Death and Existence: Some Philosophical Problems

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University College London, MPhil Thesis 2004

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Abstract.

My thesis is an investigation into a number of philosophical problems that arise when considering the relation between death and existence. I begin by asking whether it is true that when something dies it ceases to exist, or whether it is the case that some things survive their death when they die. In the case of organisms, I argue that not only is it the case that our pre-theoretical thought holds that some organisms can survive their death, but that all arguments that try to suggest otherwise are either flawed, or little more than bare assertions.

The next line of argument that I consider is one that says that people are not organisms, and they die in an essentially non-biological way. Thus, people are subject to a personal conception of death, which is characterised as being when something ceases be a psychological entity. On this conception, it is argued, a person ceases to exist when they die. In response to this, I argue that people are not things distinct from their organism, but are in fact, numerically identical to their organism. I support this conclusion in the form of both synchronic and identity statements. Once it has been shown that the person is numerically identical with their organism, then a personal conception of death that is strong enough to support the idea that people cease to exist when they die is left unsupported.

The final problem I consider starts by looking at sentences which, in the present tense, say of a no longer existing person that they are dead. Such a sentence would be 'Socrates is dead'. Why are such sentences meaningful considering the thing that they are about no longer exists? Why are such sentences true if there is nothing to satisfy the 'is dead' predicate? I deny that this problem is removed by metaphysical solutions that posit entities to act as referents and truth-makers. Instead, I adopt the strategy of

explaining the sentence's truth and meaning, by developing a naturalistic account of name practices.

Introduction.

It is a fact that we will all, one day, die. It is another fact that the inevitability of our death is something that is of deep significance to us. The significance of death is so deeply rooted in our attitude towards ourselves that an indifference to it is an extreme rarity. Given these facts, the philosopher might want to know the following things. What is death? And why does it matter to us so much? The topic of this thesis is the first of these questions. More specifically, I want to go someway towards giving a metaphysical explanation of what it is to die, whilst leaving the questions that relate to the significance of death untouched. Having said this, in this introductory section I will take it upon myself to briefly contextualise some of the metaphysical questions and show how they relate to questions of significance. Before I do that, I will explain what the metaphysical questions that concern death are, with a brief plan of how they are answered in the thesis.

The central metaphysical questions concerning death are ones that, if answered, will give an explanation of the relation between death and dying to existence and non-existence. The problems are as follows:

- Does an organism cease to exist when it dies?
- Are people subject to the same kind of death as organisms or are they subject to a non-biological, personal conception of death?
- If there is a personal conception of death, do those that are subject to it cease to exist when they die?
- If it is the case that the dead do cease to exist, what is it that allows us to continue speaking of them?

I am only going to tackle philosophical questions concerning the nature of death, and it would be foolish to think that by doing this I am giving anything more than an elucidation of an aspect of death. A full account of death would incorporate innumerable empirical discoveries that could never be unearthed by philosophy. I am thinking of precise physiological explanations of what happens to an organism when it dies. Instead of supporting hypotheses with data, I will be examining the everyday phenomena of death and how our concepts of existence and non-existence apply to the deceased constituents of the phenomena. As a kind of guide for the rest of the thesis, I will give a quick overview of the arguments of the work as a whole.

The topic of the first two chapters is the question whether death entails non-existence. In the first chapter, the topic is organisms, whilst the second chapter considers people. I couch the debate in terms of two opposing theses: the termination thesis, which asserts that dying things cease to exist when they die, and the conflicting survival thesis, that asserts that something's death is not necessarily the end of its existence. Throughout the thesis, my sympathies lie in the direction of the survival thesis because I believe that it represents our natural thought concerning the persistence of dying things, whilst the termination thesis requires a peculiar and unnecessary revision of our natural thought. For this reason, I think that the survival thesis is best supported by thought experiments which I believe give extreme intuitive support to the survival thesis. There are two major strands of argument that are supposed to support the survival thesis, as it applies to organisms. One is an idea, that is found in Locke, which asserts that being alive is an essential property of an organism, a property that the organism cannot lose without ceasing to exist. The other idea attempts to excavate the idea that death entails non-existence from analogies that

can be made between the expressions 'dead' and 'counterfeit'. The first chapter of the thesis is a protracted argument against these two ideas.

My conclusion in the first chapter is that there is strong reason to believe that the survival thesis is true, whilst the termination thesis is false. The next question considered concerns the generality of the survival thesis: does it apply to all things that die? During the first chapter, I argue that, in the case of organisms, the termination thesis is false, but are things that aren't organisms, people for example, that are subject to another kind of death that does fall within the boundaries of the termination thesis? In the second chapter I consider this possibility. I outline what I think is the strongest reason that one might hold that there is a non-biological, personal conception of death. Although there are a number of reasons to believe that the very idea of a personal conception of death is unmotivated or incoherent, the most convincing strategy is to attack the underlying metaphysical picture of people that this account of death requires. The scaffolding of a personal conception of death, a theory where people are in some sense distinct from their body or organism, is thus replaced by a theory of personal identity where the person is their body or organism. The conclusion at the end of this chapter is that since people are their body or organism, and organisms are able to survive their death, then it follows that people are too.

After the generality of the survival thesis has been vindicated I turn to another problem concerning death and existence, a problem that results from a theory of reference where the meaning of a name is in some sense object-dependent and a theory of truth where the truths expressed by sentences are about the things that they are truths of. If these theories are true, then certain sentences about the no longer existing dead seem problematic because there is no object to provide the meaning of the name, nor is there anything for the truth to be about. The sentences that I have in mind

are those of the form 'Socrates is dead'. Instead of succumbing to the desire to posit extra entities to explain the truth and meaning of such a sentence, I provide a naturalistic account that satisfactorily does the explanatory work with only an ontology of the everyday.

These are the problems that this thesis is concerned with, and I have just given a brief description of how I go about addressing them. What I will do now is show the way in which these metaphysical questions bear on philosophical questions concerning the significance of death.

The questions concerning whether people and organisms can carry on existing after they die relate to questions concerning value in two ways. Firstly, continued existence, even after death, matters to a lot of people. Consider the people who are perturbed by the idea of being destroyed by cremation, and for that reason favour burial (it goes in the other direction as well: some people are repulsed by the idea that they will be a decomposing corpse). The value of existence carries across to things other than people: think of those who preserve their pets through the taxidermist's art; these people obviously prefer the minimal existence that the taxidermist is able to give their pet over the absolute non-existence that natural decomposition will bring to it. Modern science has made continued existence attain a new significance with cryogenics. Some terminally ill people are willing to be frozen to death, and perhaps killed, with the hope of being thawed out when a cure for their disease becomes available. For all these people, who for some reason value their existence or non-existence after their death, the answer to the question of whether death can be survived will carry some pertinence.

The second way that the relation between death and existence can relate to questions over the value of death is in the way that a particular relation between the

two is often assumed when talking about the fear of death. It is often assumed that when something dies, it ceases to exist, and it is this idea that is employed in many explanations of the fear of death. The most famous example is Epicurus' argument which asserts that it is irrational to fear death because one cannot rationally fear a state where one cannot be the subject of ill, and death is such a state where one cannot be the subject of ill because when one dies one is no longer. If the relation between death and existence is not one where the dying thing ceases to exist when it dies, then arguments such as Epicurus' must reformulate their premises in order to be sound.

A common way of staving off the fear of death is to attempt to extract some consolation from the idea that although it might be the case that we all die, and eventually cease to exist, the people who knew us and whose lives we impacted, will remember and continue to speak of us. One of the problems that I will consider (in chapter 3) is how certain common philosophical theories give a *prima facie* reason to doubt that talk about the non-existent dead is possible. These problems will not be seen to be too problematic, but they are discussed because the idea of post-existence, truthful discourse is important to many people.

It is for the reasons just given, that I believe that, at least in the case of death, the correct metaphysical picture acts as a propaedeutic to the questions of value. I think it would be difficult to acquire a satisfactory account of why death is significant to us without having a correct metaphysical picture as a foundation. It is for these reasons, as well as the intrinsic value of the topic, that uncovering the relation between death and existence is a potentially bountiful philosophical endeavour.

With these introductory remarks, we can now advance towards the problems themselves, the substance of the thesis.

Chapter 1. Surviving Death.

Part 1. The Theses.

In what follows, I am going to argue for the somewhat surprising thesis that death is an event that can be survived. If I am right, it should become clear that this is by no means a miraculous occurrence, but what is in fact the norm when something dies. Surprising such an assertion may be, but the kind of survival that will become apparent is one of hardly any worth: no-one should expect their fear of death to diminish upon the discovery that they will continue to exist after their death as a dead body. To substantiate these claims, I will have to undertake an examination of the relationship between death and existence, and refute the claim that when something dies it ceases to exist.

For both brevity and accuracy, it will be beneficial to state and name the two major theses that will be discussed. Following Feldman, the first thesis shall be called the termination thesis:

TT- When something dies it ceases to exist.

Not only is death the end of something's life, it is also the end of its existence. The usual formulation of TT is one that talks exclusively of the deaths of people, whereas the formulation presented here is broader because it takes as its subject anything that dies: we are not just talking about the death of people, but of trees, dogs, lizards, etc. This extra generality is justified because our topic here is all the occurrences of death,

and although much of what will be said will be about the death of people, they are by no means the only mortal existents worthy of our attention.

The opposite of TT is what I will dub the survival thesis:

ST- Not everything ceases to exist when it dies.

Whereas TT says that when something dies it necessarily ceases to exist, ST denies this necessity by saying that death does not necessarily imply destruction: death may be sufficient for non-existence, but there is no necessary connection between death and existence. Now that we have stated the theses, we should now see who their champions are.

There are numerous philosophers who advocate TT, and I think that they can be divided into two main categories. There are those philosophers who merely express TT as an assertion, without any argument to support it; and there are those philosophers who argue that there is a fundamental relation between an organism being alive and it existing. I will call the first camp the bare asserters, and the second camp the Lockeans because they employ arguments which are similar to, or are inspired by Locke. Let us start with the bare asserters. Why don't they argue for TT? Maybe they think that it is too self-evident or intuitive for the truth about death to be anything else, or perhaps they think that the alternatives are untenable. But no matter what their reasons are, there are a lot of philosophers who believe that TT can be taken as an assumption. To put names to theses, let us examine some of those philosophers who have subscribed to TT in this way.

Among the bare asserters is Epicurus, who famously supports his conclusion that 'death, is nothing to us' because 'when we exist death is not present, and when

death is present we do not exist'[1]. Nagel thinks that there is a problem concerning who is the subject of the misfortune of death if it 'is the unequivocal and permanent end of our existence'[2] and Silverstein accepts 'the proposition that when one dies, one ceases to exist, in some important sense'[3]. Perhaps the most brusque bare assertion is that of Yourgrau's who says: 'Since I find that my intuition that Socrates, as dead, no longer exists, is unshakable, I am more inclined to reject any philosophy that rejects this intuition than to give up the intuition itself'[4]. Of the kind of philosophers who argue for TT we have Wiggins and Olson[5]. They both have inspiration from Locke to supplement their broadly Aristotelian theories of personal identity so that TT is true as a corollary (Olson's theory of personal identity 'entails that an animal necessarily ceases to exist when it dies'[6]).

The two main figures on the side of ST are Feldman and Mackie[7] (There are other philosophers who have briefly discussed the relation between death and existence and come down in favour of ST: Ayers and Jarvis Thomson[8]). They, like me, believe that organisms can persist through the change that is their death. I think that by combining and supplementing their work, we can create a comprehensive case for the establishment of ST. I will now give an account of the argumentative strategy that this chapter will follow.

To begin with, we will disregard those who argue for TT. Before we tackle these philosophers we will exploit the existence of the bare asserters, who state TT without argumentation. This gives me the opportunity to present a number of cases

[1] Long & Sedley (1987) p150. Luper-Foy in Fischer (1993) p221 agrees: 'Let us assume with Epicurus that death means annihilation'
[2] Nagel (1979) p1.
[3] Silverstein in Fischer (1993) p120
[4] Yourgrau (1987) p88
[5] Wiggins (1976) and Olson (1997).
[6] Olson (1997) p136.
[7] See Feldman (1992), (2000) and (2001); and Mackie (1999).
[8] Ayers (1991) and Jarvis Thomson (1997)

that show that TT is not as intuitive as it first seems, and if they give us a reason to think that ST is true, they give us a reason to think that TT is false (since ST is the negation of TT). After these cases have been presented, they will be given a theoretical underpinning. In the next section we will counter a criticism of ST, before we come to the Lockean proponents whose arguments will either be seen as fallacious, or in contravention with the common sense account of what happens to something when it dies. In the final section, we will consider a stronger criticism that intends to restrict the generality of ST. This criticism will lead us into the discussion of personhood that will form the bulk of the next chapter.

Part 2. Cases of survival.

In this section, I will present a number of intuition cases that favour ST, which I will call the 'survival cases'. The idea behind these cases is that they present situations where it is natural to think that ST is true, and at the same time, unnatural to hold that TT is true. Part of the attraction of the survival cases is that they fall under the subcategory of thought experiments that do not try and squeeze substantive philosophical theses out of fantastic situations: take Twin-Earth, and brain bisections for example. Instead, Feldman's survival cases only require the imagining of situations that one could potentially go and observe oneself. This is not to say that philosophical theses cannot be supported by thought experiments like ones involving Twin-Earth, it is just that if a thought experiment only involves what could be called 'real-life' situations it is a characteristic that can only add to their plausibility. All but one of the survival cases are either from or derivative of the work of Feldman[9]. A

[9] Feldman (2000)

broad range of organisms from the organic world are present in the cases: plants, insects, amphibians, and mammals are represented. This will give any inference made from the survival cases a broader coverage.

The cases are as follows:

Tree: In someone's garden there is a dead tree. There is all the evidence to suggest that it has once lived. It has a number of rings in the trunk, for example. Say it lived for fifty years before it died, and it died fifty years ago. If you were to ask someone facing the tree 'How old is the thing in front of you?' the natural answer would be to reply 'It is one hundred years old'. Anyone who accepts TT would have to say the real answer is that it is fifty years old because fifty years ago something went out of existence, the tree, and a new thing was created. It seems obvious however, that the tree didn't go out of existence fifty years ago. It may be a dead tree, but it's still a tree.

Frog: Two girls are in an anatomy class about to dissect a frog to learn about the anatomy of amphibians. If TT were true the class teacher could approach the girls and truthfully say to them 'The thing that you are going to cut up never ribbited, swam, croaked, or ate flies because the frog that performed all those activities ceased to exist when it died. The thing in your hands is a different thing'. But surely what the girls have in their hands is the very thing that did all these frog-like things, and when they start the dissection, they will be chopping up a frog.

Butterfly: Frank is a butterfly collector. He prides himself in being able to acquire dead butterflies and display them in his cabinet without causing any damage to them. If TT is true, then whatever Frank displays in his cabinet is not a butterfly, because the butterfly itself stopped existing when it died. From this we can infer the peculiar conclusion that we were wrong all along to call Frank a butterfly collector because whatever he is collecting are not butterflies.

Dissection: Medical students are about to dissect a dead person as part of an anatomy course. If TT were true, the teacher could approach them and truthfully say 'The thing that you are about to cut up never ate breakfast, watched television, or had a job for thirty years because that the thing that did all these things ceased to exist when it died. You will be chopping up something different'.

Burial: Phil's grandmother has past away. He wants to fulfil her last wish which is to be laid to rest with her husband. The problem is, if TT is true, then the dead don't exist. Phil now faces the problem that he cannot fulfil his grandmother's wish because she doesn't exist anymore and you can't bury what doesn't exist. Whatever he puts in the ground will be something other than his grandmother[10].

What the survival cases all show is how anyone who holds TT should also hold highly untenable beliefs as a consequence, and if they are just a bare asserter, it seems that all

[10] This example is inspired by Yourgrau (2000).

the intuition in favour of TT has been swept away. The unnatural consequences that all the cases highlight is that [redacted] if one accepts TT, then one must accept that when something dies, it ceases to exist, and something else, made out of the same matter, comes into existence to occupy the space which the dead thing used to occupy. TT may well be true, but the survival cases show that it doesn't appear true: some sort of positive argument is required to support it.

The survival cases not only have a strong pre-theoretical pull, but they also function as a signpost towards a theoretical defence of ST, and they do this by all exploiting one particular metaphysical notion: that of a single object that persists through time. In all the cases, the dead thing is the same thing as the earlier living thing. The natural inclination we have to see a dead tree as the same persisting object as the earlier living tree is the source of the unusual consequences of TT. By combining the cases with a metaphysical theory of persisting objects, we will have shown that in fact ST is the most natural account of the relation between death and existence.

When talking about continuants in metaphysics, three ideas are especially prevalent because they do much to set the debate, and these are substance, property, and kind. After an explication of these notions, we will see how they explain the cases we have just seen.

Substances are characterised, by Wiggins and Lowe[11], as being non-abstract, persisting, particular things, whereas a mode, or a property, is just a way that that thing is. The substance is that single persisting thing in the survival cases. This distinction between substances and properties can be brought about by an example. Imagine that a friend of yours is looking out of the window at the garden and says

[11] Wiggins (2001) and Lowe (1989)

'There's something that is eating in the garden', you immediately become concerned that an animal has invaded your vegetable patch and is destroying a year's hard graft at gardening. In response to his statement, and in order to find out about the thing is that is doing the eating, you ask 'What is it?', and as an answer your friend says 'It's a goat. It's decimating your cabbages'. If you understand the exchange, and accept the aforementioned definition of substance, you will realise that in the garden, there is a substance, the goat, which is modified in such a way that it is eating cabbages.

Questions of the form 'what is it?', when asked in this context, are satisfactorily answered by the mention of a kind of thing (also called sortals). In the case above, the mentioned kind was a goat, but in some situations, the mentioning of a kind of thing is not sufficient to individuate a substance. If the man looking out the window had said 'nun' instead of 'goat', we will have still been informed about a thing of which a sortal is true, but we wouldn't want to say that a nun is a substance, and this is due to the relation between substances and existence. This can be seen when we think about the numerous sortals-terms that apply to the thing that is eating in the garden: not just 'nun', but also 'human-being', 'person', and, 'woman'. Wiggins brings light here by saying that of all these sortals, one is more fundamental than the others. Fundamental in the sense that if the thing under scrutiny no longer satisfied such a sortal-term, in Wiggin's case the term 'human-being', then that thing will have ceased to exist. On the other hand, the thing just changes how it is when other, less fundamental, sortals cease to apply to it. When you set the nun on fire for looting your cabbages, and all that is left are ashes, the thing has ceased to exist, because the human being has been destroyed; but if the nun just quits the convent, there is not one less thing in the world, but one thing in the world has ceased to be a nun.

We are now able to draw the distinction between two kinds of kinds, which will become crucial when we come to talk about the relationship between human beings and people. There are what Wiggins calls substances, which are sortals 'that present-tensedly apply to an individual *x* at every moment throughout *x*'s existence, e.g *human being*, and those that do not [phase-sortals], e.g *boy*, or *cabinet minister*'[12]. The picture being shown to us is a hierarchy of sortals that apply to a thing, at the top is the substance-term which the thing has to satisfy in order to carry on existing, and underneath the substance, there can be numerous phase-sortal terms whose application to a thing has no bearing on its existence or not.

The final metaphysical concept that will be explicated here is one that is related to the idea of a kind, the notion of a persistence condition. For each substantial kind, horses and human beings for example, there are innumerable situations that the substance could be subject to, some of these situations the thing will survive, and some it will not. The persistence conditions of a kind are an account of what changes a member of that kind can and cannot survive. We can apply this idea to the tree in *tree*. When a tree is at ground zero of a nuclear blast, it is obvious that the single persisting thing will have ceased to exist when it is vaporised. It is also obvious that when a tree is licked by a dog, or when it drops a leaf during its autumnal shedding, the single persisting thing has survived the situation. Situations like these are at the extremities of the situations that a tree can and cannot survive, but what about death? Are situations involving death of the kind that the tree can survive or not? Well a tree cannot survive all the deaths that it can undergo, look at the nuclear bomb case where the single persisting thing has evidently been totally destroyed. But the tree in *tree* has died, but the single persisting object does seem to have survived: it's still there for us

[12] Wiggins (2001) p30

to see; and as of yet, we have not considered any reason to see the situation any differently. Therefore the theoretical explanation of *tree* is that death is not one of those situations where the thing necessarily has to go out of existence. I think that the same kind of reasoning can be applied to all the survival cases. In all these cases we have persisting things that were once alive and are now dead. At the beginning there were living trees and living people, and later on, there were dead trees and dead people.

The foregoing account of substance, kind and persistence conditions, is no more than a sketch of a general metaphysical picture. I am making numerous assumptions. My main assumption is an endurantist account of persistence where the persisting object in question is wholly present at every time of its existence. This endurantist picture is opposed to the perdurantist picture where the persisting object is not wholly present at every time that it exists, and this is because persisting objects have temporal parts analogous to spatial parts. I assume the endurantist model because I believe that it is correct, but I have no space to argue for it in this thesis. What I will say, however, is that the intuitions from the survival cases are neutral to what account of the persistence of objects one holds: as long as one believes that objects do persist, then the survival cases should provoke the intuition that organisms can survive their death; a temporal parts theory will explain this intuition with a different theoretical viewpoint[13]. I also assume what might appear a simple, possibly even archaic ontology that consists of only substances and modes. I do this because this is the only distinction that we will need, and there is no space to explain how substances,

[13] For an account of endurantism, see Wiggins (2001), and for a recent account of perdurantism see Sider (2001).

countable objects with determinate identity conditions, relate to other kinds of objects[14].

By combining the data that comes from Feldman's survival cases with a metaphysical account of substance, I think that I have provided a convincing account of why we should consider ST to be true: it is in accordance with our natural viewpoint concerning the persistence of organisms.

So far, we have only been dealing with the TT theorists who are bare asserters; by tackling these thinkers first, we have seen that if it were merely a contest between how intuitive the two theses are, then the survival cases capture the intuition in the favour of ST, and leave TT, as of yet, unsupported. If there were only bare asserters, we could clear up the objections to TT as it stands and consider the matter settled. But the situation is not that simple: there are a number of philosophers who believe that there is an argument concerning the nature of living organisms that supports TT. We will now consider what some might consider as a counterexample and then turn to the arguments inspired by Locke's writings on organisms.

But before we do this, we should briefly highlight the argument form that is becoming apparent. Since the survival cases have taken an indispensable and crucial position in my argument for TT, we can explicitly state the form of the overall argument:

1) The survival cases give reason to think that ST, not TT captures our natural attitude to the relation to death and existence.
2) There are no good arguments to make us think otherwise.

[14] For an account of what other kinds of objects might compose the furniture of the universe other than those that we can count and determinately individuate see Lowe (1998) Chapter 3.

In this section, I believe that I have given a good reason to believe that premise one of this argument is true. The next task at hand is to show that the body of arguments that have establishing TT as their end do not succeed in reaching their goals, thus supporting the second premise.

Part 3. A purported counterexample and clarifications.

The huge number of organisms that there are means that there is a vast diversity in the make-up and activity of the members of the animal kingdom. Upon this observation, an opponent of ST might attempt a counterexample.

> *Amoeba*: There is a microscopically small amoeba that is made out of one cell. When the amoeba dies, its structure is so simple that the cell almost instantaneously breaks up which causes the persisting thing that was the amoeba to cease to exist. It is normal for the members of this amoebic kind to cease to exist at the point of their death. It seems that death is not something that the persistence conditions of this kind allow its members to survive.

Should this be considered a counterexample to ST? Not really, because all ST denies of TT is the necessary connection between death and existence. It does not say that *all* things can carry on existing after they've died, but that some can. The amoeba in *amoeba* is an organism that cannot survive its death, but this doesn't contradict anything ST asserts. All that *amoeba* does show is that there could be some organisms that cannot survive their death. To deny that ST is true would require an argument that

denies the possibility of anything surviving its death. Anyone who believes that *amoeba* is a counterexample to ST has not grasped what ST is trying to assert.

Someone might take issue with my use of the expression 'survival'. They could say that my usage of the expression is incorrect, it is akin to an analytic truth that death cannot be survived because a thing only survives whilst it is alive. But the problem with this kind of objection is that it makes it impossible to literally say of non-living things that they have survived an event. This would mean that the following sentences are metaphorically, not literally true:

(3) Luckily, my house survived the hurricane.

(4) As long as I take care of it, this car will survive a whole century.

Both (3) and (4) can be seen as supporting the intuition that non-living things can survive their death, and this is harmonious with my use of 'survives' by which I mean 'carry on existing'.

There is a further reason why one might think that one shouldn't think that my use of the word 'survival' is wrong. Compare the following two sentences:

(5) I will live after I die.

(6) I will survive my death.

If you analyse death as the end of life, then (5) appears to result in contradiction because it is being asserted that there is life after the end of life[15]. If a theist who believed in life after death uttered (5) one could try to correct him by saying that what he is saying is contradictory. Could the same strategy be adopted with a theist who utters (6)? I think not. There seems little reason to believe that (6) is contradictory, and if someone used it an argument, another theist for example, we might disagree with them because there is little reason for them to believe that the metaphysics of the world are in accord with the assertion, but we wouldn't disagree with them on the basis that they are saying something contradictory.

Even if you are not convinced that these reasons vindicate my use of the expression 'survival', it is ultimately a terminological point. For those still unsatisfied, one should read 'survival' as 'carry on existing'.

Before we continue, I would like to clear up one more brief point. It might be said that it is obvious that I will cease to exist when I die, because isn't it true that I will cease to exist as a living thing when I die? To this supposed objection, I can only agree, but deny that it forms any real sort of objection to what I am trying to do. Whilst I agree that I cease to exist as a living thing when I die, I disagree that I cease to exist *simpliciter,* and the question that I am trying to answer is whether or not things cease to exist *simpliciter* when they die. I am not concerned with the weaker event of 'ceasing to exist as an F'. To confirm that ceasing to exist as is a weaker notion than ceasing to exist *simpliciter*, consider the following case. I ceased to exist as a boy when I reached a certain stage of my development, but this doesn't mean that I ceased to exist *simpliciter.*

[15] The contradiction could be escaped by disambiguating the sentence into 'I will live as a person after I have died as an organism'. For more on this see the discussion of the personal conception of death in the next chapter.

With minor criticisms out of the way, the positive arguments that are supposed to establish TT can now be assessed.

Part 4. Locke's criterion and Wiggins' interpretation.

We now reach the point where we can step beyond bare assertion and examine a set of arguments for TT. Locke gave an account of the persistence conditions of living organisms that some have taken to concord with TT. Two philosophers, Wiggins and Olson, have utilised Locke's insight about the persistence conditions of living organisms into arguments which are supposed to establish TT. In this section we will consider Wiggins' arguments, but before that I will give the passage where Locke expounds his views on the subject. It is worth giving it in full because we are going to be examining three viewpoints derived from it.

> [1] We must therefore consider wherein an Oak differs from a Mass of Matter, and it seems to me to be in this; that *one is only the Cohesion of Particles of Matter any how united*, the other such a disposition of them as constitutes the parts of an Oak; and such an Organization of those parts, as is fit to receive, and distribute nourishment, so as to continue, and frame the Wood, Bark, and Leaves, *etc.* of an Oak, in which consists the vegetable Life. [2] That being then one Plant, which has such an Organisation of Parts in one coherent Body, partaking of one Common Life, *it continues to be the same Plant, as long as it partakes of the same Life*, though that life may be communicated to new

> Particles of Matter vitally united to the living Plant, in a like continued Organization, conformable to that sort of Plants.[16]

Wiggins is particularly influenced by the ideas in the sentence marked by [1] from which he adopts a strategy to get where Locke reaches albeit via a slightly different route. The following argument is the result.

It starts by saying that, at least in the case of persons (who on Wiggins' account are human animals), an organism and its body have different properties, and this is supposed to become apparent when we consider some of the ascriptions we make when talking about human animals. Whilst it is perfectly legitimate to say 'the man is solving the puzzle', 'the person is eating the steak', or 'the woman is giving birth'; it is, according to Wiggins, 'absurd' and 'so unnatural that the upshot is simply falsity'[17] to make the same ascriptions to a body. This means that all the equivalent ascriptions for the body are false: we cannot truthfully say 'the body is solving the puzzle' or even 'the body is eating the steak'[18].

Questions of identity obey Leibniz's Law[19]. This is to say that for x to be numerically identical with y, whatever is true of x must be true of y and whatever is

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[16] Locke (1690) Bk II Chap XXVII §4, or p330-331 of the Nidditch edition (1975). The sentence numberings and the italics are my own.

[17] Wiggins (1976) p152.

[18] Although the non-transferability of certain ascriptions is asserted by Wiggins, he makes no characterisation of what kind of ascriptions cannot be transferred from organism to organism's body. The examples of such ascriptions he gives are '...is playing chess', '...is talking sense', '...knows arithmetic', '...plays games' and '...sits down'. All of these can be true of a human animal, and this is because they might all denote kinds of acting, but maybe the kinds of ascriptions that he is trying to gesture at cannot be grouped together in terms of them denoting agency. The point that I am trying to make is that even though Wiggins is only explicitly talking about these ascriptions as applied to human beings, maybe a similar strategy could be applied to other organisms. So if the ascriptions are all of the agency kind, then the forthcoming argument could be applied to other animals that we believe act: apes and dogs perhaps? What's important here is that the kinds of ascriptions that Wiggins is using, when fleshed out, could apply to other animals other than human beings, and this means that for the rest of the argument I will remain neutral in the specification of the kind of animal that is being talked about, and refer to it simply as the 'organism'. This neutrality is not significant because the arguments I use against this kind of argument work regardless of what kind of organism is in question.

[19] This is almost entirely orthodox. For one dissenter, see Geach (1970).

true of y must be true of x (Formally stated as: $(\forall x)(\forall y)\ ((x=y) \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow Fy))$). Since Wiggins thinks that he has shown how bodies and organisms possess different properties he can now assert that they are distinct entities. The body and the organism, although not identical, are intimately related: when the body is structured in a manner appropriate to sustain life, the body and the organism occupy exactly the same space. When this happens, the body constitutes the organism.

The relationship between Wiggins' argument and the establishment of TT should now be apparent. If the argument goes through, then a situation has been created where the organism and the body can cease to exist at different times, something that is not possible if they are numerically identical. According to this model of death, an organism dies when its constituting body ceases to be capable of supporting life, and when the organism no longer has a suitable body to constitute it, it ceases to exist. But just because the organism ceases to exist doesn't mean that the body ceases to exist (unless the death is particularly violent), and the dead body can be used to explain away the intuitions from the survival cases. The overriding intuition found in the survival cases was that TT required its advocates to hold the extremely counterintuitive opinion that the corpse that survives death is not the same thing as organism that lived before. But Wiggins would say that he has vindicated this seemingly unnatural consequence of TT by giving an argument that shows that it must be the case that the body was never a living thing: if the body and the organism are distinct at one time, they are always distinct.

The denial of Wiggins' argument of TT should rest on how we interpret his use of the expression 'body'. We can interpret this word in two ways. The first use of the term is in accord with Locke who is talking about the thing that constitutes, and is distinct from the organism, as being an aggregate of microscopic entities, or as he

himself puts it, a 'Cohesion of Particles of Matter, any how united'. The second way that we could interpret 'body' is as we mean it in expressions 'dead body', or 'your body cannot take the abuse much longer', etc. 'Body' in this sense, denotes a material thing with a certain type of distinctive form. Since these two interpretations of the expression 'body' are not equivalent, Wiggins' argument will be affected by how we interpret him. I will now argue that if Wiggins chooses the 'body' as an aggregate of particles[20], he can argue that the body and the organism are distinct, but then he cannot use this to support TT; and then I will show that if he uses the 'body' in its more biological sense, he cannot make the claim of distinctness in the first place.

What needs to be shown first is how an organism is distinct from its aggregate of particles, and this is not done by highlighting the queerness that occurs when we make certain ascriptions to bodies. Instead, we note that their persistence conditions are different. An aggregate of particles persists as long as all of its members remain part of that aggregation, so if a member is destroyed, or becomes separated from the group, the aggregate ceases to exist. Whilst the members are essential for the persistence of the aggregate, its form is not: it can take any shape that allows it to maintain the aggregation. An organism, due to its metabolic nature, is the exact opposite. Organisms constantly change their component parts, but persist as long as they maintain their form throughout this change. The difference in persistence conditions means a difference in the dispositional properties between the aggregate of particles and the organism, implying that they cannot be numerically identical. As with the original formulation in the argument, we should say that the aggregate constitutes the organism.

[20] The expression 'particles' here is meant in a non-technical manner to denote microscopic entities.

Let us consider what happens when an organism constituted by an aggregate of particles dies. As the aggregate of particles lose the form that is apt to support a life, the organism ceases to exist, and as long as the death isn't very violent, the aggregate of particles can carry on existing. We should recall why Wiggins is trying to make the distinctness claim in the first place. He does it because it is supposed to allow for there to be a body that carries on existing after the organism has died. It allows for TT to be true, because the organism ceases to exist when there is nothing to constitute it, yet it leaves a body behind, just as the survival cases demand. It also manages to explain away the intuition the survival cases produce that the dead thing is the same thing as the earlier living thing, because the body and organism are distinct. I will now show that the body as an aggregate of particles does not satisfy the role of a dead body as we commonly conceive it.

The survival cases all present situations where there is a body that maintains some of the form of the kind of thing it was when it was living. The dead frog, up until its dissection, still has the form of a frog. By taking the dead body to be an aggregate of particles we are not dealing with anything which has a particular form, we are dealing with a completely formless thing that just so happens to be in the shape of a frog. If a freshly dead frog loses any one of its microscopic parts, a particle or a cell, it doesn't cease to exist. But if we think that the dead body is an aggregate of particles, we would be committed to saying that its form is completely insignificant for its persistence, and every time one particle or cell ceases to exist, the dead body ceases to exist and a new dead body has come into being because an aggregate has ceased to exist and a new one has come into being. We would also be committed to saying that if we were to flatten a dead frog into a one particle thin pancake, then the

dead body would still survive, as long as the frog loses none of its parts. For these reasons, an aggregate of particles cannot satisfactorily do the job of a dead body.

Since the interpretation of 'body' as Locke's aggregate of particles doesn't seem to allow for a plausible account of TT, we shall now see if the alternative interpretation–one where it denotes an object with a distinctive form, that can persist through some loss of its parts- fares any better. There needs to be some sort of characterisation of the form that bodies possess. A fair characterisation is whatever characterises the physical aspect of the organism: bones, organs, blood and other essential fluids, all configured in the fashion characteristic of the kind in question. In the case of a dog, this will include its skin, internal organs, teeth, fur, and so on, all in the configuration of a dog. But if this is what Wiggins means by 'body', it seems that he is unable to make the claim that the body and the organism are distinct.

It is in the nature of an organism that it changes its constituent parts through metabolic processes. If a body is a thing that is made out of organic parts, like internal organs, teeth, etc; and if these things alter their parts through metabolic processes, then surely it is the case that the body alters its parts through metabolic processes in the same way that the organism does. We can continue making comparisons: they share the same parts; they share the same space, etc. In fact, they have so much in common, they're suspiciously beginning to appear as if they are identical. If anyone were to suggest that the body and the organism are identical, Wiggins can wheel out his argument that some ascriptions true of the organism are not true of the body.

Olson thinks that the consequences of claiming that the body and organism are distinct are unacceptable. He wants to know how two things, made out of exactly the same parts have different properties. Take a human being for example. If what Wiggins is saying is true, then there are two distinct objects, the organism and the

body, made out of exactly the same parts, yet the organism thinks, and the body doesn't. Both the organism and the body will have the same brain as a part, and this brain will be in exactly the same state for both of them, so why shouldn't they both be thinking?

We are faced with a dilemma. Either we deny the distinctness between body and organism and swallow the absurdity of making psychological ascriptions on bodies, or we insist that they are distinct, but then we have to explain how two things, each with the same brain, can differ in terms of their mental properties. The second option comes at a high price. It involves saying that two things, each with exactly the same physical parts, have different mental parts. Making this kind of move should not only prove distasteful for those who hold that the mental is identical with the physical, but also to those who believe that although the mental is not identical with the physical, it is in some way dependent on the physical. By demanding the distinctness between body and organism, we are severing any explanatory connection between the mental and the physical. To say that the body and the organism are distinct requires a theory of the mental that few would want to accept. Perhaps we should reconsider how absurd it is making psychological ascriptions onto bodies.

Wiggins has claimed that it is absurd and false to make psychological ascriptions onto bodies. This comes from an unease we encounter whenever we identify a body with a human being: 'we bring these findings to the subject [of personal identity] before speculation begins'[21]. Now that we have seen how difficult it is to make the distinction between body and organism, maybe we should reconsider this assumption, or explain it away without making a metaphysical distinction. One plausible way that we could do this is to say that it is a phenomenon of our language.

[21] Wiggins (1976) p152.

Why don't we just say that terms like 'body' and 'organism' are coextensive, but differ in their sense? On this model, a body, an organism and a human being may all be the same thing, but the terms we use to refer to these things have different connotations, and we could use this to explain the apparent falsity of the ascriptions. Consider the following utterances, one of direct discourse, one of indirect discourse:

(1) Bodies do play chess and human organisms do too.

(2) David Wiggins believes that bodies don't play chess and that human organisms do.

I take it that if there is no distinction between bodies and organisms (1) will be true, whilst the sentence embedded in the propositional attitude in (2) will be false, but the entire sentence will be true. It seems that this linguistic explanation fulfils our conditions. It denies a metaphysical distinction between body and organism, acknowledging the difficulties Olson points out, but it allows for an explanation in terms of truth and falsity, by accounting for the unease we feel when we identify bodies with human beings in terms of the truth and falsity of sentences like (2)[22]. For the rest of the thesis, I will not acknowledge the distinction between body and organism.

The argument Wiggins presented to support TT, one whose aim was to show that the thing that survives death is not identical with the earlier living thing, cannot reach its conclusion no matter which of the two senses of the expression 'body' we employ. Since this interpretation of Locke fails to vindicate TT, we shall move to Olson's attempt.

[22] Since writing this, I have discovered that Williams suggests a similar idea in Williams (1972).

Part 5. Olson's interpretation of Locke.

We have seen how Olson thinks Wiggins' attempt to make a distinction between body and organism faces seemingly insuperable difficulties. He still wants to subscribe TT, but he doesn't try to help himself to the useful metaphysical distinction between body and organism that Wiggins tries to set up. This means he rejects Wiggins' interpretation of [1], so his support of TT comes from Locke's [2], where he says that an organism at one time is the same organism at another time if both organisms share the same life. Olson takes this on, and proposes persistence conditions for organisms which assert that an organism can carry on existing as long as it carries on living: when an organism ceases living, it ceases to exist. If the persistence conditions of organisms are like this, TT follows as a corollary.

It is not insignificant that Olson denies the distinction between body and organism. The utility it had was that it allowed for an organism to cease to exist, yet leave a body behind, which was never identical to the organism. But Olson's animals are not two things that co-locate at certain times, an organism and a body, but one individual, the organism. According to this account of TT, the organism goes out of existence, leaving nothing behind. He puts it as follows: 'whatever objects there may be that your atoms now compose, it is plausible to suppose that they cease to exist no later than your death. There is no obvious reason to suppose that any 150-pound object persists through the change'[23].

Olson has not really presented with an argument for TT, but instead an account of the persistence conditions of organisms that have TT as a consequence. As

[23] Olson 1997 p152.

it stands, there seems to be little to differentiate this from the bare assertions. The fact that Olson's account of organism persistence entails TT, is something that can be used as a criticism of it, because it flies against the intuitions dominant in the survival cases. Olson is committed to all the peculiar consequences of TT, that when an organism dies it ceases to exist, a thing made out of exactly the same matter comes into existence; and he is unlike Wiggins, because he has not got the distinction between body and organism to explain this away. The survival cases give our natural account of the relation between death and existence, the fact that Olson's theory of organism persistence goes against them is reason to deny the account of organism persistence rather than deny ST.

The fact that Olson's persistence conditions of organisms entail the counterintuitive TT would not be so bad if his account of the persistence conditions were itself strong and compelling, but his precise formulation is itself flawed. We mentioned earlier that Olson believes that an organism persists if it has the same life over time. His precise statement of this idea is that 'For any organism *x* and any *y*, *x*=*y* if and only if *x*'s life is *y*'s life'[24]. This formulation needs an account of what sameness of life consists in. Olson thinks that there are a number of essential characteristics that all living things have. These are: metabolism -the retention of an organism's 'characteristic form and structure despite a constant and rapid exchange of matter and energy with [its] surroundings'[25]; teleology - which is the way that organisms are formed to be directed towards fulfilling particular functions; and organised complexity - the way in which life-forms are the result of an incredibly complex organisation of parts. The only way in which Olson fleshes out this account of sameness of life is in terms of sameness of brainstem because it is the brainstem

[24] Olson (1997) p138
[25] Ibid. p127

that directs the numerous parts of the organism into working in unison towards their metabolic goals. But this cannot be a fully general formulation because most organisms do not have brainstems, take any organism made out of a couple of cells for example. So if Olson wants his sameness of life to be applicable to all organisms he will have to give an explanation of why there is a different criterion of identity for organisms with brainstems from those without, and then he will be forced to give a formulation of sameness of life for those organisms.

Let us focus on the sameness of brainstem formulation. It not only results in persistence conditions that entail the counterintuitive TT, but regardless of the debate over the relation between death and existence, to hold this criterion, one must bite off further unpalatable consequences. It requires us to accept that if an organism's brainstem were destroyed and replaced a thousandth of a second later, by another brainstem, the organism would cease to exist and a new organism would come into existence. This is a logical possibility, but something that there seems little independent reason to believe to be the case. This means that we have a counterintuitive theory which entails the counterintuitive TT. If there is a better explanation, one which coheres more with our pre-theoretical view of the world, yet at the same time explaining the phenomena in question, we should accept that. In the next section, I shall offer such an explanation. The only option left for Olson is to provide an argument that justifies his subscription to TT despite its disagreement with common sense.

Luckily Olson does produce an argument that is supposed to support TT. When he dies, the organism that he is will go through 'dramatic' changes over a very short period of time. After this, the change will be as slow as the process of decomposition. He thinks that we should conclude from this that the initial big

changes that happen during death cause the non-existence of the organism, rather than the interminable changes of decomposition. But the problem with this argument is that it doesn't say that *all* the changes that lead to the non-existence of the organism occur at death, just the 'big ones', and this is perfectly consistent with the possibility that the changes that cause the non-existence of the organism are the slow ones that occur later during the long process of decomposition.

There seems to be a certain idea underlying Olson's thought concerning TT and organisms. It is that in order for an organism to exist, it must be a living, functioning organism. If it is not alive, for whatever reason, it is not functioning, and it therefore does not fulfil its teleology, and is hence not an organism. I think that this is initially a compelling line of thought, but I believe that if we exploit the similarities between the functionality of organisms and the functionality of artefacts, we will see that it can quickly lose its attraction. Mackie adduces a situation that dismisses this idea. Imagine an object which belongs to a kind that is characterised by its members having a kind of functionality, a watch for example. A broken watch, one that is broken because one of its parts has snapped, is still a watch. If this person were to show you this watch twice, one time before the watch was broken, the other time after it had broken, there seems to be no reason why we would not say that we are being presented the same object twice. If the watch losing its functionality does not cause it to cease to exist, then why should another functional object, an organism cease to exist when it ceases to function, i.e. when it dies? I can think of no reason.

I conclude from this that neither Olson, nor Wiggins has succeeded in vindicating TT by employing the insights of Locke. We will now turn to an interpretation of Locke that suggests that what he says is compatible with ST.

Part 6. Locke and the survival thesis.

Mackie believes that what is fundamental to the passage from Locke is not incompatible with ST. The primary motivation of the passage is to show that an organism is distinct from the mass of particles that constitutes it. Locke argues for this by giving the mass of particles and the organism different persistence conditions: the mass of particles can't survive changes in its parts whilst the changing of the parts of an organism is the means by which it persists. But Locke goes one step too far when he says that the persistence conditions of an organism require it have the same life throughout its existence, which implies that when its life is extinguished, the organism no longer exists.

The development that Mackie brings to the debate is as follows: he says that it is possible to give an account of the persistence conditions of the organism which takes into account the metabolic change of their parts, but also doesn't [redacted] entail TT. What he suggests is that we should demand that the persistence conditions of an organism require that the organism keeps a sufficient number of its parts that is akin to the organisation of parts that it had whilst it was alive, whilst at the same time say that the organism need not be alive to retain that organisation of parts. The idea behind this is that an organism can retain the organisation of the vast majority of its parts after it has died. What this means is that when an organism retains the form it had when it was alive it then persists through the change that is its death without ceasing to exist, which is a denial of TT, and that we can still maintain a difference in the persistence conditions of organisms and their constituting matter. Wherein does the difference lie? As long as we demand that the organism retain some of the form of its living self, it will always have different persistence conditions to a mass of matter

which has no form essential to it. Mackie can also find support from Ayers, who says: 'There is nothing special about the function life itself, and we can continue to talk of the same individual's being in existence as long as there exists a stable structure'[26]. How long an organism can maintain its characteristic form after death is something that we shall not go into here, but let it be said that a metric of decomposition will take into account the kind of organism in question and its environmental situations: a dead frog in a desert is going to maintain the form a of frog for a far shorter period of time than a dead frog kept in the fridge.

Mackie has shown that we can have the best of both worlds: we can keep Locke's idea that we are distinct from our constitutive matter and accept ST at the same time.

Part 7. Problems with being 'dead'.

Some people, like Olson and Rosenberg, say that a dead person isn't a real person, and though we might use the expression 'dead person', we shouldn't be committed to saying anything more than just a corpse which isn't a person. Criticisms like this suggest that anything dead cannot be a member of the kind it was when it was alive. Olson puts it like this: 'That a dead animal should not be an animal may sound absurd. But then a ghost town is not a town, a dry lake is not a lake, a tin soldier is not a soldier, and a dead person is not a person'[27]. This is a criticism that denies that there could be any coherent inference from the use and significance of the expression 'dead people' to there actually being dead people. I think this kind of objection can be countered.

[26] Ayers (1991) p208
[27] Olson (1997) p136, for something similar see Rosenberg (1998) p41.

There can be found in the literature, a refutation of this kind of denial of there being dead things in the work of Mackie[28]. He introduces the notion of dead people in an argument to deny the necessity of the psychological criterion of the identity of people over time, which says that one person at t_1 is the same thing at t_2 if and only if the person at t_1 is psychologically continuous, in an appropriate way, with the thing at t_2. His argument is as follows. When someone dies there is a dead person, and this thing is not psychologically continuous with the prior living person. He asserts that the dead person is the same thing as the prior living thing, but because it is not psychologically continuous with the prior living person, Mackie concludes that psychological continuity is not necessary for personal identity.

Although we are not concerned with the effectiveness, or relevance of this argument in the debate over personal identity; in his defence of the first premise, that once someone dies there is a dead person, Mackie says some interesting and relevant things about the coherence of the expression 'dead people'. For a start such a significant expression exists in our language, and we have no problems understanding an utterance that appropriately contains it. Just think of the news correspondent reporting from some disaster where many people have been killed in the collapse of a building, she might report something like 'In the rubble, rescue workers have estimated that there may be as many as one hundred dead people still buried'. But Olson would reply to Mackie that although we use such an expression, this doesn't mean that we are in fact referring to dead people, or that such things exist.

What seems to be the main charge that Olson employs over the expression 'dead people' is that there are no dead people because the adjective 'dead' functions as a predicate modifier that says of the predicate that it modifies does not actually

[28] Mackie (1999). In his discussion Mackie doesn't cite anybody as being an example of someone giving the kind of criticism that he is trying to defend ST from. From what I have covered in the literature, Olson seems to be a philosopher who can be interpreted as giving this kind of criticism.

apply to anything it is predicated onto. In response to such a charge, Mackie analyses both of the components of 'dead people': 'dead' and 'people'. He thinks that an example of such an adjective is 'counterfeit', as it appears in the expression 'counterfeit money', and counterfeit money isn't actually money at all. Other such adjectives would be 'illusory' or 'imaginary'. Therefore, when we combine 'dead' with 'person' we are not actually talking about people, but we are just referring to corpses in a different way. But, as Mackie points out, if this were the case, we would get counterintuitive outcomes when we combine 'dead' with a variety of predicates. Recall *butterfly.* The butterfly collector collects dead butterflies. He puts on display dead butterflies whilst doing his best not to damage them. If 'dead' were like 'counterfeit', then it would be false to say that the butterfly collector collects butterflies. The best example that he gives is that of 'dead body', which if 'dead' is an adjective like 'counterfeit', would not be a body at all. It should be obvious that since we consider dead bodies to really be bodies, we should not consider 'dead' as functioning like 'counterfeit'.

This is a rather shallow way of couching the debate between ST and TT, because by directing the debate towards the meaning of the expression 'dead', we are presupposing the outcome of the debate. What other reason might anyone think that 'dead' functions like 'counterfeit' unless they already thought that TT is true? Would Mackie believe that 'dead' doesn't work like 'counterfeit' if he didn't subscribe to ST? Think of the butterfly example that Mackie uses against the 'counterfeit' charge. The reason one might think that a dead butterfly is still a butterfly is because we have given reasons independent of the functioning of 'dead' to suggest that ST is true. The only example that Mackie gives that seems to be independent of the truth of ST and TT is the example concerning dead bodies, and if we want to try and discuss the

functioning of 'dead' without presupposing the truth of ST and TT, it is this example we should focus on.

Olson would say that his metaphysics can stop the dead body example succeeding. He doesn't believe that there are such things as bodies, in the sense that we mean. He thinks that 'body' is idiomatically acceptable, but he doesn't think that any metaphysical consequences can be grounded by its use. His argument for this conclusion is that there is no accurate way of characterising what our body is or our relation to it. The characterisation that he examines in most detail, ultimately disposing of it, is that the body is that which we are in some sort of control over. Olson by no means gives a logically exhaustive account of all the ways that we could characterise what our body is, so it seems a bit hasty to discard the notion from our metaphysics so abruptly. Many everyday things have escaped precise formulation, but that doesn't necessitate denying their existence; and it is not as if bodies are some sort of mysterious metaphysical concept of which talk is controversial: they are everyday objects. If this is Olson's reasoning, then it seems that he cannot escape Mackie's dead body example, which gives reasons, independent of the truth and falsity of ST and TT, to believe that 'dead' does not function like 'counterfeit'.

But even if one were to accept Olson's denial of the existence of bodies, I think that there is another convincing reason to the effect that we should not treat 'dead' similarly to 'counterfeit' which is independent of the general debate of TT and ST. If one analyses death as the end of a life, then we can say that dead things used to be alive things, and there is nothing analogous with expressions like 'counterfeit' and 'fake'. For example, a living fish stays out of water for too long and subsequently turns into a dead fish, the dead fish was once a living fish, but a fake Rolex watch was never a real Rolex watch.

Someone like Olson might make a concession by saying that the analogy between 'dead' and 'counterfeit' isn't an *exact* analogy, but the lack of a perfect analogy doesn't mean that they aren't, in some sense, analogous. Another, similar, analogy might be suggested: that 'dead' is analogous with 'ex-wives'. This is because an ex-wife used to be a wife and now no longer is, in the same way that a dead person used to be a living person, but is now a dead person. I think that an advocate of ST can accept this analogy between 'dead' and 'ex-wives', because ex-wives become ex-wives once they cease to exist as the wife of a particular person; once someone ceases to exist as a wife, she does not cease to exist *simpliciter*. This analogy between 'dead' and 'ex-wife' is perfectly compatible with ST because I believe that when something dies, it ceases to exist as a living thing, but it does not cease to exist *simpliciter*. As I mentioned earlier, ceasing to exist *simpliciter* is the event that I am interested in.

The main problem that Mackie faces in his assertion that there are dead people, is that when we use the expression 'dead people', we are not actually referring to people, because people are things that satisfy certain conditions that presuppose life. One might say that a person is a rational agent with the capacity to retain memories of past experiences, and whereas these characteristics are true of a person whilst they are alive, they cease to be true of them when they die. Thus we can say that there is no such thing as a dead person. It is here that Mackie is forced to make a concession. He admits that he never intended to refer to people in the sense of a thing that satisfies a number of psychological conditions, which he calls a person with a big 'p', but instead he is using person 'in a different, but not obviously incorrect, way'[29], which he denotes with 'person' with a little 'p', and this is the use as it appears in 'dead people'. Again, it seems that Mackie is again correct with the

[29] Mackie (1999): p224

meaning and use of 'dead people', but this concession is not insignificant. This foreshadows the next criticism, which will be dispatched within the next chapter where the idea of personhood is examined.

When talking about dead people then, we have to admit that the kinds of things we are talking about are people, and not People. But Mackie's analysis of the meaning of the expression 'dead' means that we do not have to deny the existence of things that are combined with the expression, and this means that we do not have to deny the existence of dead people on the basis of Olson's linguistic criticism. It does seem that our problem is not with 'dead' but with the word it is concatenated with, 'people'. This problem will be met in the future discussion of personhood in the next chapter.

The prospects for the survival of non-human organisms are rosier because we do not have to bother with the psychological distinction between People and people. We don't have trees and Trees, or cats and Cats, in the same way that we have people and People: we just have trees and cats. Because of this, we can just use Mackie's analysis of 'dead' to say that there are dead trees and dead cats without denying their existence.

Part 8. A more potent argument.

At the present stage of the inquiry, I would like to think that there has been given a satisfactory account of how, at least some organisms can survive their death. It is timely to consider how general a thesis ST is, and to present an argument that attempts to restrict its scope. The argument goes as follows: even though there are some kinds of persisting objects whose persistence conditions allow them to carry on

existing after their death it does not cover all the things that die. Examples of such kinds are butterflies, trees, and frogs; but not, as the critic might suggest, people. What it is that separates a frog from a person is that when talking about the persistence conditions of the latter, we are compelled to invoke a certain set of higher psychological characteristics, whereas when talking about frogs and trees we do not. So although a proponent of TT might say that ST may be true of organisms, things whose persistence conditions do not require the mention of psychological characteristics, it is not true for things whose persistence conditions do seem to require the mention of psychological characteristics, like people. What motivates this objection is a distinction between two types of death: a biological one that applies to members of the biological world, and a further personal conception of death that applies to things with psychological characteristics that constitute a person. Thus, to sum up what is being said by the opponent of ST is that ST is only true of a biological conception of death, but not true of a personal conception of death where TT applies.

If this objection were to go through, then it will not only scupper the generality that I originally envisaged for ST, but it will also thwart the following inference:

(1) My human being or body will survive my death.

to

(2) I will survive my death.

This is because although my biological aspect might survive my death, if I am essentially a person, then I will not survive my death if TT turns out to be true for people.

All that has just been touched upon requires extensive discussion, which will occur in the next chapter, but here I will outline what the forthcoming discussion will be. For anyone who suggests that TT is true for people depends on ~~their~~ Here being a personal conception of death. I will argue in the next chapter, that the correct account of the metaphysics of personhood does not allow for TT to be true of anything that we might call a personal conception of death. Hitherto, the attempt to prove ST has only seemed successful with non-human organisms, but since everyone who reads this will be a human being and a person just as I am, we will be far more interested about what happens to *us* when we die, and this is what will be explicated during the following chapter.

Chapter 2. The Fate of Persons and the Personal Conception of Death.

Throughout the last chapter, an argument was given that provided ample reason to believe that some organisms can survive their death. The final criticism to this view that was given said that there is a kind of death, that of persons, which is beyond the remit of the survival thesis (ST), and this leaves the termination thesis (TT) to be true of people. This chapter is devoted to elucidating this personal notion of death, and determining whether this kind of criticism has any effect or not on our overall discussion of the relation between death and existence. We will begin by looking at the two contrasting conceptions of death, the biological and the personal, with reasons why one might believe that they occur, and how they might be relevant to the arguments over TT and ST. After having found the relevance to depend on the metaphysics of personhood, we will embark on a prolonged account of personhood that will ultimately show that TT is not supported for people by a personal conception of death.

Part 1. The biological and the personal.

The expressions 'personal conception of death' and 'biological conception of death' have been bandied about with only the barest of adumbrations, and it is here that they will get a proper description. It will have been noticed that there has been no attempt to define or analyse the general concept of death, and this might be seen as a prerequisite for an enquiry into any of the different kinds of death. The analysis of death that I will work with is one where death is the end of the life of a living thing. At first, this analysis may seem problematic because we are now encumbered with the

task of giving an analysis of life. In order to avoid circularity, the analysis of life has to avoid all mention of death related terms (it cannot for example, be analysed as 'thing that is not dead'). Unfortunately, the task of giving a complete analysis of life is not an easy one[30]; and to keep hold of our analysis of death I think that we shall have to fall back on our unanalysed, pre-theoretical concept of life.

What might appear as a fatal problem with any attempt to analyse the different kinds of death is actually less perturbing when it is considered with regard to a parallel case in epistemology. In the 1960s, Gettier exposed the insufficiency of the ancient analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. Forty years on, there is still no consensus over how we should analyse our concept of knowledge, and there have been myriad different attempts to give a satisfactory analysis. But we must realise that even though epistemologists have had no satisfactory analysis of knowledge they have continued to work on its different varieties: testimonial, perceptual, and a priori, etc. If we were to say that our inability to give an analysis of death leaves us unable to talk about death in its different forms, we would be forced by a parity of reasoning to say the same of knowledge. No-one chastises the epistemologist for discussing the a priori, so why should the thanatologist be the subject of disapprobation?

As with most of our concepts, we may not be able to give an explicit analysis of the necessary and sufficient conditions needed for something to be dead, but this doesn't mean that we do not have an everyday, pre-reflective concept of death suitable for allowing us to differentiate between those things that are dead and those that are not. It is not just philosophical concepts that we might be unable to explicate. Think of all the concepts that we employ in our everyday life. We have a concept of chairs, aeroplanes, and mental states like emotions, but can we give fully accurate

[30] For more on these difficulties, see Feldman (1992) Chaps 1-4

analyses of them? And if we can't, does this mean that we don't really know whatever we are talking about is, and that we should not talk about them? Even if there do exist exact boundaries at the edges of our concepts, it seems unreasonable to demand that we should be able to explicitly state them. For what remains of the discussion, I will employ the analysis of death as the end of the life of a living thing, and let that analysis itself rest on our pre-theoretical idea of life.

Such worries aside, we may now begin to illustrate the differences between the biological and the personal conceptions of death. Put roughly, death in its biological sense is what happens to all organisms when they die. We can see examples of this in the following sentences where the death terms all seem to have a univocal meaning:

1) The pig died shortly after having its throat slit in the abattoir.

2) It is commonly believed that the dinosaurs all died as a result of a giant comet crashing into the Earth.

The reason that we should believe that the there is such a conception is because it is apparent all around us in the natural world: there is a never ending supply of instantiations of it to be observed. All the organisms we know of end up dying one day, and when they do, they do it biologically.

Standing in contrast to the biological conception of death is the personal conception. This can be characterised as what happens to something when it ceases to be a thing that instantiates higher psychological properties, such as self-consciousness, memory, agency; in fact, many of the properties that are associated with being a person. We might thus characterise the personal conception of death as what happens

when something ceases to be a person. The most obvious way that this could happen is in a case of a permanent and irreversible coma where all cognitive powers have gone with the destruction of the upper part of the brain, leaving only the more basic, animal drives to keep the body functioning with the metabolic processes. For anyone who believes that there is a personal notion of death, this is a prime example, and they will regard the poor unfortunate who is in the coma, as having actually died (in a sense). Who believes in such a conception? Van Ezra says that 'dying is simply a matter of ceasing to think and experience, and death presumably is the state of such experiencelessness'[31]. Another advocate is Walton, who says that death, as it is conceived secularly, involves the 'total and irreversible extinction of consciousness and sensation, including the discontinuation of the actual survival of the individual personality'[32]. For the most explicit relation between death, the ceasing to function of the brain, and the loss of personal identity there is Green and Wikler[33] who say 'The death of a person's brain is that person's death'. All of these philosophers appear to be equating the death of persons with something psychological: the ceasing to be a subject conscious of the world. Van Ezra and Walton may not stand alone, many of those philosophers who were cited as being proponents of TT at the beginning of the last chapter may well be interpreted as supporting this limited TT that only applies to people. Silverstein said that when we die, we cease 'to exist, in some important sense', and this important sense could be only as the person, not as the organism. If this is the case, he could agree with us about all that has been said about the survival of organisms but say that people are subject to a different kind of death.

[31] Van Ezra (1970) p170
[32] Walton (1979) p41
[33] Green and Wikler (1980).

I think that something in accord with the personal conception underlies many discussions of death. It is present in the phenomenological-existential tradition, and we can see this when Heidegger makes the following distinction:

> *Dasein's* going-out-of-the-world in the sense of dying must be distinguished from the going-out-of-the-world of that which merely has life. In our terminology the ending of anything that is alive, is denoted as "perishing". We can see the difference only if the kind of ending which Dasein can have is distinguished from the end of a life. Of course "dying" may also be taken physiologically and biologically. But the medical concept of the '*exitus*' does not coincide with that of "perishing"[34].

What Heidegger appears to be doing here is making a distinction between dying as it affects anything with life and a different dying that affects people (Dasein). He says that we can make this distinction because we need not see dying as a biological process. Another example of how the personal conception is deeply set into some discussions of death is in certain religious accounts of death. Take Christianity for example: when people talk about dying and then subsequently going to heaven, they may well explain the scenario by saying that although the body has died, the soul, which is itself the person, carries on living in heaven. Many people may have abandoned their religious convictions concerning the afterlife, but they may well keep the dual senses of dying that some notions of the afterlife require[35].

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[34] Heidegger (1962) p240-1

[35] This is by no means a universal account of what Christians believe. Many believe that their eternal life will be bodily life consisting of their bodily resurrection at the final judgement. All I am trying to do is give an example of how the personal conception death is an idea that many people hold.

With the personal conception of death comes a personal conception of life. If we stick to the aforementioned analysis of death as the end of a thing's life, then it seems that we cannot have the death without a prior life. Everyone is familiar with the biological kind of life that is present in all functioning organisms: a set of biological parts organised in such a way as to enable metabolic processes to occur in the single persisting object that they compose. The kind of life that a person would have would be a life of the mind: a persisting, suitably connected stretch of mental activity. This means that the death of a biological thing occurs when its life as a biological thing ceases, and the death of a person occurs when it ceases to have the mental activity that characterises its being.

Whereas there is something intuitive about this conception, it is not as obvious as the aforementioned biological conception. For this reason, I will produce a couple of considerations in its favour. The first consideration will be weak and not adequate for the purposes of a TT advocate, whilst the second consideration can be used for the establishment of TT, but it rests on a major assumption.

We shall begin by considering the following two sentences:

3) The Angel Gabriel died after God decided to destroy him as punishment for his crimes.

4) The worst thing about artificially intelligent robots is that they die if you forget to charge their batteries.

Surely neither angels nor robots are organisms because they don't seem to have any of the relevant properties: they are created by God or by scientists, not by a process of

reproduction; they do not require nutrition in order to persist; nor do they have any DNA. We might say that there must be a personal conception of death, because sentences like (3) and (4) make perfect sense, and if there weren't a personal conception, then we would be unable to explain why they make sense.

But I think that we should be wary of cases that are intended to exhibit a use of the expression 'dies' that is non-biological, for example, as it applies to angels and robots. One might try to explain the significance of the death terms in (3) and (4) not by positing a personal conception of death, but by saying that they are being used metaphorically or figuratively. But I think that there is a better response. It might be said that even if we can think of artificially intelligent robots or angels in an intelligible way, then we imagine them so that they are structured in a way analogous to a biological structure, so even though their parts are non-organic they are like our parts in the sense that they form a unified structure, like an organism, that functions towards certain ends: staying alive (and in the case of angels doing God's work, and in the case of robots, fulfilling their creator's desires). If this is the case, the robot and the angel don't suffer a biological death, but they are subject to a robo-death or an angelic-death, which is just the same as the kind of death an organism suffers but with different kinds of parts, so if an organism can survive its death, then by analogy, so could an angel and a robot. This would mean that even if there were a personal conception of death that applied to certain non-biological entities, then it wouldn't be the case that TT applied to angels and robots, since their deaths may well be analogous to our own death, because when they die, they like us, cease to be a functioning unity of parts. One need only think back to the last chapter to remember that just because something ceases to be a functioning unity of parts, doesn't mean that it has ceased to exist. I think we should take it that we cannot adduce sentences

like (3) and (4) to support a personal conception of death that is strong enough to entail TT.

Even though the foregoing consideration fails, we should look at another, stronger reason for believing that there might be a personal conception of death. If it is the case that a person is a non-biological, essentially psychological thing that is distinct from its body or organism, and if it is the case that death is a biological phenomenon, an event that only has biological entities as its subject, then it follows that people do not die. In other words, death only happens to biological things such as organisms, so if people aren't organisms, then people don't die. This is a conclusion that is against our natural view of people. It would mean that sentences that have the deaths of people as their subject are all false. Consider:

(5) John died after battling with cancer for two years.

(6) Frank's death occurred in the most peculiar of circumstances.

It would be peculiar to say that sentences of the form of (5) and (6) could never be true, but that is what someone who believes that a person is some sort of psychological entity distinct from its organism appears to be committed to.

For these reasons someone who believes that a person is distinct from their organism might argue for the personal conception of death in the following way. They won't bite the bullet and accept the idea that people don't die, but nor will they abandon their belief that the person is distinct from the body, so what they will do is assert that the boundaries of death are broader than the boundaries of the biological, one need not die as a biological entity, one can also die as a person too. It seems that

the personal conception of death is essential for the philosopher who believes that the person is a psychological thing distinct from its body, because otherwise, they would have to accept the unusual conclusion that people do not die. Death as ceasing to be a person seems to be in accord with TT, and this is because whilst there is reason to believe that the death of a biological entity does not entail its non-existence, because it can leave behind a corpse which is the same thing as the earlier living thing, there is no similar reason to believe that there are parallel cases for psychological things. When an organism dies, there is usually a dead body left behind, and it is that which gives us reason to believe that the organism has survived. There is no psychological analogue to a physical dead body to prompt a belief in a psychological ST. One might support a psychological termination thesis with the following metaphysical picture. If it is the case that a person is an essentially psychological thing distinct from, and constituted by, its organism, then when the organism ceases to be in a configuration to support a psychological thing, as would be the case if the organism suffered severe brain damage, then the psychological thing would cease to exist[36]. We now have a personal conception of death that is strong enough to support TT and deny ST.

We have just seen how a certain theory of personal identity is related to a personal conception of death that supports TT. The rest of this chapter will be a dismissal of this way of establishing TT. My first attempts to do this will be an attempt to deny the personal conception of death as it stands. Eventually, the method I shall take will be to deny the theory of personal identity that supports the personal conception.

One could attempt to deny a personal conception of death by saying that its proponents have simply misappropriated the term 'death' and used it to denote an

[36] Someone who believes that people are constituted by organisms is Garrett. I am not trying to suggest that he holds that there is a personal conception of death, I am trying to show how a pre-existing psychological theory might adopt a psychological termination thesis.

event of a very different kind. What does 'death' as used in its uncontroversial, biological sense have in common with 'death' as it is used to denote the event of a thing ceasing to be a psychological thing? It might be said that death in both of its biological and personal manifestations is the ceasing to exist of a living thing, where life could be taken to be either biological life or mental life. The reply to this should be apparent in the light of what was shown in the last chapter. We have already seen that death, in its biological sense which applies to organisms, does not entail the non-existence of the organism; and this means that any attempt to unify the biological and the personal conceptions of death in terms of their both being the ceasing to exist of a living thing is always going to be based on an inaccurate account of the biological conception. Regardless of the results of the first chapter, there are philosophers who have baptised the event of ceasing to be a person 'death' and there seems to be nothing more to say than that they are using their language incorrectly by giving their expression 'death' two different senses whilst ours only has one. They themselves could reply with the same charge but in the opposite direction: that my expression 'death' which only denotes biological deaths is unnecessarily capped at having merely one meaning. A debate like the one sketched centres around the idioms of its participants and even though I think this criticism of the personal conception of death is right, I do not think that it is decisive against anyone who doesn't already agree that there is no such thing as a personal conception.

The final argument that we will consider that will be employed directly against the notion of a personal conception of death is that of Benn[37]. He gives the following short argument. Imagine a man with a serious multiple personality disorder. The man starts going through intense treatment for his ailment, and over time he begins to lose

[37] Benn (1993).

a number of his personalities. Benn says it would be unnatural to consider a death to be occurring whenever one his personalities goes away: we don't grieve as we would as if someone had really died (in the biological sense), nor do we feel compelled to organise a funeral, hence we should not think that when something ceases to be a person it is something dying. This argument rests on a tacit assumption that there is a one-to-one relationship between personalities and persons: whenever there is a personality there is a corresponding person, and vice versa. If this assumption is not true, then whenever a person suffering from multiple personalities loses a personality, something will not be ceasing to be a person, and this will mean that Benn's situation is not an example of a personal conception of death. For now, I will only say that this assumption is question begging in the extreme. Later on in the chapter, an argument will be presented to suggest that it is false.

Hitherto, we have seen a number of arguments which are all directly trying to dismiss the personal conception of death, and none of them has been decisive. To attain conclusive reasons, I believe that we must descend to a more fundamental level and attempt to knock the foundations from under the reasoning for the personal conception of death, and we can do this by denying the theory of personal identity that supports it. In order to do this, we must attempt to set up a theory of personal identity that is contrary to the theory that supports the personal conception of death, and such a theory will have as its central notion the idea that a person is numerically identical with its body or organism. I take it that if I am able to demonstrate that a person is identical with its organism, then it is the case that people are in fact the kind of things that can be subject to a biological death, and not only does this mean that ST can apply to people, but there is also no need to posit a personal conception of death

which TT is true of. For these reasons, I will attempt to answer the question 'what is a person?' (recall the survival cases *dissection* and *burial* from the chapter before).

It is now necessary to outline the problem of personal identity. It is the case that I am a person, and I am such a thing because I instantiate certain higher psychological capacities. The question, 'what is a person?', when entertained, asks what thing it is that instantiates those psychological properties? One option is that I could be an essentially psychological thing, like a mind, which would mean that I would not be able to lose my psychological aspects without at the same time ceasing to exist. The alternative possibility is that I might not be an essentially psychological thing, like a body or an organism. If this were the case, then whether I instantiate the psychological properties that are characteristic of people is irrelevant to whether I exist or not. If I am the kind of thing that cannot survive the loss of its psychological aspect, then I must be distinct from my body or organism, which is the kind of thing that can exist when it doesn't instantiate higher psychological properties. (There is another sense in which it can be asked 'what is a person?', and this is when we are trying to give an account of what psychological capacities are characteristic of the things that are people). For the rest of this chapter, I will be arguing that the kind of thing that I belong to, is the kind of thing that can exist before and after it instantiates the psychological capacities characteristic of people.

The plan will be as follows. I will consider a way of formulating the idea that a person is identical with its body or organism that is seriously flawed. I will then present an argument that is supposed to show that the person is numerically identical with its body or organism. Finally I will give reason to ignore the main counterexample to this claim. Once this is all done, the metaphysical basis for the

personal conception of death will have been struck down, and only the biological conception, which ST is true of, will be all that remains.

Part 2. People as members of biological kinds.

Biological substances are things that satisfy biological kinds: 'horse', 'human being', 'crab', etc. A philosopher who says that a person is a biological substance means that a person is something that satisfies the biological kind 'human being'; or as Lowe puts this view: 'persons are a kind of animal'[38]. Wiggins is one of the more prominent proponents of this view, and one of his earlier statements of this view is that '*x* is a person if and only if *x* is an animal falling under the extension of a kind whose typical members perceive, feel, remember, imagine, desire, make projects... have, and conceive of themselves as having, a past accessible in experience-memory and a future accessible in intention,... etc'[39]. For our purposes, the most significant consequence is that the person is numerically identical with the thing that is the member of the relevant kind. In our case, the person *is* the human being, and I will cease to exist when the human being ceases to exist, and this need not be when he dies.

There is however, a telling objection that considers the arbitrary restriction of the application of personhood to things that arises from Wiggins' formulation. Not only is there the possibility of non-human organisms that instantiate the properties that characterise personhood, but there are also possibilities that are totally inorganic: think of artificially intelligent computers and angels. What is characteristic of Wiggins' account of personhood is that it is relational, whether or not I am a person

[38] Lowe (1991) p90
[39] Wiggins (1981) p171

depends on extrinsic facts about the kind of which I am a member. On this account, a rational, self-conscious [redacted] crab is not a person because crabs generally don't instantiate the properties of personhood. Surely the object that is a member of the crab kind which also instantiates the person properties is a person, and this is where the telling objection to the biological kind approach becomes apparent.

Snowdon, who is generally sympathetic to the aim of introducing the notion of the animal in discussions of personal identity, discusses this very point[40]. He makes a distinction between the semi-technical, philosophical use of the term 'person' which refers to a thing that has certain psychological capacities, and a more everyday usage of the term where it is just a term for referring to human beings[41]. Naturally, our clever crab is not a person in the latter sense, but only a person in the former sense. There is a way in which this distinction is applicable to a man in an irreversible coma: he is a person in the everyday sense, but not a person in the philosophical sense. Wiggins' account of the nature of persons seems to ignore the philosophical sense of 'person', and just employ the everyday sense. He would have to say that a foetus is as much a person as an adult man, and a brain-dead person is as much a person as an active brain surgeon. Thus the main problem for Wiggins is that he ignores the philosophical usage of the term 'person' and thereby lets into the people category those who shouldn't be in there (the brain-dead), and excludes those who should be there (the clever crab).

There seems to be one escape route from these problems open to Wiggins, and that is to deny that there is a specifically philosophical sense to 'person'. The main reason that we believe in such a sense of 'person' is because we can think of things

[40] Snowdon (1996) p37-43

[41] This distinction fills in the gaps that Mackie's similar distinction left open. 'Person', with a big 'p', picks out psychologically endowed entities, whereas Mackie never explains what he thinks 'people', with a little 'p' denotes. Snowdon's everyday sense of person, seems to be the correct candidate for the meaning of 'person' with a little 'p'.

that are members of kinds that don't usually instantiate person properties, but nevertheless instantiate such properties as individuals. Thus, the best way for Wiggins to defuse the worry is to deny that there could be such a situation: there can't be things that are people that do not belong to a kind that does not generally instantiate the properties associated with personhood. Snowdon examines Wiggins' reasons for thinking that this is a possibility, and considers two arguments based around the possibility of interpretation[42].

The first argument goes as follows. Whenever we encounter something like a human being we have numerous expectations of what it is, what it will do, and why it will do them. If we were to meet something else that is supposed to be a person but with a non-human form, we would not be able to have those expectations, and this being the case, we would not be able to penetrate them. We would be faced with 'an alien intelligence whose sources of satisfaction are inscrutable'[43]. But just because there are expectations useful for communication with human beings that would be peculiar to employ when meeting the clever crab, doesn't itself show that when we don't have these expectations we can't interpret the thing. The task may be infinitely more difficult, but not impossible. Would we be still unable to make sense of the crab when he starts to write coherent sentences in the sand with his claw?

The second argument says that it is impossible to interpret something unless we can imagine what it would be like to be them, and that this is impossible to do this without being of the same kind as they are. But it doesn't seem as if there is any reason to accept that we can't empathise towards members of other kinds. I can read from the actions of a dog and reasonably infer that it is hungry, or scared of something, and so on. Snowdon puts it like this: if we were to meet a non-human,

[42] Snowdon (1996) on Wiggins (1987)
[43] Wiggins (1987) p42

animal person that coincidently spoke a language like English in such a way that it enabled satisfactory communication, surely that thing I can interpret, if not identically, then at least similarly to how I interpret a human being. It appears that Wiggins is wrong to suggest that the proposed failure of the possibility of interpretation is necessarily present in the cases of non-human people.

It would be a generous boon for ST if Wiggins' person as biological kind account were true because the human being is the person, and the human being does carry on existing after death. Unfortunately, for the reasons just given, it does not seem a tenable account, so we will have to look elsewhere for an account of personhood that does support ST.

Part 3. Psychological modes, psychological substances, and an argument for animalism.

There are two alternative accounts of the metaphysics of people that we can consider: person as mode, and person as psychological substance. The latter, as shown earlier is incompatible with ST, and actually supports a form of TT for a personal notion of death. If we want to avoid TT we should thus avoid the person as psychological substance approach. In due course, we will see that the criticism that Lowe fires at the person as mode account in order to setup the person as psychological substance account can be undermined to create a theory of personhood that takes the best from the person as biological kind approach and the person as mode account. This theory allows that the person be any thing which has the person properties, thus avoiding the anthropocentrism.

To say that a person is a mode is to say that a person is just a bundle of mental events or states. A person is not just any old group of mental states, so theories of this kind usually postulate certain relations that adequately tie up the states so that they end up producing something that has the appearance of a person. Some, such as Locke, postulate the relation of memory as that which binds the mental states together into a person, whereas someone like Hume, expresses the importance of the states being causally related. Modern theorists of this breed have debts to both Locke and Hume: they often use a relation of psychological continuity between mental states that is fundamentally based on memory, and restrain it further by saying that it only holds if the thoughts in question are causally related in some way[44]. An immediate advantage of this approach is that it avoids all the problems of anthropocentrism that were evident in the person as biological kind approach. This is because if we adopt the person as mode approach, we can apply the properties of being a person to any entity that is constituted in such a way sufficient to possess mental states: human beings, lizard men, robots.

As part of our day to day life, we often enquire about the identity of things. We do this with people when we ask questions like 'Is that the same person as before?' Lowe believes that any account that treats people as modes cannot fully account for these kinds of questions, and this is because any such theory must assume that one can produce a satisfactory account of the identity conditions of mental states without talking about whatever they are states of. When one starts taking into account the thing that the states are states of when talking about identity, what the identity question then pivots on is the subject of the states as opposed to the states themselves.

[44] This is the view held by Parfit.

Thus it is the subject of experience that is the person, which is a psychological substance, not a bundle of mental states.

Lowe's argument is as follows. Mental states are necessarily states of something, what one might call a subject. The reason for this is because it is impossible to individuate mental states and avoid all reference to their subject. A situation where we are supposed to see this to be the case is one where two patients are sat in a room, hooked up to complex neurological equipment that creates whatever token experiences the scientists desire in the two patients. The scientists give each of the patients' qualitatively identical experiences, at exactly the same time. Lowe says that such a situation demonstrates that the qualitative character and time of the experience in question is not sufficient to individuate whose experience is whose in the case of the two patients. What Lowe thinks is required as supplementation is reference to the subject of the experience. So, for an adequate individuation of the experiences, the scientists would have to say something like 'That experience is his (the first patient) and that experience is his (the second patient)'. If represented in the first person, one of the patients might say 'This experience can be distinguished from any other qualitatively identical experience, in virtue of the fact that it is mine'.

Peacocke is someone who believes that the supplementation that has to be given to the time and the qualitative character of a mental state need not be a reference to the person[45]. He thinks that we can individuate mental states by taking account of their causal relations to other things and he uses Davidson's criterion of identity for events which says that two events are identical if and only if they have the same causes and effects[46]. We can apply this to the earlier case as follows. When the scientists simultaneously create qualitatively identical experiences in their patients,

[45] Peacocke (1983) Chap 7.
[46] For more on Davidson's explanation of the individuation of events see his (1969).

we can say that they are different because they have different causes and effects: the first patient's experience was caused by neuron stimulator A and the second patient's experience was caused by neuron stimulator B. Lowe's response is twofold. To begin with he believes that Davidson's criterion which Peacocke uses is itself unsatisfactory, but we do not need to explore this because his other criticism is strong enough to quash Peacocke's efforts. Even if the proposed criterion is true, it gives us a theory of individuation of mental states that will still require reference to the thing that they are states of. The problem here is that it doesn't sound plausible that we could give an account of the causes and effects of a mental state without reference to the person that is having them, and for the person as mode account to provide us with a robust theory of individuation for people this is exactly this reference to a thing having them that it must avoid.

How does this argument relate to physicalism? Can't the physicalist cut off someone's cranium and point to the thing that is the mental state, and isn't this an example of the individuation of mental states without reference to the thing that has them? Surely to discount this possibility would require making the argument incompatible with physicalism, and it would then only be an argumentative option for those who believe that the mental is in some way non-physical. But I think the argument is amenable to physicalism, and that this is apparent when we remember that the argument is talking about mental states as modes. Someone could only make the individuation by pointing solely to a mental state if the mental state were a substance, an independent entity, but we should keep in mind that the argument is a conditional one. It says that *if* you believe that mental states are modes, then to maintain a robust account of the individuation of mental states, you are required to individuate the thing that the state is a state of. The argument only seems to be

incompatible with physicalism if you believe that mental states are substances, or objects, as opposed to states of objects, but if you believe that they are objects, then the argument doesn't work, even if you believe that mental states aren't physical.

If all the parts of Lowe's argument hold, it seems that all he has shown is that mental states have to be the states of something, but why can't this just be a body? What reason does he have to suppose that it has to be a psychological substance? The reason why he believes that it has to be a psychological substance, or subject of experience, is because only that can adequately perform the job of individuation. The argument that he gives to show that it can't be a body goes along the following lines. One cannot individuate people with bodies because one is not always guaranteed that for every body there is just one person. The cases that he cites are those of multiple personality, where there is one body, but what he thinks are two people, or two subjects of experience. Just because you can individuate one body, doesn't necessarily mean that you can individuate one person, and if you want to keep a solid notion of the individuation of people, then you have to posit another thing, the subject of the experience, as the person.

This argument rests on three assumptions: that the only way of individuating mental states is by talking about the thing that they are states of; that a person could not simultaneously experience two qualitatively identical experiences; and that a personality entails a person. It seems that if we find reason to deny that any of these premises to be true, we can block Lowe's argument. Here it would be advantageous to split his argument into two. There is the first half which is about the individuation of mental states which concludes that they must be states of something. This conclusion on its own is not unattractive because it radically alters the person as mode approach in a way that it makes people not just floating thoughts, but grounded in something,

ideally a body; and I think that Lowe has given a satisfactory defence of this step. The second half of the argument says that the thing that mental states must be the states of can't be a body, it must be a psychological substance, or subject of experience, which itself is the person. This is unattractive because, not only does it require the positing of these mysterious psychological substances, but as mentioned before, it leads us into the route towards TT for people. Luckily, it seems that the step he uses to suggest that the thing that mental states are states of must be a psychological substance is wrong. Lowe's argument doesn't go all the way because it is not the case that a personality entails a person. I will now go on to show that this is a false assumption. If I am successful, we can keep the first stage of Lowe's argument, which shows that questions of identity for mental states turn into questions of identity of the thing that has those states, but jettison the second stage which says that that thing has to be something other than the body.

Part 4. Persons, personalities, and the proper interpretation of Lowe's argument.

As alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, one way of explicating what people are is to ask what are the qualities that things need to fulfil in order to be people. Whatever these qualities are, rocks and cats don't fulfil them so they should not be considered people. Whereas people are things that satisfy the person properties, a thing can have a personality even if it is not a person. I would like to suggest that we correctly use the expression 'personality' to denote a way of acting or behaving of a thing. The loose description 'way of acting or behaving' may seem so broad that it could apply to anything, but there is a way of narrowing it down. All members of the kind sodium, act or behave in a way that is determined by their membership of their

kind: whenever you put some sodium into water it will explode. There is no variation with things like sodium, in a given situation, they will always act in a certain way. It is obvious that members of the sodium kind do not have personalities, even though they do have dispositional properties that determine how they act in a given situation.

The things that do have personalities are those things that it makes sense to talk of their behaviour as an individual, even though they are members of a kind. Put a person or a human being in a certain situation, and he or she could potentially act in a variety of different ways. If their behaviour is characteristic of their overall behaviour then it is part of their personality. Examples of aspects of personality would be a person who stands steadfast in dangerous situations, and that person has the personality trait of being brave, whilst a person who flees dangerous situations is a coward. Simply the membership of the kinds 'person' or 'human being' doesn't determine how someone will act. To satisfactorily predict a person's behaviour in a given situation, you not only require some knowledge of the kind it is a member of, but also of its personality which characterises its behaviour as an individual.

If this account of personality is accurate, it causes problems for Lowe, because it applies to things that don't satisfy all the person-properties required to be a person. When you put a cat on the highest branch of a tree, whether it will try and get down or not will depend on whether it is scared of heights, and we only know if this is the case if we know of the cat's personality as well as its membership of the kind called 'cats'. Just as some people are braver than others, some cats are braver than others, and their difference of behaviour in situations can be accounted for by their differences in personality. If one accepts that cats can have personalities, and cats are not people, then we have a case where personality does not imply person. Although a personality does not imply a person, if we are to truly say of things that they have personalities,

the thing that has the personality should have capacities that are sufficient to adequately explain the behaviour that the personality ascribes to the thing. If, when talking of a thing's personality, we say 'It is a brave thing', for that sentence to be true, the thing in question must be able to have the capacities to be brave, and this will probably include the capacity to feel fear and the capacity to not flee when exposed to high levels of fear. It is therefore the case that personality is distinct from, and not entailed by, the notion of personhood.

It is now appropriate to approach Lowe's case of the multiple personalities in the light of what we have just seen. In the case of multiple personalities, Jekyll and Hyde for example, what we have is an extremely complex way of behaving of a particular thing, but this shouldn't be taken as implying that there are multiple people in the body, but instead that the body has sufficient capacities to maintain such complex behaviour. This is all that we can infer from the things that we talk about when using the words 'person' and 'personality'. To say something more, that cases of multiple personality imply multiple persons, requires a positive argument that Lowe doesn't give. An example where there are two distinct people contained in one body, in an uncontroversial way, would be the case where there is a person with two heads. He will have two brains, each independently supporting different instantiations of personhood. The problem for someone like Lowe is that it is unclear how he could say that there are two separate instantiations of personhood in the case of Jekyll and Hyde in a way analogous to the two headed man, because in the case of Jekyll and Hyde, there is just one set of capacities.

In light of this discussion of the relation between persons and personality, we can now evaluate Lowe's argument. In the previous section, I defended the first stage of the argument which said that when talking about identity of states, we must

rephrase the question into one about the identity of the thing that has the state. But whilst I believe that the first stage of the argument is sound, I disagree with the stage where Lowe tries to force the conclusion that the thing that has the mental states is a subject of experience, and that this step depends on there being a one-to-one correspondence between persons and personalities, a relationship that as we have seen, has little to support it[47,48]. Therefore, I advocate a modified version of Lowe's argument which is the first stage: an argument which has the conclusion that we are able to individuate things with mental states, and ask whether it is the same thing as before, in virtue of individuating the thing that has the states, and in our case, it is our body or organism.

We started out looking for an account of the ontological category that applies to people so that there could be no doubt over whether ST is true of people. The outcome that is most desirable for our purposes is for people to be numerically identical with their body or organism, since if people are bodies, and bodies can survive death, then so can people. Wiggins' formulation of how a person is numerically identical with its organism was found wanting. In the last two sections, I have modified an argument that was designed to show that a person is numerically identical with a psychological substance, and at the same time show that a person cannot be a mode and whilst allowing us to individuate people, into an argument that shows that people are numerically identical with their body or organism. The prospects for the fully general ST now appear close to realisation.

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[47] Even if the second stage of the argument were to go through, it is not clear how it solves the problem that Lowe sets up. If the thing that had the mental states were a psychological substance, a subject of experience, it is by no means clear how we would be able to individuate it. Surely w[redacted] when we individuate the thing that has the mental states, we are individuating a body, and here lies an advantage of my formulation of Lowe's argument, by saying that when we individuate people we individuate a body I am giving an account that is already in accord with what our practices appear to be.

[48] I believe that by merely providing a correct characterisation of what a personality is, we can see that the relation between person and personality is slight. For a sceptical account that *argues* against the relation between persons and personality see Olson (2003).

Part 5. The brain transplant objection.

The argument that I gave in the last two sections is one that has as its conclusion the idea that people are numerically identical with their bodies. The kind of identity claim made is a synchronic one. It says that at a time, the person is numerically identical with their body. Many philosophers would assert that a mere synchronic identity claim is not enough for a complete account of personal identity, because there are many diachronic counterexamples to the synchronic claim. In this section I will examine this kind of objection to the claim that people are numerically identical to their organism, and then find reason to dismiss it.

The kind of counterexample that is most popular is that of the brain transplant. We are asked to imagine a situation where two patients, A and B, are anaesthetised, awaiting an operation. The procedure starts with the removal of both men's brains. A's brain is placed in B's body, whilst A's body is placed on a bonfire and incinerated; and B's brain is burnt whilst B's body survives as a receptacle for A's brain. Upon entertaining the scenario, we are then asked to consider what has happened to A and what has happened to B. It appears that the intuitive answer to this question is that A has continued to exist, albeit in B's body, whilst B has ceased to exist. Since A's body no longer exists at the end of the operation, yet A does, and B doesn't exist at the end of the operation yet his body does, we are supposed to conclude that bodily continuity is not necessary for personal identity. If we are the kind of thing that can survive bodily destruction, then we cannot essentially be our bodies. It may thus seem natural to consider ourselves to be our brains, but that is on the assumption that the thought experiments end there. The problem is that one can

modify the brain transplant thought experiment into a case where we are not even essentially our brains.

Think of the situation where someone has incurable brain cancer spreading through his brain. Scientists gradually replace every part of the brain that becomes diseased with a robotic replica, an inorganic replacement that performs exactly the same task. After about a year, all the parts of the brain have been replaced, so he no longer has a biological thing in his head, but a bionic replacement. As with the case of the brain transplant case, it seems natural to consider the person to have survived, even though his brain has not, which leads to the conclusion that since one can survive the destruction of one's brain, one is not essentially one's brain. Both of these thought experiments can be adduced for the theory that psychological continuity is what is required for survival.

Thought experiments such as the ones just illustrated cause havoc with my attempt to say that the person is numerically identical with its body, and bionic brain examples challenge any equation of the person with anything more than a set of connected mental states. If we are to stick with my earlier conclusion, that the person is numerically identical with their body, then we must find a way of dealing with the brain transplant intuition.

One way of dismissing the brain transplant intuition is to dismiss the thought experiment methodology that supports it. Whereas I gave an argument for the synchronic identity between people and their bodies, one who uses the thought experiment methodology considers situations which a thing may or may not survive, and after coming up with an account of the persistence conditions of that object, works backwards to the kind that has those persistence conditions associated with it. One could deny that the thought experiment methodology is [redacted] a satisfactory way of

supporting metaphysical conclusions. But this option is barred from me because I use thought experiments, in the form of the survival cases, to establish ST. If I am to avoid the brain transplant intuition, I will have to do it via an option that accepts that thought experiments can be used in making statements about personal identity.

Another way of avoiding the problems of the brain transplant intuition, whilst maintaining that thought experiments can have a role in metaphysics, is to say that although our intuitions are useful starting points for enquiry, they are not always right, and in this case, the intuition is plain wrong. This is the direction that Snowdon[49] goes down. He is right in the sense that intuitions are not an infallible guide to metaphysical endeavours, if they were philosophy would be a lot easier than it is, but the brute denial of the brain transplant intuition, a thought experiment that has seduced so many philosophers, seems a little unsatisfactory. Snowdon's route is an option, but I don't think that it should be taken unless there is no other route available.

But need the brain transplant intuition be incompatible with my claim that a person is numerically identical with its organism? Van Inwagen thinks not. He believes that the brain transplant intuition is compatible with the claim that the person is numerically identical with its body or organism, because when one transplants brains, one is transplanting an organism. When A's brain is moved into B's body, A's organism is being transplanted, and when B's brain is destroyed, an organism ceases to exist. On his account, a brain is the minimal core of an organism: a disembodied, functioning brain is a maximally pared down animal. He puts it as follows: 'It, the [brain] in the vat, was recently a 150 pound four-limbed object. It has shrunk, or, rather, has been whittled down. It was once a normal man. It is now a radically

[49] Snowdon (1991)

maimed man, man who is about as maimed as it is possible for a man to be'[50]. I admit that this is a solution but it is not a satisfactory one because it requires us to accept a revisionary account of what an organism is. On this account an organism isn't an organisation of parts, but the part that controls the overall organisation of parts, and this is 'a manifestation of the cerebrocentrism endemic among those who make their living sitting in chairs and thinking'[51]. One has to admit that it allows one to accept that a person is numerically identical with its body or organism without having to deny the brain transplant intuition, but it only does so at the cost of forcing onto us a highly revisionary account of what an organism is.

So far, we have seen two potential options. Snowdon's, which is nothing more than a denial of the intuition; and Van Inwagen's which is a willingness to pay the costs that must be met if we are to adhere to the intuition. Neither of these options are attractive: either we should be able to incorporate the intuition into our theory without making unacceptable concessions, or we should be able to give a reasoned account of why we should dismiss the brain transplant intuition, other than simply dismissing it because it conflicts with our prior synchronic findings.

Olson believes that the brain transplant intuition discredits itself if one accepts the two empirical premises that (i) a person can survive the destruction of one the hemispheres of their brain, and (ii) one can disconnect the connection between the two hemispheres of the brain without killing its owner. Both (i) and (ii) are empirically grounded and together with the brain transplant intuition they lead to another thought experiment situation: the split brain case. A man, C, has two copies of himself made, D and E, and they are identical in every respect except that they have no upper brain. C pays scientists to remove the top half of his brain, bisect it down the

[50] Van Inwagen (1990) p172
[51] ibid. p175

middle so that the hemispheres are separated and place one hemisphere in D's skull and the other in E's skull. C's body is subsequently incinerated. If one believes that the original brain transplant thought experiment proved that psychological continuity is necessary for personal identity, then one has problems because when D and E wake up, they will both be psychologically continuous with C.

Why does Olson find this problematic for the brain transplant intuition? Because it is now by no means obvious what has happened to C when D and E wake up. There appear to be four options. (a) We could say that C is identical to both D and E, but this is not an option because identity is a one-one relation not a one-many relation, it is logically impossible for C to be identical with both D and E. (b) C is now D, or (c) C is now E. But the problem with these two options is that they are arbitrary: the same relation holds between C and D, and C and E, and if psychological continuity is essential for personal identity, the fact that there are two things psychologically continuous with C makes it rather ad hoc to say that only one of D and E is C. Finally, there is (d) which says that C is neither D nor E. But again, if psychological continuity is necessary for personal identity, and if, in normal cases, one case of psychological continuity is sufficient for allowing the person to persist, why should two cases of psychological continuity cause the object not to persist? It seems that the split brain case leaves the psychological criterion of personal identity over time in a quandary.

What lesson should we learn from the split brain case? Some psychological theorists, such as Parfit, have used it to keep a modified psychological criterion where psychological continuity is still essential but it is not instantiated in terms of a one-one relation like identity, but in a one-many relation. A corollary of this manoeuvre is that it is psychological continuity, in whatever form it may come, that matters, not

identity. One can only take Parfit's path if one is already convinced by the psychological criterion, but if one has independent reasons to believe the psychological criterion to be false, like we have in the form of an argument that asserts the numerical identity of the person and body, then one should seek a different interpretation of the split brain case. Olson's interpretation is as follows: the split brain case follows from the brain transplant case plus two supported empirical premises, and although the brain transplant case is initially compelling, the fact that it results in the split brain case, a case that is problematic for the theory that the brain transplant case attempts to support, means that we should see the brain transplant case as a case, that when it is fully thought through leads to peculiar and unintuitive consequences. Olson's idea is that the brain transplant intuition, once fleshed out, ultimately discredits itself, and it is therefore not anything that should worry anyone trying to make synchronic claims in personal identity.

Part 6. Conclusions.

By giving a conclusion to this chapter, we are tying up a strand of thought that we began in the last chapter. I began by considering the deaths of organisms, and I presented reasons to think that their death does not entail their non-existence. The end of that discussion brought up the possibility of another idea of death that is not compatible with ST, a personal conception of death. Once this idea of death was fleshed out, it became apparent that it rested on a certain theory of personal identity. I take it that in the discussion that followed I cast doubt on that theory of personal identity and supported a theory of personal identity where the person is the body or the organism. The thing that is a person is the organism, and since organisms can

survive their death, as bodies, people can survive their death. I conclude that ST, has been vindicated for the animal world of which people are part of.

Chapter 3. Speaking of the Dead.

Part 1. The Problems.

Throughout the last two chapters, I have argued that death does not entail non-existence. Death can be survived. It does not follow from this that death is survivable forever. I might survive my death as a dead body, but that body is endowed with only a finite lifespan: it will ultimately cease to exist as it reaches the destructive stages of composition. Both subscribers to TT and ST can assert that the dead cease to exist, they only disagree over when it happens. The fact that the dead do cease to exist causes problems for the logical triumvirate of reference, truth, and meaning, and we can begin to see the problem when we consider sentences that present-tensedly ascribe death to those who have been dead long enough to no longer exist. For example:

(1) Socrates is dead.

What is characteristic of (1) is that it ascribes the property of being dead, in the present tense, to a person who no longer exists. I will call sentences that perform such a function, 'dead sentences'. I believe that dead sentences are problematic for two reasons.

The first problem concerns their meaning. Socrates no longer exists. If we accept a Russellian[52] theory of names where the meaning of a name is dependent on

[52] The philosophers who I believe are Russellian about names include Russell himself, who held that objects are constituents of propositions and it is the role of a proper name to indicate that a certain object is part of the proposition that is expressed by the sentence containing that name. Evans is another Russellian, but he believes that objects cannot be the constituents of a proposition. What I think unites

there being a referent of the name, then dead sentences like (1) appear problematic, because there is no longer an object that can ground the meaning of the name 'Socrates'. But sentences like (1) are perfectly meaningful, which means that we are left with three choices. We could either abandon the Russellian theory of names, or we could say that there is in fact an object which 'Socrates' refers to, or we could give an explanation of how an object that is the meaning of a name could cease to exist, yet the name remain meaningful. I will not consider the first option, I will refute the second option, and advocate the final option. (This is an instance of a more general problem that does not only affect dead people: buildings, cities, and geographical features cease to exist whilst the names that refer to them remain significant).

The second problem centres on the truth of the proposition that a dead sentence expresses. Yourgrau puts it as follows: 'How can we even assert... that Socrates is dead? If this is a truth, for whom is it supposed to be a truth about? Socrates? But there is, there exists, no such person. For precisely because he is dead, he is no longer, and therefore there is no one whom we may truly predicate death, or non-existence'[53]. I take it that the problem is as follows. The property 'is dead', is a present tensed property, but in the case of the non-existent dead, there is no person to predicate the property onto. The question thus arises: in virtue of what are dead sentences like (1) true, considering they contain a predicate that appears to apply to no thing? As with the problem of dead sentences and meaning, we are left with three options. We could say that the proposition that (1) expresses is not true, or we could say that there is in fact an object that we can predicate the property 'is dead' onto, or we could attempt to reinterpret the problem so that it loses all of its problematic qualities. For this problem, I will not consider the first option, I will dismiss an

these philosophers is that they all believe that the contribution a name makes to the meaning of a sentence that it appears in is dependent on an object.

[53] Yourgrau (1987) p85.

attempt that tries to find a solution in the debate between TT and ST, and I will finally settle the problem by denying that it is problematic.

What I am trying to do by presenting these problems is not attempt to produce any scepticism concerning the truth and meaning of the dead sentences. Instead, I am trying to show that some natural philosophical doctrines, the Russellian theory of names and the idea that our truths must be truths about something, do not readily apply to dead sentences when they are considered together with the phenomenon of ceasing to exist. By giving an account that answers or avoids the problems, it will not be the case that a philosophical worry will have been allayed, but rather we will understand more about what we are doing when we talk of the dead and something more about what it is to be dead by learning about the use of the 'is dead' predicate.

The rest of this chapter will be an attempt to give an answer to these two problems. I believe that the problem concerning meaning is important, and in some sense prior to the problem concerning truth, because it is only once a sentence expresses something meaningful, that it can express something that can be true or false. Once we have seen why sentences containing names referring to the dead can remain meaningful, then we can tackle the problem concerning the truth of dead sentences. I think the reason why this problem appears to be problematic is because there is a temptation to couch the problem in terms of the prior debate concerning TT and ST. I will pander to this temptation and see if any resolution to the problem can be brought by examining it in such terms. It will eventually become apparent that neither TT nor ST is in a better place to solve the problem of truth. It is because of this, that I will ultimately side with a solution that denies that it is problematic, and I will give a solution that is neutral to the debate surrounding TT and ST.

Part 2. Being Dead.

My own positive solutions to the problems concerning dead sentences will be presented in contrast to Yourgrau's own solutions to the problems. In this section, I will outline the metaphysical structure that he believes can be employed to solve both of these problems. It does this by suggesting that there are more entities than we might initially countenance. The essence of his solution can be put succinctly, 'Don't say: "But if we are referring to Socrates he *must* exist," nor: "Since he doesn't exist, we can't be referring to him." The facts are in front of us: we *are* referring to him, and he really *doesn't* exist'[54]. His solution is the product of retaining both of these intuitions: that the dead don't exist and that we can refer to them. If the dead are correctly characterised as non-existents, then if we refer to them, they cannot be nothing. To resolve this apparent tension Yourgrau asserts that just because something doesn't exist does not mean that it is nothing, nor that it shouldn't be incorporated into our ontology, and this is because there is an ontological category between absolute nothingness and existence: the category of being. The dead do not exist, but this doesn't mean that they are nothing, that they are not objects that can be the subject of predication; and it is these objects with being, but not existence, that act as the referents of our names of the dead, and are the subject of our truths about the dead.

What kinds of entities can be correctly characterised as having being but not existence? On Yourgrau's account, there are the dead; but also, the yet to be born, and the never to be born. What we are talking about here are not essences, concepts or memories, but people, albeit non-existent people. Excluded entry into this domain are fictional people, like Hamlet and James Bond. Those that are in the realm of being are

[54] Yourgrau (1987) p89

those that were the actual (the dead), those that could've been actual (the never-born), and those that will be actual (the unborn). This explanation of the world of being in terms of possibilia provides a solution to the problem concerning who death is a misfortune for, because death is a misfortune for the non-existent man who was once an existent man. There are also all those people who would've had pleasurable lives if they had only existed; they are the subject of misfortune concerning their never having been born. Finally, the inhabitants of this ontological group are indestructible: their existence can be quashed, but their possibility of existing, their being, can never be eradicated[55].

We should now see how this ontology affects our logic. Being is something that every object has, and this is represented by the quantifier (because the quantifier no longer has anything to do with existence, on this scheme of things, maybe it should be called the 'being quantifier'). Existence is something that a subset of the entities with being have, and having existence is represented by a predicate. Thus, we would give the following logical form to 'Socrates does not exist':

(2a) (Bx) (Socrates x & ¬Exists x)

(2b) There is an object x, such that x is Socrates and x does not exist.

It would be advantageous to have an explication of the new use of the quantifier as something that has being as its domain, but Yourgrau believes that it is as indefinable as existence, and should therefore be treated as a logical primitive. However, he does suggest that in the same way that we can acknowledge that we have a basic, ineffable understanding of the existence of objects, we have a similar understanding of the non-

[55] Yourgrau (1987) p89-90: 'There simply is such a person as Socrates, and nothing, not even his death, can ever erase this fact. (If the bad news is that you're going to die, the good news is that you won't "disappear" –i.e., become nothing.)'

existent, such as the long dead and future objects, and 'if we just let our eyes be opened, we will see that we have all along been trafficking with the nonexistent, as with the existent'[56].

It might be thought that there is a problem with Yourgrau's theory because it assumes that existence is a first-order predicate, representing a property that is true of objects. This is not an assertion that can merely be assumed because it is widely believed that existence is a second-order predicate, one that has first-order predicates in its argument place, which says of that predicate that it has instances. One may well think that a second-order translation of 'existence' avoids the problems of nonexistent objects and that the first-order account is bound to them. Why so? Because on the first-order account some objects will have the property of existence, Tony Blair for example, and some objects will not have the property of existence, Hamlet, and it is these objects which do not instantiate the property of existence that are the nonexistent objects.

The correct response would be to say that although we might not agree with Yourgrau's statements about being, this doesn't mean that we can't agree with him that existence is a first-order predicate. There are good reasons to believe that existence is a first-order predicate. For example, the first-order approach is more faithful to the form of our natural language. The second manner of defence would be to say that even if the second-order approach were true, it would not defuse Yourgrau's suggestion for accounting for the truth and meaning of 'Socrates is dead' by positing the existence of non-existent objects. All that the second-order theory proves is that we can provide a notation that doesn't require any talk of nonexistent objects: it doesn't *prove* that there aren't any nonexistent objects, it simply *assumes*

[56] Yourgrau (1987) p91.

it[57]. I am not saying that it is a foolish assumption, on the contrary it is perfectly sensible, it is just that one shouldn't think that by adopting the second-order approach to existence we are getting a knockdown argument against there being nonexistent objects.

I think that it is very hard to come up with a decisive argument against there being a set of entities like nonexistent objects. What we can do instead of giving reasons why there can't be such a set of entities, is say that even if there is such a set of entities, it is either the case that it doesn't fulfil the explanatory role that it has been ascribed by its advocate, or that the same explanatory role can be done by a more everyday set of entities. Therefore, my strategy will be to show how nonexistent objects fail to meet the explanatory demands that the dead sentences make, and at the same time I will present a more naturalistic explanation of the problems of meaning and truth. By the end of the chapter, it should be apparent that there is no need to posit nonexistent objects to explain the problems of the dead sentences.

Part 3. The problem of meaning.

What is the best way of explaining the meaning of names that refer to the nonexistent dead that is in accord with the Russellian schema? There seem to be two general options. We could side with Yourgrau and assert the existence of nonexistent entities[58] that can act as the referents of the names, but I will favour the other option,

[57] Stirton (1995) says the same: 'The technical trick of using the existential quantifier to translate existence-statements, does not, by itself, prove that there are no non-existent objects; it rather presupposes that there are none'. p40.

[58] Why do I focus on nonexistent entities? It might be thought they are a weak opponent to set my own views against. I consider them for two reasons. The first reason is that they are the only suggested entities in the literature, and the second reason is that I believe that there is no need for any other entities other than the everyday to solve the problems in question, so even if another kind of entity is suggested, then I believe that their existence is surplus to explanatory requirements.

where we explain the meaning of such names with only an everyday ontology. I will begin by arguing against Yourgrau's option, and then move onto expounding my own positive solution which suggests that his solution seems unsatisfactory when we consider it against the epistemological demands that the Russellian theory of names makes.

The Russellian theory of names says that the meaning of a name is dependent on the object that it refers to: Yourgrau's theory of nonexistent people explains how the dead are still objects. So why shouldn't we consider the name 'Socrates' as meaningful, since there is an object there for it to refer to? The answer to this question should become apparent if we examine why the Russellian theory of names is such an attractive theory. Its allure derives from its two successful aspects: one metaphysical, the other epistemological. The metaphysical success of the Russellian theory of names is that it tells us where meanings come from: they come from the very thing that the members of the language community have decided to baptise with that name. The epistemological success of the theory arises from the neat explanation that it gives regarding what one needs to know to understand a name, and it is simply the object that it refers to: to know the meaning of a name one needs to either have acquaintance with the object that it refers to, or to have learnt what thing is the referent of the name without actually having been acquainted with it. Although Yourgrau can say that he has given an answer to the metaphysical question, he can hardly say that he has given one for the epistemological question.

This is because it is impossible to know, or be acquainted with, a nonexistent person. Furthermore, it is doubtful that we could ever be in the position to know what it would be like to be acquainted with any nonexistent object. To know the meaning of a name, I need to know what object it refers to, and be able to recognise it as such. I

have never seen a nonexistent object, nor does it seem possible for me to do so: how can I observe what doesn't exist? If I can only ever see existent things, I can never even know what it would be like to see a nonexistent thing, there seems to be no possibility for the requisite discriminatory knowledge. Nor can I infer the being of non-existent objects via a causal chain from my observations of existent objects, because it seems fair to assume that the non-existent can't have any causal affect on the world of existents[59]. If I can never observe a nonexistent object, how else could we know them? There is no ready explanation of how I might be acquainted with a nonexistent object by some a priori method. Not having noticed this Yourgrau gives some examples: 'Just as we are intimate with various existent objects, we, most of us, are familiar with specific past objects (those we know who have died), and we are all used to dealing with the future'[60]. But I am not intimate with people who I knew when they were alive, I am only intimate with my memories of them; nor does it seem to make any sense to say that I am intimate, or know anything at all, about the future by means of any acquaintance of the future[61].

It seems that if nonexistent objects are supposed to be the referents of our names for dead people, and if they are to explain the meaning of the names as well, one of two things should be true: either we should not be able to know these objects and the names should have an unknowable meaning; or, we are able to know these objects and the meaning of the name is pellucid. But neither of these statements are true: we can know the meaning of a name of a dead person, *and* we do not know of nonexistent people. I know the meaning of the name of my grandmother just as much

[59] If this assumption needs justifying, consider the following question: 'Why hasn't the pink elephant caused your glass to fall over by waving its trunk about?' The best answer to this question is just to say that it is because the pink elephant doesn't exist.
[60] Yourgrau (1987) p91.
[61] This is not to deny the possibility that I might know about the future indirectly, from inferences from present events to future ones, all I am denying is the possibility that I know about the future by means of an acquaintance of it.

now as I did before she died, but I am not acquainted with my nonexistent grandmother. Now it is still necessary to explain how I still know the meaning of her name even though she no longer exists, and that will come in my positive solution to these problems, but all we need to note now is that nonexistent objects don't help us solve our problems about the meaning of an utterance of stating that someone is dead. My refutation of the utility of nonexistent objects is as follows: since I know the meaning of the name of a dead person, and I do not know any nonexistent objects, it can be fair to say that I do not know the meaning of the name in virtue of a nonexistent object.

Having dispatched with Yourgrau's solution to the problem of meaning, I can now illustrate the positive account that I favour: Evans' naturalistic account of name using practices.

Evans[62] begins by asking what it is that characterises names from other singular referring terms, such as demonstratives and pronouns. The latter are what he calls 'one-off' referring expressions. What characterises these expressions is that, although they refer to objects, there doesn't exist a practice that demands that they constantly refer to one particular object. The expression 'that' in 'That's the man', refers to a particular man in that utterance, but the demonstrative expression could be used to refer to something else in the next utterance. Names operate differently. With a name, there does exist a practice to refer to only one thing with that expression: e.g. the practice that governs the meaning of the expression 'Tony Blair' to pick out Tony Blair. The distinction between one-off referring expressions and referring expressions that are names is worth mentioning because it highlights the kind of practice that names are characteristically associated with, and by examining how this kind of

[62] Evans gives his theory of names in Chapter 11 of his (1982), and in his (1973)

practice comes about, we will be able to see that what allows a name to keep its meaning over time is the continuation of the practice associated with it.

The discussion of how a name using practice comes into being starts when Evans makes the distinction between producers and consumers. A producer is someone who is acquainted with an object, *x*, and for whatever reason, wants to baptise *x* with a name. He will think of a name and then say something like 'This is NN' where *x* is the target of the demonstrative reference. By doing this, he will have decided that *x* is to be called 'NN'. If the producer repeats the utterance 'This is NN' to someone else who is acquainted with *x*, this new person will also know that *x* is known as 'NN', and he will become a producer too. To become a producer, one must have some sort of acquaintance with the object, and have been introduced to the object *x* as 'NN' by another producer. But one need not have an acquaintance with the named object in order to be able to be part of the name using practice. Someone can be introduced into a name using practice when they aren't acquainted with the named object. When someone becomes part of a name using practice in this manner, they become consumers. Someone can become a consumer in the practice if they are told by someone who is already a member of the practice, either a producer or another consumer, something like 'NN is the F'. Whenever the new consumer wants to talk about the thing that is the F, he can now use the expression 'NN'. The consumer can now introduce people into the practice as consumers by passing on the information that they have about the thing that is called 'NN'.

An introduction into a name using practice is characterised by the transfer of information. A person becomes a producer in the practice when another producer tells him that an object in their acquaintance is known as 'NN': the person has become a producer because he has been told that an object he knows about has a certain name.

He can now associate all the information he has about that object with the name 'NN'. He too can now make demonstrative assertions like 'This is NN'. Consumers don't have the acquaintance with the named object that the producers do: they only possess the information that they heard being associated with the name. A consumer will have information about the named thing, without acquaintance with the thing, even though he may well be in the position to identify something as the thing known as 'NN' if he were to encounter the named thing.

At the beginning of a practice, all of its members will be producers, because the only people who know x as being called 'NN' will be those with an acquaintance with the object. The practice will expand as producers use the name to say things about x without it being present to people who have not yet been introduced into the practice. Whether or not a name using practice survives or not depends entirely on the existence of people who are members of it. If a name is useful, because it refers to someone who many people want to talk about, people will be constantly introduced into the practice, even after the thing that the name is about has ceased to exist. Nor does a name have to be used in order to remain being a name, all there need be are members of the practice who would recognise it as a name for a certain object if they were to hear it being used.

Given this framework that Evans provides, we ~~now~~ can now tackle the meaning of the singular referring terms in dead sentences. A name stays meaningful as long as there is a practice within a community of language users to refer to a certain object with a particular name. As long as this practice exists, the name will retain its significance, and it will do so even if the referent has ceased to exist. In what way is this theory still Russellian? It is Russellian in the sense that the meaning of the name is always about a certain object, and the meaning couldn't come about without the

producers first deciding to baptise a certain *thing* with a name. Whenever someone uses a name, they will be engaged in a practice to refer to a particular thing. I take it that this is the basic Russellian insight, a name must always be about a thing, and this is adhered to by this proposed solution.

Information, and its transferral, is essential to this theory. It might be thought that its integral place in the theory makes it more of a Fregean theory, where the speaker's cognitive attitude to the named object is a part of its meaning, rather than a Russellian one. I admit that the theory is Fregean in the sense that what we know about an object will determine what propositional attitudes we will have towards it, but the information itself is not part of the meaning. Remember that the main role that information plays in the theory is the function it has in introducing consumers into the practice, someone becomes a consumer when they are told something, or given some information, about the named object with an utterance containing the name. Information therefore is essential for keeping the practice going, but it is the practice itself, a practice to use a certain expression to refer to a particular thing, that maintains the significance of the term. This point is important because it means that a speaker is able to use a name because he is a member of a relevant practice and not because he has some information that the referent of the term is supposed to uniquely satisfy. Upon this realisation, we avoid Kripke's criticisms against accounts of names where they are disguised definite descriptions.

Evans' account of name using practices gives us an account of how a name remains meaningful as long as the practice associated with it persists. Two people can talk about Socrates if they are both embedded in the practice to use 'Socrates' to talk about a particular philosopher. We have reached this conclusion with only an ontology of the everyday, there has been no need to posit the existence of any non-

natural entities, and I think that this makes solutions such as Yourgrau's, or any other theory that believes the problem of meaning can be solved by employing extra entities, superfluous. With the problem of meaning out of the way, we can now move onto the problem of truth.

Part 4. The Problem of Truth.

What is it that makes 'Socrates is dead' true, in light of the fact that there exists no Socrates to satisfy the 'is dead' predicate? Yourgrau says that although Socrates might not exist, there is a thing that is not nothing that satisfies the 'is dead' predicate: there is a nonexistent person, and it is that thing, which is dead. I think that there is an obvious response to Yourgrau's solution to the problem of truth. We could accuse him of paying too much for explanation, as Lewis puts it, with 'the coin of ontology'[63]. In order to justify such a criticism we would have to show how we could get the same amount of adequate explanation at discount prices: by positing fewer kinds of entities. The solution that will now be considered is one where the problem of truth is interpreted as a pernicious consequence of TT, and if we instead subscribe to ST, the problem can be solved with an everyday ontology. It will eventually be seen that formulating the problem in the terms of the debate between TT and ST leads nowhere because a solution to the problem based on ST faces just as many problems as one based on TT. Once this idea has been rejected, I will conclude the chapter by explaining how the problem of truth is much less of a problem than we might think.

[63] Lewis (1986) p4

The reason that one might think that the problem of truth arises from an adherence to TT is as follows. What we want to know is what thing the predicate 'is dead' true of? If we accept the thesis that when something dies it ceases to exist, then the thing that has died, Socrates for example, is never a thing that ever instantiates the property 'is dead', because all dying things have ceased to exist at the moment of their death. This is not to say that TT compels to say that there are no dead things, there are plenty of them, it is just that the dead thing is not the same thing as the thing that died. An adherent of ST, on the contrary, might consider himself free of such problems, and this is because if death isn't necessarily the end of the existence of the thing that dies, it follows that there can exist dead things that are the same thing as the earlier living thing. According to ST, when Socrates quaffs the hemlock, his surrounding group of admirers would soon be in the presence of his dead body, a thing that instantiates the property 'is dead', and it is that thing which makes the proposition that Socrates is dead true. An adherent of ST who is tempted by this line of reasoning, might even go so far as to say that their ability to produce dead things that make propositions about the dead true could be used as a reason to consider ST a more attractive theory than TT.

What might appear to be an attractive solution to the problem of the truth does not withstand a scratch through the initial veneer of attraction. It suffers from the failing which is that although many dying things can survive their own death, things that die whilst maintaining a requisite organisation of their parts, some dying things do cease to exist when they die. An obvious example is a dog that is next to a nuclear bomb as it detonates: the dog has died *and* it has ceased to exist. If ST doesn't guarantee the survival for all organisms, then it is the case that sometimes a dying thing doesn't survive its death and eventually satisfy the 'is dead' predicate. The ST

advocate could say that a dying thing does eventually satisfy the 'is dead' predicate for things that don't die in an extremely violent way; but he cannot say that ST gives a fully general solution to the theory of truth because some things die and cease to exist at the same time. It is not a fully general because it can only provide truth-values to propositions that are about people whose death is non-violent, and it is just as much at a loss to explain the propositions about things that have died in an extreme manner as the TT advocate is.

In order to shore up the theory of the ST solution to the problem of truth, its exponent might try to deny the counterexample concerning the nuclear bomb. They would say that the correct interpretation of the death of the dog next to the nuclear bomb is not to say that the death of the dog and its ceasing to exist have occurred simultaneously, but that the death happens first and the non-existence happens very quickly afterwards, which allows for the split second between death and non-existence there to momentarily exist a thing that satisfies the 'is dead' predicate. But I think that this would be a peculiar way to avoid the counterexample to the ST solution to the problem of truth, and it suffers from a number of problems.

There appears to be an immediate response to the interpretation of the atom bomb case where there exists a dead body for a slither of an instant. One can allow the advocate of the ST solution to the problem of truth his interpretation of the atom bomb case, but adduce another case that still limits the generality of the solution in an unacceptable way. Such a case would be where somebody, as a result of the most anomalous freak of nature, ceases to exist in an instant: one moment he is there and closest following moment later he is not. The advocate of the ST solution of truth might give the following response. They might say: if someone were to simply pop out of existence, then a proposition like 'That man has ceased to exist' would be true,

but another sentence 'That man has died' would not be true. In effect, they would be saying that merely ceasing to exist is not dying, and the reason that they make this denial would be based on an unease resulting from saying that a thing that instantaneously ceased to exist has died. If this is true, then it has the interesting conclusion that not only is non-existence not necessary for death, as ST suggests, but also that non-existence is not sufficient for death. We would have to revise the analysis of death we have been using, that death is the end of the life of a living thing, and supplement it with an extra condition that demands that the death be a process that the dying thing undergoes, and it not be an instantaneous change.

But there is an extra, more decisive criticism that can be levelled at reinterpretation of the nuclear bomb case, which is that although there may momentarily be a thing that satisfies the 'is dead' predicate, whether there is such a thing or not has no effect on whether we truthfully say of something whether it is dead or not. An assertion, that comes from a philosopher, that says that there exists a brief dead body when something is blown up, is pure armchair speculation: it could be confirmed or disconfirmed by appropriate empirical evidence, but whether it is true or not does not figure in our holding that sentences which talk about the deaths of people that have been blown up by nuclear explosions are true. It is not as if cases where people are destroyed by explosions are borderline cases of the death, like we find when thinking about how much of the body has to not function before death, they are clear cut cases. We should not think that the ST solution to the problem of truth is saved by positing a momentary dead body that satisfies the 'is dead' predicate. We should turn away from explaining the truth of dead sentences like 'Socrates is dead' in terms of the entities that our metaphysics allows, but instead see that it is possible to

explain their truth with entities whose existence everyone will condone, regardless of what they think of TT and ST.

I think the only reason that the problem of truth could ever be seen as problematic is because it takes the satisfaction conditions of the predicate 'is dead' to be derivative of its natural language form. The problem arises by seeing the present tensed predicate 'is dead' to only be satisfied if at some point there presently exists something that instantiates the predicate is dead. I don't think that such an approach is mandatory. We have seen the problem of truth to be problematic for adherents to both TT and ST, where both theories have allowed in one sense or another for there to be a thing that present tensedly satisfies the 'is dead' predicate. Dead sentences, like 'Socrates is dead', are evidently true whether Socrates dies non-violently from drinking poison or if he is blown up by a giant bomb, but we are unable to always find a presently existing object to satisfy the predicate 'is dead'. I think that this suggests that there is no object, common to all the situations that presently satisfies the 'is dead' predicate. What we should do instead is find what is common to all dead things. The answer is obvious: all things that are dead, according to the analysis of death that we have been employing, will have at one stage been alive; their death was when they ceased to be alive. Since all things that are dead have died by ceasing to be alive, why don't we say that 'Socrates is dead' is true if it is the case that Socrates has died? By putting explaining the satisfaction of 'is dead' in terms of has died, we are incorporating the past tense into its satisfaction conditions, removing the troublesome present tensed aspect. It is only when we take 'is dead' to have present tensed satisfaction conditions that the problem of truth seems problematic, and by avoiding that way of setting up the problem, we can give an account of the truth of the dead sentences

without requiring any presently existing things, only the prior living things whose existence is uncontroversial.

In this chapter I would like to think that I have achieved two things. Not only do I think that I have given satisfactory solutions to the problems of meaning and truth that concern dead sentences, I have done so in a way by employing entities that are neither out of the ordinary nor controversial.

Conclusion.

With the problems of the thesis now addressed, it would be an appropriate time to summarise the main idea that is advocated in the thesis, so that we can see the work as a condensed whole.

The dominant strand of thought concerned whether death is a change that a thing can survive. Two opposing ideas were laid against each other, the termination thesis, which asserts that death entails the non-existence of the thing that dies, and the survival thesis which asserts that although some dying things can cease to exist when they die, it is not the case that all dying things cease to exist when they die. At the foundation of the argumentative structure that favours the survival thesis was a set of intuition cases designed to show that it is the survival thesis, not the termination thesis that represents our natural thought concerning the death of organisms. Once this has been shown, the onus is on the advocate of the termination thesis to argue for their conclusion.

There were three main arguments considered in favour of the termination thesis: the first concerned the death of organisms, the second concerned the meaning of the word 'dead' and its cognates, and the third was an attempt to establish a non-biological, essentially personal, conception of death.

The first set of arguments, from Wiggins and Olson, attempted to show that being alive is in some sense essential for the continued existence of an organism. Wiggins argued that the body that survives death is a distinct thing from the organism that it constitutes. I argued that in order for Wiggins to make the distinctness claim he had to provide an inaccurate picture of what a body is, and if he actually employs an accurate picture of what a body is, the body and organism are too similar to allow for

a metaphysical distinction to be made between the two. My alternative account is that the difference between bodies and organisms is a linguistic, not a metaphysical difference. The alternative to Wiggins was Olson. He too believed that being alive is an essential property of an organism, but once his arguments are examined, this conclusion is not so much something that he argues for, it is instead a corollary of his general theory of organism persistence, a theory that is itself unconvincing because it is neither in accord with our natural thought concerning the persistence of organisms nor fully general in terms of its formulation. What I propose, following Mackie, as the essential property for the continued existence of an organism is not that the organism be alive, that it is a functioning organism, but instead that it retain a suitable organisation of its parts characteristic of the kind that it is a member.

The second argument for the termination thesis was one that asserts that the property 'dead' is analogous to words like 'counterfeit' or 'fake', in the sense that a dead rat is not a real rat in the same way that a fake Rolex watch is not really a Rolex watch. I suggested that this is an unsatisfactory way to frame the debate between the termination and survival thesis because it presupposes the outcome of the debate. Even though this is the case, I adduced a number of examples neutral to the debate of the termination thesis that showed that 'dead' does not function in the same way as 'fake'.

The final argument for the termination thesis is one that concedes that organisms can survive their death, but denies that people are organisms and that they are subject to a biological kind of death: a personal death. I elaborated that a personal conception of death is what happens to something when it ceases to instantiate psychological properties. Such a notion of death, strong enough to support the termination thesis, rests upon a theory of personal identity where people are

essentially psychological things that are distinct from their body. This theory of personal identity is diagnosed to be the heart of the personal conception of death, and an opposing theory, one where the person is numerically identical to the body or organism is argued for. In order to argue for such a theory of personal identity I modify an argument of Lowe's that is supposed to show that a person is a psychological substance. It says that questions of identity of the psychological states of things ultimately rest on questions about the thing that has those states. Lowe believes the thing that has those states is a psychological substance, but this claim relies on an assumption that makes an implausible relation between persons and personalities. It is on the basis of this argument that we make a synchronic identity claim between people and their bodies or organisms. After this I considered diachronic counterexamples in the form of brain transplant arguments. I advocated Olson's interpretation of these thought experiments that asserts that they have the fission case as a corollary which ultimately discredits the common inference made from the original brain transplant case. Having defended the idea that a person is numerically identical with its organism or body, I have uprooted the foundations of the personal conception of death, securing the generality of the survival thesis.

Two new problems that arise from considering the relation between death and existence were discussed in the final chapter. If we have a theory of names where the meaning of a name is in some sense dependent on the existence of an object, then why are sentences that make reference to the nonexistent dead, such as 'Socrates is dead', still meaningful? Why are they true, if there is nothing to satisfy the 'is dead' predicate? We saw that Yourgrau thought it necessary to posit the existence of non-natural entities to give an account of the problems of meaning and truth. I eschew such metaphysical explanations as being explanatorily redundant, because the

problems can be solved with only an everyday ontology, objects whose existence is uncontroversial. To explain the meaning of singular terms like 'Socrates', I advocated Evans' account of naturalistic name using practices, and truth of sentences like 'Socrates is dead' was explained by construing the satisfaction conditions of the 'is dead' to be past tense, which removes all aspects of the problem.

In sum: the conclusions of my thesis are that organisms can survive their death; that people can survive their death because they are organisms too; and that subsequent talk of the dead is philosophically unproblematic. My hope is that, even though the reader may disagree with these conclusions, the thesis will have provoked thought about the metaphysical nature of death.

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