure thesis, "the conscious state of the organism, as such, can have *no influence whatever* on the organism's behavior, and thus on its propensity to survive." This is so, because the causal-closure thesis precludes "the kind of role for awareness and cognition that is posited in the epistemological account." (p. 78) This argument opens up new territory for debate by shifting Kim's arguments about mental causation to an issue internal to evolutionary considerations.

Chapter Four ("Free Will and Agency") is Hasker's case for libertarian free will against determinism. Although libertarian free will is crucial to Hasker's view of the mind, the arguments in favor of it seem question-begging. For example, libertarians appropriate the term 'freely choose' in a way that precludes determinism, and then object that determinists deny that we choose freely. I doubt that there is new ground to be broken here—on either side.

In Chapter Five, Hasker insightfully discusses Richard Swinburne's and Charles Taliaferro's versions of Descartes' argument for mind/body dualism. I want to comment only on what he calls the 'Unity-of-Consciousness Argument.' I experience my visual field as a unity. Looking around my office, I experience the books

on my shelves, the small plants, etc., "as a unity, all at once and not as a succession of discrete experiences." (p. 126). Hasker doubts that any physical entity is in the state that I am in when I am aware of my visual field. The problem, as he sees it, is that "a person's being aware of a complex fact cannot consist in the actions of parts of the person, each of which does *not* possess this awareness." p. 129)

Here I think that Hasker "proves too much." Presumably, a dog's experience at t of his visual field is a unified experience of the bone, the waterdish, the fence, etc. Hence, either dogs have immaterial souls or a composite physical entity can be aware of a complex fact, and its being so aware can consist in the actions of its parts. No one who thinks dogs are wholly physical entities will find the Unity-of-Consciousness argument persuasive. (Hasker, however, takes animals to have souls. (p. 193))

Chapters Three-Five converge on "single conclusion:" Rationality pertains to "the human person as a whole" (Ch. 3); choices in virtue of which we're agents must be "ascribed to the person in a holistic sense" (Ch. 4); "the subject of conscious experience must be a unity of a sort that is inconsistent with its being a whole consisting of physical parts." (Ch. 5) This conclusion leads to the central question of the book: "But what is this self?" (p. 146)

This question is answered in Chapter Seven, which develops Hasker's own view, Emergent Dualism. (Chapter 6 is a critical evaluation of problematic versions of Dualism: Cartesian, Swinburne-style, Thomistic, and Chapter 8 is an interesting survey of scenarios for postmortem life.)

Hasker takes care to discuss how he understands emergence. As I understand it, his view is that when "higher-level" properties emerge, they alter the laws according to which lower-level elements interact. (p. 176) Applied to consciousness, his conclusion is that consciousness is emergent in the sense that (in Searle's words) "consciousness could cause things that could not be explained by the causal behavior of the neurons." (p. 177) We can understand how consciousness could cause things that could not be explained by the causal behavior of neurons, says Hasker, if "consciousness should happen to be endowed with libertarian freedom."

As I understand Hasker's use of the idea of emergence, micro-elements, governed by standard physical laws, generate new emergent properties—properties with new causal powers—and the emergence of these properties produces new emergent laws that govern the interactions of micro-elements from then on in situations in which the new emergent properties manifest themselves. (pp. 171-8) (Emergence, I think, will have to be a brute fact of nature, not to be explained in terms of any laws: The new emergent laws cannot be implicated in explaining the emergence of the new properties, on pain of vicious circularity. The old pre-emergent laws cannot explain the emergence of the new properties or else physics would have discovered the emergent properties by now.)

Property dualism, however, is not sufficient for Emergent Dualism. The Unity-of-Consciousness argument, says Hasker, shows that what is needed is "an emergent individual, a new individual entity which comes into existence as a result of a certain functional configuration of the material constituents of the brain and nervous system" (p. 190) Although Hasker does not discuss substance emergence and its relation to property emergence, the mind is taken to be a substance produced by the human brain and not a separate element 'added to' the brain from outside." (p. 189) The mind can be usefully compared to a magnetic field: a real,

concrete entity, which once produced, exerts a causality of its own. (Hasker warns readers not to press the analogy too far, however. (p. 190))

In sum, Emergent Dualism holds that "when suitably configured, [matter] generates a field of consciousness that is able to function teleologically and to exercise libertarian free will, and the field of consciousness in turn modifies and directs the functioning of the physical brain." (p. 195)

As he would probably agree, Hasker has provided only a sketch (pp. 189-191), not yet a theory. Details need to be filled in. For example, is the mind made of anything; if so, of what? The mind does not consist of "previously existing stuff—quarks, for instance." (Otherwise, Emergent Dualism would not avoid the "unity-of-consciousness" argument—an argument that I find unpersuasive anyway.) Is the mind made of some immaterial stuff, or of nothing at all? (p. 196)

Hasker considers the emergent mind to be part of nature, something naturally generated by natural processes. Holding that "the field of consciousness is a consequence of the natural powers with which the stuff of life is endowed," he regards it as implausible that there are any mental processes without at least neural correlates. (pp. 196-7) But if Emergent Dualism is correct, then the mind is an "entity actively influencing the brain but distinct from it." (p. 193) This seems to raise the problem of causal closure again: either every neural event can be explained physically or not. If so, then (pace Emergent Dualism) there is no active influence on the brain from mental events that are independent of it; and if not, then neuroscientists ought to find causal gaps in neural processes that are physically unexplainable.

The Emergent Self is a valiant defense of substance dualism. Those who prefer a spit-and-polish style of philosophy, with precisely formulated claims expressing simple inferences, will find the argumentation somewhat loose. Nonetheless, the book is honest, original, and provocative.

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