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978-0-521-46101-6 - Substance among Other Categories
Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz
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Substance among other categories

This book revives a neglected but important topic in philosophy: the nature of substance. The belief that there are individual substances, for example, material objects and persons, is at the core of our commonsense view of the world, yet many metaphysicians deny the very coherence of the concept of substance. The authors develop a novel account of what an individual substance is in terms of independence from other beings. In the process many other important ontological categories are explored: Property, Event, Space, Time. The authors show why alternative theories of substance fail and go on to defend the intelligibility (though not the existence) of interacting spiritual and material substances.

“This is a well-informed and up-to-date contribution to an important topic in modern metaphysics, filling a significant gap in the recent literature.” (E. J. Lowe, University of Durham)

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO



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For my wife, Ruth, and my parents, Jack and Bea

(J.H.)

For my wife, Sheree

(G.R.)

Contents

Acknowledgments	page ix
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1 <i>Substance and other categories</i>	5
I Statement and defense of our project	5
II Ontological categories	14
III The category of Substance intuitively understood	22
2 <i>Historically prominent accounts of substance</i>	29
I Two Aristotelean theories	29
II Substratum and inherence theories	46
III Independence theories of substance	53
3 <i>Collectionist theories of substance</i>	58
I What is a collectionist theory of substance?	58
II Sets or collections of abstract entities	60
III Collections of concrete entities	62
4 <i>The independence criterion of substance</i>	89
I Problems for the independence criterion	89
II A proposed first solution	93
III The first test case: Properties	97
IV Tropes	99
V Places, times, and limits	100
VI Events	113
VII Privations	115
VIII Collections	119

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 Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

IX	Substance	120
X	A second solution and its defense	124
XI	Other categories	139
	<i>5 Souls and bodies</i>	144
I	The nature of a soul	144
II	Is a soul wholly negative in nature?	148
III	Do souls need a principle of individuation?	150
IV	Do souls need a principle of separation?	156
V	Does dualistic interaction violate the supervenience of causal properties upon noncausal properties?	161
VI	The classical attack on dualistic interaction: A reply	163
VII	Do dualistic interactions violate the laws of nature?	167
VIII	Do souls need a criterion of persistence?	169
IX	Is spatiotemporal continuity a criterion of persistence for bodies?	173
	<i>Appendix 1 The concrete–abstract distinction</i>	182
	<i>Appendix 2 Continuous space and time and their parts: A defense of an Aristotelean account</i>	188
	Index	194

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Acknowledgments

The seeds of this project began to take root some seventeen years ago when we became intensely interested in answering two fundamental philosophical questions. First, is it possible to analyze the ordinary concept of an individual substance in terms of ontological independence? Second, is it possible to state criteria of identity and individuation for such individual substances? We owe a debt of gratitude to Roderick Chisholm, whose metaphysics classes and seminars at Brown University in the mid-1970s are the source of our interest in these two questions. In addition, we would like to thank the following philosophers for their helpful comments or conversations: John Foster, John Heil, John King, Jonathan Lowe, C. B. Martin, Peter Simons, Barry Smith, Ernest Sosa, James Van Cleve, and Michael Zimmerman. And we are especially grateful to an anonymous referee for Cambridge University Press, whose many critical comments and suggestions for improvements were most helpful and guided us in making the final revisions of our work.

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