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PERSONAL IDENTITY: THE SIMPLE VIEW

by

Susan Jane Southgate**ABSTRACT**

In the examination of the concept of personal identity, this thesis concentrates upon the central divide between complex and simple accounts. The opposing theories have been evaluated with respect to their ability to produce a concept of persons which will fulfil the role of a forensic being. Thus, the criticisms suggested are not made solely in consideration of the coherence of supportive arguments but also on the ability to provide accurate accounts of a person as a moral agent: whether value and responsibility are sufficiently met by the concept and whether the resulting person can be objectively and reliably identified.

The thesis begins with an explanation of the historical roots of the debate, considering the originators of the simple view in their criticism of Locke's conception of personal identity. It then moves on to examine the modern version of the simple view, explaining its arguments and providing a critique. Finally, modifications to the modern simple view are suggested, pointing the way to a more satisfactory debate within personal identity theory, whilst showing the central epistemological role that such a debate has.

PERSONAL IDENTITY: THE SIMPLE VIEW

By

Susan Jane Southgate

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

1	THE PROBLEM.....	1
1 (i)	Personal Identity.....	1
1 (ii)	Complex and Simple Accounts of Personal Identity.....	2
2	THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY.....	6
2 (i)	Forms of Identity.....	6
2 (ii)	Identity and Change.....	8
2 (iii)	Complex and Simple Identity.....	9
3	THE CONCEPT OF PERSON.....	12
3 (i)	The Public and Private Person.....	12
3 (ii)	Simple and Complex Persons.....	14
4	MORALITY AND PERSONAL IDENTITY.....	16
4 (i)	Identity and Responsibility.....	16
4 (ii)	The Dual Nature of Morality.....	17
4 (iii)	Simple and Complex Identity and Morality.....	18
5	THE AIMS OF THE THESIS.....	20

PART I THE COMPLEX VIEW OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

CHAPTER 1	LOCKE.....	23
1.1	IDENTITY.....	24
1.1 (i)	Quantitative and Qualitative Identity.....	24
1.1 (ii)	Criteria of Identity.....	29
1.1 (iii)	Complex and Simple Identity in Locke.....	31
1.2	THE IDEA OF THE PERSON.....	34
1.2 (i)	The Rational Being.....	34
1.2 (ii)	The Forensic Being.....	38

1.3	PERSONS, MEN AND SUBSTANCES.....	40
1.3 (i)	The Natural Man.....	40
1.3 (ii)	Constitutive Substances.....	42
1.4	PERSONAL IDENTITY.....	46
1.4 (i)	Consciousness and Personal Identity.....	46
1.4 (ii)	The Changing Person.....	49
1.5	CONCLUSIONS.....	53
CHAPTER 2	THE LOGIC OF THE COMPLEX VIEW.....	55
2.1	THE PROBLEM.....	56
2.2	PRESUPPOSITION.....	57
2.2 (i)	Sensation and Reflection.....	58
2.2 (ii)	Synchronic and Diachronic Distinctions.....	61
2.2 (iii)	Continuity Accounts of Personal Identity.....	63
2.2 (iv)	Circularity and Continuity Accounts.....	65
2.2 (v)	Lockean Circularity.....	68
2.3	EVIDENCE AND TRUTH.....	73
2.3 (i)	Identity and Thinking Substances.....	74
2.3 (ii)	Evidence of Subjective Persons.....	77
2.3 (iii)	Evidence of Objective Persons.....	80
2.3 (iv)	Empiricism's Failure to Accommodate Meaning....	84
2.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	87
CHAPTER 3	THE ABSURDITY OF THE COMPLEX VIEW.....	89
3.1	THE PROBLEM.....	90
3.1 (i)	Absurdity of the Memory Theory.....	90
3.1 (ii)	Lockean Acceptance of Multiple Relationships...	92

3.2	LOGICAL ABSURDITY.....	95
3.2 (i)	Modification of the Person.....	95
3.2 (ii)	The Logic of Multiple Relationships.....	99
3.3	PRACTICAL ABSURDITY.....	106
3.3 (i)	Third-Person Individuation.....	106
3.3 (ii)	The Modern Objective Complex Person.....	110
3.3 (iii)	The Necessity of Subjectivity.....	114
3.3 (iv)	Personal Identity as Derivative in Value.....	119
3. 4	CONCLUSIONS.....	121
CHAPTER 4	THE COMPLEX VIEW AND REAL IDENTITY.....	123
4.1	THE PROBLEM.....	124
4.2	PERSONS AND SUBSTANCES.....	127
4.2 (i)	Lockean Substance.....	127
4.2 (ii)	Actual Distinction of Persons and Substances..	130
4.2 (iii)	Change in the Lockean Person.....	135
4.2 (iv)	Modern Complex Accounts.....	138
4.3	REAL IDENTITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.....	141
4.3 (i)	Morality and Identity and Convention.....	141
4.3 (ii)	Identity Does Not Matter.....	145
4.3 (iii)	Responsibility and the Self.....	148
4.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	152
CHAPTER 5	SUMMARY CONCLUSION.....	154
5.1	LOCKEAN PERSONAL IDENTITY.....	155
5.1 (i)	Problems in Locke.....	155
5.2	MODERN COMPLEX ACCOUNTS.....	157
5.2 (i)	Problems in the Modern Complex View.....	158

5.3	INSIGHTS OF THE COMPLEX VIEW.....	161
5.3 (i)	Conclusion.....	162

PART II THE SIMPLE VIEW OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

CHAPTER 6	THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	163
6.1	BUTLER, REID AND THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	164
6.1 (i)	The Butler/Reid Account of Personal Identity..	164
6.1 (ii)	The Necessity of Real Identity.....	167
6.1 (iii)	The Modern Simple View.....	170
6.2	THE ARGUMENTS OF THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	174
6.2 (i)	Arguments of Descartes.....	174
6.2 (ii)	Descartes and the Simple View.....	178
6.3 (iii)	Rational Argument.....	183
6.4	CONCLUSION.....	187
CHAPTER 7	METHODOLOGY.....	189
7.1	A USE FOR THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS.....	191
7.1 (i)	Rational Use of Thought Experiments.....	191
7.1 (ii)	Thought Experiments.....	194
7.2	THE PROBLEM OF PRECONCEPTION.....	196
7.2 (i)	Assumption.....	196
7.2 (ii)	Natural Necessity.....	199
7.3	THE JUSTIFICATION FOR USING INTUITION.....	202
7.3 (i)	The Pro-Intuitionist Claim.....	202
7.3 (ii)	Empirical Certainty.....	207
7.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	211

CHAPTER 8	THE CONCEPT OF A PERSISTING SUBJECT.....	213
8.1	THE SELF IN EXPERIENCE.....	215
8.1 (i)	Self-Awareness in Perception.....	215
8.1 (ii)	The Persistence of the Self.....	217
8.2	A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF.....	220
8.2 (i)	Knowledge by Acquaintance.....	220
8.2 (ii)	Direct Acquaintance with the Self.....	221
8.2 (iii)	Differences Between Locke and the Simple View.....	222
8.3	THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT SELF.....	225
8.3 (i)	Persistence Through Change.....	225
8.3 (ii)	Experienced Persistence Through Time.....	226
8.3 (iii)	The Reduction Self-Consciousness.....	227
8.4	THE NECESSITY OF AN INDEPENDENT SELF.....	228
8.4 (i)	The Prior Existence of the Self.....	228
8.4 (ii)	Prior Knowledge of the Self?.....	230
8.4 (iii)	Necessity of Consciousness to Self?.....	232
8.5	CONCLUSIONS.....	235
CHAPTER 9	THE LOGICAL POSSIBILITY OF DUALISM.....	237
9.1	LOGICAL CONCEIVABILITY.....	239
9.1 (i)	Logical Possibility and Actuality.....	239
9.1 (ii)	Modern use of Cartesian Thought Experiments....	241
9.2	OBJECTIVE EMPIRICAL DESCRIPTION.....	244
9.2 (i)	Scientific Description.....	244
9.2 (ii)	Failure of Scientific Argument.....	247
9.3	SELF-IDENTIFICATION.....	249
9.3 (i)	The Content of Self-Reference.....	24
9.3 (ii)	'I' as a Logically Proper Name.....	251

9.3 (iii)	Identification of the Self Without Properties.....	252
9.3 (iv)	Self-Reference and Separability.....	253
9.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	256
CHAPTER 10 THE POSSIBILITY OF SUBJECT/PROPERTY DUALISM...		259
10.1	CONCEPTUAL DIFFICULTY.....	261
10.1 (i)	Reference to Properties.....	261
10.1 (ii)	The Propertyless Self.....	263
10.1 (iii)	The Self and Non-Specific Properties.....	265
10.1 (iv)	Having Properties and Being Properties.....	266
10.2	LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY.....	269
10.2 (i)	Practical Absurdity.....	270
10.2 (ii)	Self-Contradiction.....	275
10.2 (iii)	Subject/Content Dualism.....	277
CHAPTER 11 SUBJECT/CONTENT DUALISM.....		279
11.1	THE PROPERTY OF SUBJECTIVITY.....	281
11.2	MODERN SIMPLE VIEW SUBJECTIVITY.....	284
11.2 (i)	Experience and Subjects.....	284
11.2 (ii)	Subjectivity in Experience.....	286
11.2 (iii)	Subjectivity as a Location.....	289
11.2 (iv)	A Physical Description of Subjectivity.....	290
11.3	THE NATURE OF SUBJECTIVITY.....	293
11.3 (i)	Subjectivity and Consciousness.....	293
11.3 (ii)	Real Identity.....	297
11.3 (iii)	Support For Persistence.....	299
11.3 (iv)	Subject/Content Dualism?.....	301
11.3 (v)	Actual Separability.....	304
11.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	307

CHAPTER 12 REAL IDENTITY.....	308
12.1 MORAL CENTRALITY OF THE SELF.....	211
12.1 (i) The Moral Obscurity of the Self.....	311
12.1 (ii) The Person and Properties.....	313
12.2 EPISTEMIC CENTRALITY OF THE SELF.....	318
12.2 (i) A Priori Knowledge of the Self.....	318
12.2 (ii) A Relative Concept of Identity.....	322
12.3 CONCLUSIONS.....	325
CHAPTER 13 SUMMARY CONCLUSION.....	326
13.1 THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	326
13.1 (i) The Modern Simple View.....	328
13.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	330
13.2 (i) Inconclusive Evidence.....	330
13.2 (ii) Moral Obscurity.....	331
13.3 CONCLUSIONS.....	332
 <u>PART III THE NEW ACCOUNT OF PERSONAL IDENTITY</u>	
CHAPTER 14 MORAL VALUE.....	333
14.1 SELF AND VALUE.....	335
14.1 (i) The Value of Self as Experiencer.....	336
14.1 (ii) The Moral Self.....	339
14.1 (iii) 'Self' as the Source of Non-Derivative Value..	342
14.2 PROPERTIES AND VALUE.....	344
14.2 (i) Properties Affecting the Self.....	344
14.2 (ii) Knowledge of our Properties.....	346
14.2 (iii) Value and Memory.....	348

14.2 (iv)	Public Value.....	351
14.2 (v)	Stable Personalities.....	355
14.3	CONCLUSIONS.....	358
CHAPTER 15 MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.....		360
15.1	RESPONSIBILITY AND SELVES.....	362
15.1 (i)	Attribution of Responsibility.....	362
15.1 (ii)	Properties and Predetermination.....	364
15.1 (iii)	Agency and Causation.....	367
15.1 (iv)	Experience of Freedom.....	271
15.2	OTHERS AND RESPONSIBILITY.....	373
15.2 (i)	Public Persons.....	373
15.1 (ii)	Properties as Evidence of the Self.....	375
15.2 (iii)	Properties as Necessary to Individuation.....	382
15.3	THE ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTIES.....	385
15.3 (i)	Self-determination of Responsibility.....	385
15.3 (ii)	Public Concern.....	387
15.3 (iii)	Independence of Person Properties.....	389
15.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	393
CHAPTER 16 A NEW CONCEPT OF PERSONS.....		394
16.1	THE PHYSICAL SELF.....	397
16.1 (i)	Mind/Brain Identity.....	397
16.1 (ii)	Mind/Brain Identity and Subjectivity.....	399
16.1 (iii)	Consciousness and The Brain.....	401
16.1 (iv)	Pan-Psychism.....	407
16.1 (v)	Exclusive Descriptions and Transitivity.....	412
16.1 (vi)	Self/Brain Identity.....	414

16.2	SELF-PROPERTIES AND PERSON-PROPERTIES.....	417
16.2 (i)	Person-Properties.....	417
16.2 (ii)	The Unified Person.....	418
16.2 (iii)	Criterion of Identity?.....	422
16.3	CONCLUSIONS.....	478

CHAPTER 17 PROBLEMS OF THE NEW VIEW.....430

17.1	THE NEW VIEW AND INTERACTION.....	432
17.1 (i)	Interaction and Dualism.....	432
17.1 (ii)	Simple View Dualism.....	433
17.1 (iii)	Interaction in the New View.....	435
17.1 (iv)	Objectivity and Subjectivity.....	437
17.2	IDENTITY.....	442
17.2 (i)	The Idea of Persistence.....	442
17.2 (ii)	Identity and the Brain.....	444
17.2 (iii)	Reduction to Complex Identity?.....	448
17.2 (iv)	Identity Just Imagined?.....	450
17.3	IDENTIFICATION.....	453
17.3 (i)	Inference by Analogy.....	455
17.4	CONCLUSIONS.....	461

CHAPTER 18 APPARENTLY FUNDAMENTAL IRRECONCILABLES.....466

18.1	THE TENSION OF PERSPECTIVE.....	467
18.1 (i)	Empiricism and Rationalism.....	467
18.1 (ii)	The Complex and Simple Views.....	471
18.1 (iii)	Resolution in the New View.....	473
18.2	EXAMPLES OF ANTINOMIES.....	476
18.2 (i)	Perspective in Morality.....	477
18.2 (ii)	Definition of the Person.....	479

18.2 (iii)	The Individual and Society.....	480
18.2 (iv)	Absolutes and Relativity.....	482
18.2 (v)	Perspective in Art.....	483
18.2 (vi)	The Centrality of the Self.....	485

CHAPTER 19 SUMMARY CONCLUSION.....488

19.1	THE SELF AND THE PROPERTIES.....	488
19.1 (i)	Knowledge of Properties.....	489
19.1 (ii)	Mind/Brain Identity.....	492
19.2	THE NEW VIEW AND MORALITY.....	494
19.2 (i)	The Attribution of Personal Rights.....	494
19.2 (ii)	Others and Selves.....	496
19.2 (iii)	Others as Persons.....	497
19.3	CONCLUSIONS.....	500

CONCLUSION

1	THE COMPLEX VIEW.....	503
1 (i)	Advantages.....	503
1 (ii)	Disadvantages.....	504
2	THE SIMPLE VIEW.....	506
2 (i)	Advantages.....	506
2 (ii)	Disadvantages.....	507
3	THE NEW VIEW.....	509
3 (i)	Combination of the Complex and Simple Views...	509
3 (ii)	Moral and Epistemological Implications.....	510
(iii)	The Potential for Persons.....	512

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....515

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To my long suffering family and friends -
especially my Mother and Stephen.

INTRODUCTION

It is time to explain myself - let us stand up.

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'

INTRODUCTION

1 THE PROBLEM

The philosophical problem of personal identity has produced many different theories, all of which have advantages, but all of which are somehow unsatisfactory. This thesis is an examination of the basic issues influencing accounts of persons and identity, and a suggestion of the fundamental ingredients that any successful theory should contain.

1 (i) Personal Identity

The problem of personal identity concerns the concept of persons at one time and over a period of time - what it is that constitutes a person and what makes that person the same person from one moment to the next. It is a search for the essence of personhood - not the incidental and accidental trimmings associated with persons but the basic necessary elements without which a person would not be. Once these are found, a criterion of both synchronic and diachronic identity can be offered.

Expressed in this way, the task seems fairly straightforward. However, like most philosophical pursuits,



the project is far from simple. For apart from fundamental questions relating to epistemology and ontology, the examination of persons leads to intricate paths tracing their way through the basic philosophical fields of identity and morality.

It is the ideas and conclusions drawn from these broader issues that influence and produce different theories of personal identity. Thus the various accounts of persons* can be classified into groups according to the character of the theory that produces them: Lockean, neo-Lockean, dualist, naturalist, functionalist, idealist, realist...the 'lists' seem endless. But there is one categorisation which strikes at a more basic level, aligning all the traditional oppositions into two distinct and exclusive groups. This opposition or conflict has become known as the simple versus complex account of personal identity.

1 (ii) Complex and Simple Accounts of Personal Identity

The complex account is exemplified in Locke and all subsequent, largely empirically based theories of personal identity. The most obvious characteristic uniting these theories is that they literally give a complex account of persons - that is, their theories assume that the person is made up of a number of parts to which their identity can be

* By which I mean concept of person - throughout the text 'person' carries such an implication.

reduced. The term person thus stands for something which is composite and made up of more fundamental things: its identity over time will be ensured if those things persist in some defined manner. Such parts can be classed as properties or qualities - the particular criteria necessary to the person differs from theory to theory, but the fact remains that properties of some sort constitute the essence of personhood.

In contrast, the simple account is fundamentally rationalist. Based in Cartesian and dualist philosophy, it denies that the essence of person lies in something like properties. It does not completely disassociate the person from properties - they do have or possess such things. It is just that properties are not essential to the person, the identity of which lies in something else. The simple view generally offers a non-reductive account of personal identity, taking the person to be a basic term which can be reduced no further - any attempt to do so cannot capture the true essence of person.

It is this fundamental debate, and the attempt to produce theories fitting each of these conflicting views, which will be examined by this thesis. It will consider the origins of the debate, examining the reactions of Butler and Reid to Lockean theory of personal identity*¹; and also focus on the

* Locke 1690, Butler 1736, Reid 1785.

recent re-emergence of the simple view, looking at theories such as those offered by Madell, Swinburne and Chisholm*. This analysis will provide the central pivot of the thesis, for the simple view provides both a criticism of empirical accounts of personal identity from philosophers as widely ranging as Parfit, Lewis and Williams⁺; and responds with its own rationalist theory. In addition, a critique of the simple view will test the strength of its claims and the sufficiency of its account often in the light of insights gained from the complex theory. In reply to these findings, I will suggest a new view of personal identity, following on the suggestions of Nagel[#].

Of course the above is a very basic outline, but from it emerge three basic problems facing any account of personal identity: whether it can be reduced to an informative criterion or not; whether it is a reductive criterion or not; and finally whether it displays real identity or not[@]. The direction taken on these more refined issues concerning personal identity will rely upon conclusions arising from the more fundamental areas mentioned above, that is, the concepts of identity, persons and morality. Therefore, before embarking upon a detailed examination of the opposing

* Madell 1981, Swinburne (1) 1984 & (2) 1986, Chisholm (1) 1976 & (2) 1981

+ Parfit 1984, Lewis 1980, Williams 1973

Strawson 1964, Nagel(1) 1964, (2) 1979 & (3) 1986

@ This characterisation is taken from Noonan ch. 5.5.

views of personal identity and other associated problems, I want first to consider the principal features of identity, persons and morality as they affect the simple and complex theories.

2 THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

The foundation of the concept of identity is neatly expressed in the Leibnizian 'Principle of Indiscernibility'* ($x=y$ if and only if x and y have all and only the same properties) which expresses a fundamental criterion of sameness. Yet when talking of identity this basic notion is applicable to different aspects of the object. We might, for example, be referring to numerical or qualitative identity; synchronic or diachronic; as an act of individuation or merely description.

2 (i) Forms of Identity

Between individuation and description there are interdependent links, for individuation would appear to be impossible without some form of description. For example, in order to isolate a particular gnome in a shop display, I will need some form of description or idea of its characteristics, to enable me to decide which it is out of all the gnomes present. The problem of identity which is of philosophical interest concerns the isolation of essential individuating features only - whereas a description may well cover a whole host of merely contingently associated factors. When I use the term 'identity', I shall be using the notion of individuation rather than characterisation.

* Leibniz 1716

In the uses of numerical versus qualitative identity, the relationship is similar. One isolates the object as an individual object, the other fills it out and gives it character. The qualitative identity of my gnome may well be matched in a hundred other gnomes, made from the same mould; but there is a difference in them not reducible to qualities - they are numerically distinct. Once again, the two may overlap but it is the numerical identity that is of clear philosophical interest, for it concerns the individual essence of a particular token thing rather than the type of thing that is being identified.

Synchronic and diachronic identity are of equal philosophical interest, and the two levels of description must be recognised by any complete account of individuation. A clear awareness of them is essential: one aspect informs us of criteria needed to determine numerical identity at one time, the other indicates sameness over a period of time, and neither can function properly without the presence of the other.

Temporal persistence has a more obvious dependence upon synchronic identity than vice versa. We have to have an accurate and precise understanding of the 'idea' before we can determine the persistence of the thing to which it refers. That is, we have to know what the gnome is like to know whether it continues to exist. However, a practical

existence for the synchronic idea relies upon a temporal nature, for, however momentary, existence in time is necessarily implied by actual existence, implicitly if not explicitly. Thus, if my gnome is to exist more than just conceptually, it is necessary that it exists in time, even if it is only momentarily.

The latter consideration has led modern debate to challenge the possibility of a purely synchronic description,* and mutual dependence does seem to imply inseparability. Yet if we perceive these descriptions as only dependent upon each other in actual existence, then the possibility of conceptual differentiation remains. This idea is more comprehensible if we consider the use of synchronic identity in representing the 'idea' of the thing.

2 (ii) Identity and Change

From the early history of the philosophy of identity, the problem of diachronic identity through change has formed a central contention. Whether Heracleitan flux, Theseus' ship or the simple life-span of a oak tree, the difficulty remains the same - the successive nature of most objects in the world means that they undergo partial, or even total, change of material or parts during their existence. This being so, if an object's parts clearly do not remain the same, how can it be said to remain identical

* See Brennan 1988, ch.5.

through time?

Many theories of identity have been subsequently formed trying to explain a way around this problem. All of them carry within them the fundamental tenet that if a thing is to have identity through time, then it must be unchanging. If any change does occur, then either it is no longer the same thing, or the difference is not integral to the thing or necessary to its existence. This idea is central to all theories of identity, though their solutions to the problems caused by it may be widely differing.

Types of identity theory can be broadly divided into those which allow identity in combined parts and through change by ascribing a form of overriding unity or underpinning continuity; and those which demand one unit which has no parts and persists through time. The difference is between perdurance and endurance*: in the one case complete although gradual change might take place, in the other all remains the same. The choice that a theory makes at this level will effect the character of any theory of persons subsequently devised.

2 (iii) Complex and Simple Identity

Perdurance theories are those of the complex view - they offer a reductionist account of identity. Criteria are

* Noonan 1989 p.122

used to provide a check list against which to determine the identity of a thing. In effect, the identity is reduced to its necessary constituents - if these are present, or some form of continuity is upheld by them, then the thing has temporal identity. This is the concept of identity invoked to avoid the problems of changing complex things, for it allows some parts not to be identical.

However, this is not the sole form that identity takes, for there are cases in which a reductionist account is not necessary, because the object or thing concerned is irreducible or simple. Rather than analysing it into the relevant constituent parts, the individual thing is taken to be a unit, incapable of description in any more basic terms. Consequently the account of identity becomes non-reductionist, perceiving the identity of the thing to be basic and irreducible.

Whether the concept of identity applied is simple or complex depends upon what the thing in question is and what we mean when we talk of it. Under a reductionist account, an object is the collective term for those qualities or parts into which it can be further analysed. Even its identity is expressed in terms of those qualities, consequently they become more important than the thing itself, for its value is derived from them. However, if the thing is classed as irreducible, further explanation or

analysis of it or its value is impossible, and so any relevance or importance is derived solely from the thing itself.

This debate has developed the distinction between single and complex accounts into a major point of contention, questioning the validity of a reducible concept of identity. For one consequence of the simple account is that it tolerates no change. The thing, being basic and unanalysable, must continue in completeness to be the same, and in this way maintains perfect identity. By contrast, a reducible thing can show some degree of change and is therefore not strictly identical. It seems that both accounts can be applied to the world and what we believe about it but, the question remains, Which one is a reliable base upon which to base our understanding of objects? In this thesis I shall argue that both are necessary, even when, in some cases, they are applied to the same thing.

3 THE CONCEPT OF PERSON

The concept of person will quite obviously affect the criteria of identity involved in its existence. As pointed out above*, until it is known what kind of thing we are dealing with, how can it be known what the criteria of its existence and persistence are likely to be? It is wise therefore, before trying to offer a criterion of personal identity, to clarify the notion of person to be used.

The dictionary account of person ranges over five or six definitions: individual human being; living body of a human being; human being or corporate with recognised rights and duties; character in a play or story; one of three modes of being of the Godhead; and one of three classes of personal pronouns denoting respectively the person writing or speaking, written or spoken to, or written or spoken of. The root of the word is from the latin 'persona' meaning actor's mask, character in play or human being⁺. If all these are taken into account what emerges, and is also indicated clearly by the root, is that 'person' has an ambiguous connotation - that of being both a public and a private thing.

3 (i) The Public and Private Person

The definitions seem to deal with what is essentially a

* p.6

+ Taken from the 'Concise Oxford Dictionary'

socially interactive thing, but one which is an identifiable individual with a certain character. The person definitely has a public face, whether formal or informal we 'play' a role in our social position and have a character by which we are known to others. Yet these ideas of mask and role have a resonance of some further thing behind the facade - the individual, the particular body or personality. This intention is usually indirect, being implied by the very term 'mask' or 'character', but it is also directly evident in the way that we refer to what might be considered the most private parts of our bodies as our 'person' and the fact that 'personal' indicates a degree of specific privateness and exclusivity.

The tension evident in the dictionary definition of person, is also present in its everyday use. 'Person' often seems to connote both private and public aspects, and concepts like those of personal rights and personal status reflect this duality, recognising the person in both a public and private social role. Furthermore, it is with respect to personhood that moral responsibility, and with it punishment and reward, is attributed; and likewise we are compensated or deprived in the light of actions done to us as persons.

It might be argued that concepts concerning rights and the individual change over time and place: for example,

pre-Christian society used a very different conception of person and its role in society than twentieth century western culture does. But the fact remains that, whatever the limits or boundaries to which the denotation of 'person' reaches, the idea encapsulated by responsibility for actions and the concept filled by our word 'person' is one of a necessarily private and public intention. Wherever one has public responsibility, the idea of private agency or volition seems to follow.

In the traditional philosophical treatment of persons, the duality of public and private plays a central role: not as forming part of the same concept but as exclusive options. From these two aspects is formed a division, the demand for philosophical clarity causing a focus on one or the other side of the definition. The key features of each aspect or connotation have been seized upon and theories of personal identity have tended to hold an either/or position. The person is taken to be either a forensic social entity, or a private subject or self. More often than not, the two are treated as mutually exclusive, the opposing view of each being relegated to a secondary and non-essential role.

3 (ii) Simple and Complex Persons

The simple and complex views can be easily located in this divide: the complex theorist concentrates upon the

subjective or objective empirical notion of a person, with its character and value in the properties that it possesses; whereas the simple view focuses upon something other than those properties, in effect, emphasising the essentially private nature of the person. The former results in empirical theories of functionalism, behaviourism, and all reductive accounts of the person; the latter opens the door to the dualism found in rationalist epistemologies.

In this thesis, I shall examine the arguments and claims made for both simple and complex views of personal identity, and then argue that an adequate notion of 'person' must combine both public and private areas of connotation within its meaning. The concept of person must be able to satisfy certain social functions whilst retaining the individual and uniquely private role we also ascribe to it. Without both, we are simply not dealing with what is meant by the term 'person' and the moral implications it holds.

4 MORALITY AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Given the account of persons just outlined, it is of little surprise that morality is intimately linked to the notion of personal identity: if persons are something to do with responsibility for action, then they must be somehow connected to the guides and codes concerning that action. The concept of person and the notion of personal rights have a role in both judgement and expectations in ethics: it is the person who is responsible, morally reprehensible or virtuous; and it is the person who is accorded certain rights associated with action and existence.

4 (i) Identity and Responsibility

Personal identity is of prime importance to morality: for if the person is the unit of responsibility, its identity will be important in deciding who is to be blamed or praised for certain actions. Identification is a necessary condition for the attribution of responsibility, since it is identity that allows the synchronic and diachronic individuation of any given person from others, and thus enables a characterisation of that person as an individual and responsible agent.

This notion of identity is fundamental to our concepts of reward and punishment with regard to others (things and persons) and to ourselves. If we cannot identify ourselves

or other agents the concept of responsibility has no practical usage because we have no means by which to apply it. In addition, at a more fundamental level, if we have no idea of identity, we will not conceive of things as persisting through time, and therefore will have no meaning for responsibility at all - for all we know, things will have no future or past to be responsible for.

4 (ii) The Dual Nature of Morality

In general morality can be characterised as a code for behaviour, for it deals with right and wrong actions. The origin and status of the code is widely debated in ethics, but a general division emerges between absolutist and relativist standpoints. These opposites each reflect certain instincts or beliefs we have about morality. On the one hand there is an absolute answer to what is right and wrong, regardless of who and how many people are in the world; whilst on the other each situation and set of rules can be argued on its own merits and the different codes of practice all seem to have validity. As in the case of persons, it seems that the history of morality has urged the division of these two descriptions along with the relegation of one or the other to a subsidiary role.

More obviously parallel to the simple and complex division in the definition of persons, is the difference between fact and value in moral philosophy. A neat

distinction in morality opens up along the complex/simple divide. For those theories endorsing a morality which can be reduced to some form of factual statement, the value of persons in the complex terms of their properties - the properties of the person emerge as the primary concern of morality. By contrast, moral theories which deny the possibility of reducing value to any form of fact, consequently place the value of persons in something more than properties - in effect, adopting a simple-type view of persons.

4 (iii) Simple and Complex Identity and Morality

The simple view's refusal to admit real identity to changing things stems from the reasoning that if something undergoes change, then it is no longer the same; and if it is no longer the same, it argues that it is different, and therefore no longer persists. If such change occurs in persons, it causes major problems for the forensic function: for if a person were to change through time, he then would be no longer the same person and therefore could no longer be responsible for the actions of the original agent. The idea of personal identity must therefore be one of perfect and strict identity.

In contrast, the complex account claims that real identity does not hold such a crucial position: that the loose 'identity' obtained in continuity or perdurance is

sufficient. The reasons take many forms: from the idea that loose identity of a thing exists despite changes in its essential material constituents; to a denial of the importance of identity to persons and their concerns. Whatever the particular theory, the main point remains that such theorists are quite satisfied with the notion of perdurance rather than endurance in the case of morality and persons.

In this thesis I shall argue that both claims are in fact necessary to the concepts of persons, responsibility and morality. Once again, to impose a strict division between the two approaches will result in a necessarily incomplete and inaccurate account of personal identity.

5 THE AIMS OF THIS THESIS

The modern simple view has increased the breadth of the debate concerning personal identity, and although in itself proves insufficient as an account of persons, it does open the doors to a new direction for the philosophy of mind, the concept of persons, and indeed for epistemology in general. The simple view acts as the hub of this thesis, focussing old and new arguments against empirical theories of persons and providing the bedrock for a new theory of persons.

Thus, although the argument as a whole will be more than just an analysis of the simple view which the title suggests, the work is closely built around an evaluation and response to this newly emerged simple account. It aims to examine the support for such a position (in tandem with any support for the complex view) - assessing the validity of its arguments, and to offer suggestions for modifications.

I shall start by explaining the historical roots of the debate, considering the originators of the simple view in their criticism of Locke's conception of personal identity. I shall then move on to examine the modern version of the simple view, explaining its arguments and providing a critique. I shall finally suggest modifications to the modern simple view, pointing the way to a more satisfactory

debate within personal identity theory, whilst showing the central epistemological role that such a debate has.

I will not be concerned with the individual merits of each particular theory of personal identity - rather I shall deal with the origins and arguments of the simple/complex divide. Where necessary, the particular arguments of particular theorists will be discussed, but only in support of the broader position within which the argument finds itself.

I do briefly explore the methodologies used by philosophers writing on the subject, and as a result have tried to avoid making the assumptions I accuse them of making, since the assumed starting point of study often profoundly influences the outcome of any investigation. It seems that to avoid any preconception and undue influence from the methodology, it is best to start from definition - with what we mean by certain terms, and what is entailed by the way the concepts are used. Using this approach it can be shown that a study of personal identity involves a study of general philosophical methodology: that the outcome of the study of persons has profound repercussions for the general epistemological approach.

It is of general methodological importance that reliance upon the definition of 'person' as a forensic unit, both

private and public, is justified, for it seems to be the only neutral starting point. In this thesis I try to employ a methodology relying on our actual use of the term person and its moral connotations, attempting to describe the way the person is and must be to function within our concepts of morality and responsibility. Morality is an active and living concept: it involves our actions, attitudes and behaviour towards ourselves and others - activities which seem to be indivisible from the beliefs impelling them. Even if the reality associated with those beliefs does not exist, the ideas suggested by them are needed for our concepts to function as they do.

Among these ideas the concept of person is central. It seems that if 'person' is to be used as a term imputing moral rights and responsibility, certain necessary ideas associated with the concept must pertain. It is these ideas which this thesis sets out to examine, in the attempt to clarify the issue of personal identity.

PART I

THE COMPLEX VIEW
of
PERSONAL IDENTITY

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'

CHAPTER 1 LOCKE

Locke* deals with personal identity in a short, straightforward account. He provides a seemingly simple concept of identity, laying the blame for difficulties or apparent complexities in the lap of confusion or undue carelessness. Yet his views are based in a set of broad assumptions and formed as a consequence of certain considerations, not least as reactions to the problems outlined in the introduction - that is, the nature of the concept of person and the moral considerations bearing upon it, and the effect of change upon both. As such, Locke provides a good starting point from which to consider the concept of identity.

* Locke 1690

1.1 IDENTITY

The concept Locke describes is one principally of individuation. Identity is concerned with the isolation of a particular object as itself through time. What identity describes is sameness of the object, and in contrast to diversity, identity is:

When the ideas it is attributed to vary not at all from what they were that moment wherein we consider their former existence, and to which we compare the present.

Locke p.206

1.1 (i) Numerical and Qualitative Identity

In using the term identity, Locke's intention is to understand the 'is' of being, rather than the 'is' of constitution - numerical rather than qualitative identity. As such, Locke is dealing primarily with a quantitative notion of identity: identity involves isolation of a particular object rather than describing what that object is like. It may be that descriptions will be needed to help achieve individuation, but such qualitative identification is not essentially the object of concern.

This notion is clearly illustrated in his comment that identity makes us sure that:

When we see anything to be in any place in any instant of time, we are sure (be it what it will) that it is that very thing, and not another which at that same time exists in another place, how like and undistinguishable soever it may be in all other respects.

Locke p.206

- a clear recognition that being an individual concerns more than just being of a certain constitution or certain type of thing. The particular or token object is identified by more than just its kind of qualities, otherwise it cannot be uniquely individuated.

The impetus of such a claim comes from two clear sources, both of which involve the nature of qualitative identity: one is the recognition of the last quotation, that it is possible that the 'properties' be the same yet the individual different; and the other is the fact that in some cases it has proved possible that the qualities change and yet the individual remain.

Such possibilities stem from the relationship between the thing and its constituents or properties. Some objects are essentially connected to particular properties of their constitution in ways which do not allow for their removal, for example substances (in the Lockean sense)*. These things will have coincidental quantitative and qualitative identity. But for others, the properties of their constitution are merely contingent; and if this is the case then it is possible to hold that even though qualitative identity changes completely, the original object can still remain.

* See Section 1.3

Even in cases where the qualities are considered to be essential, it is not always particular qualities that are necessary to the object, only the type of quality: in most complex organic objects, it is far from always the case that particular properties are necessary to the object's identity. In such cases although properties of a certain type are necessary to the object, the actual token properties may change. For example, a tree must have a certain cell structure, but the actual cells may fluctuate and change. It seems here that the properties are only derivative in value to the object; that actual token identity does not matter.

In these complex relationships it becomes evident that the quantitative identity of an object does not necessarily lie in the qualitative description. Although it may be that the properties before us are of the same type as our original object, they may not belong to the same token individual. Moreover, even if the same token properties are present, they may still be part of a different individual. For example, the same type of wool can be found on two different sheep; and the same token wool might be found first on a sheep, then in a cardigan.

These distinctions embody within them the problem of change mentioned in the introduction*.

* See Introduction Section 2

identity arise when we consider that qualitative identity can change through time yet somehow the individual remains. The examples of this are manifold - indeed some philosophers hold that the entire world is in this constant state of change. How then can identity be said to hold in anything?

The Idea

In Locke, the problem of change arises from a conflation of property and object (quality and quantity), a confusion which can be avoided through attention to the idea. The difficulty faced in the Heracleitan flux is a result of failure to understand the real idea of the thing being identified. A river is not only the water and the banks - it is something over and above the combination of the two together.

Since numerical identity applies to the thing in itself rather than just its qualities; and the thing itself is represented by what Locke terms the idea; numerical identity is to be found in the idea. Thus Locke states that:

...to conceive and judge of it aright, we must consider what idea the word it is applied to stands for.

Locke p.210

Clarification of the idea then, will reveal the essential features of the object: what it is for it to exist at a certain place and time and the criteria for its persistence.

If the idea is understood, then the nature of the thing is comprehended, and the object of identity isolated. Hence an accurate understanding of the idea should enable the ascription of identity or diversity in the object. As Locke states:

...and in this consists identity, that the ideas it is attributed to vary not at all from what they were that moment wherein we consider their former existence.

Locke p.206

The idea then, can be understood as the concept of the thing - the definition or even the essence. In effect, Locke proposes that we know the essential synchronic identity of the object before we can determine its diachronic identity.

The problem of succession, and this solution to it, is exemplified in Locke's treatment of the identity of bodies. The constant variation visible in certain bodies, for example living organisms, could result in a lack of identity. However, Locke makes it clear that unlike "atoms" and "masses of matter" (Locke p.208), the ideas associated with 'animal' or 'plant' do not find their reference in the material constituents they exhibit. Instead, these ideas refer to something like a 'life-force' which remains constant and unvarying despite material changes. Each collection of matter is part of the animal or plant at that point in time, but it is the "continued organisation" (Locke p.209) of matter which unites the succeeding parts through time. It is to this unifying organisation that the ideas of

'plant' or 'animal' refer, and therefore it is that in which their identity is to be found.

Thus it is clear that numerical, as opposed to qualitative, identity is the notion being employed by Locke. He uses identity to mean the isolation of a specific idea or object associated with that idea, rather than referring to any accidental or coincidental features associated with the idea. Contingent features may come and go yet the idea maintains steady persistence and identity; quantitative identity may continue even though the parts constituting the idea change. It is therefore possible that the identity of the individual or idea is preserved through the change of its parts.

1.1 (ii) Criteria of Identity

How then can we identify an object? By what criteria can we individuate it? If the above account is accurate, an exclusive concentration upon qualitative identity will at best result in the isolation of a type of thing through its properties: it cannot produce a universally effective principle of individuation. To produce a quantitative individuation, some criterion must be produced which will isolate what is necessary and unique to all objects.

Locke suggests that this is answered by the spatial and temporal coordinates of each thing. In effect, he claims

that identity is to be found through spatio-temporal mapping: that each object can be individuated by its relationship to its beginning and its position in space*.

He states that:

...the principium individuationis; and that it is plain, is existence itself; which determines a being of any sort to a particular time and place, incommunicable to two beings of the same kind.

Locke p.208

In this way, an object can be defined apart from its constituents, through the most objective and least qualitative (and thereby, hopefully least open to mistake) description of any object. Situation in space and time are unique to each and every individual: spatially because "we never finding, nor conceiving it possible, that two things of the same kind should exist in the same place at the same time" (Locke p.206-7); and temporally because "...one thing cannot have two beginnings of existence, nor two things one beginning." (Locke p.207)

This principle, Locke claims, should produce accurate identification: if not, it is through "the little care and attention used in having precise notions of the things to which it is attributed." (Locke p.207) The Lockean concept of identity thus involves two basic elements, change and origin. Identity holds if no change occurs and a unique connection to time and place of origin is preserved.

* See also Marr 1982

1.1 (iii) Complex and Simple Identity in Locke

This theory of identity embraces both simple and complex forms of identity. Substances and thoughts etc., which are basics, are described as having simple identity, in that they cannot undergo a change of parts but are simple units without parts. Consequently they cannot be reduced further to criteria, for their identity consists in their total persistence. By contrast, bodies and animals can and do have a complex form of identity where their qualitative and quantitative identities do not necessarily coincide, and their persistence through time is in a continuum of changing parts.

It is the idea in Locke that holds the identity; but what is the nature of the identity of the idea? Is it possible that the idea has complex identity; or, since it does not change, is it necessary that it be simple and basic? At first it may be tempting to adopt the view that ideas have simple identity, for they must persist in total with no change for identity to hold. However, ideas can be of complex things and their identity can be reduced to criteria other than the idea. The complex things of Lockean description can persist though change of their parts, and their idea is reducible to those parts.

It is this notion of a complex idea which causes possible problems for the account - for its status and for its

acceptability. As shown, the idea provides an umbrella term to link the various changing parts of complex items: but the reality of the objects referred to by such terms, and therefore their identity, can be doubted.

The Status of the Idea

Such doubt finds a foothold on a number of levels - not least in the work of Hume*. His brand of scepticism doubts the real existence of any connective or embracing unifiers that cannot be perceived. Any continuity we attribute has the status only of inference, which ultimately is nothing but "a fiction of the imagination" (Hume p.160). Thus he claims, for example, terms such as necessity, causation, life, and even identity, are in effect nothing but fabrications of our minds. We do not know the identity of anything empirically perceived, for such identity is an inference of the mind.

An attempt to produce a less sceptical account might suggest that natural kinds and organic forms beyond the reach of doubt, claiming that life forms share an objective unity unlike that imposed by our constructed ideas upon 'artificial' unities. Thus a horse has an incontrovertible unity and identity, whereas a choir or nation may be less cut and dried. Yet, still, even the status of these terms

* Hume (1) 1739

is doubted by thorough-going sceptics such as Quine*, who claim that in effect all identity amounts only to Humean-type conventions. Such doubt is based on the belief that the patterns we make of the world through our perception are entirely subjective.

It is not necessary to enter the epistemological dead-end envisaged by the total scepticism of the modern empiricist to make use of the main thrust of their arguments. For, even if one wishes to maintain the possibility of an independent and 'real' world with real identity existing in 'basics', a degree of scepticism might be retained with respect to complex objects. Such scepticism focuses on those objects which manifestly do change, claiming that if they are to have identity through time, a continuity must be found which can claim to be more than just convention. It is possible then to maintain a deep difference between complex and simple identity: for the problem encountered by the complex view is not just a sceptical difficulty common to all theories - it has its own individual problem which the simple view does not incur.

* Quine (1) 1960 or (2) 1969

1.2 THE IDEA OF THE PERSON

Heeding Lockean warnings over confusion in identity, it would seem wise to ensure that the idea of 'person' is thoroughly understood before proceeding on to an analysis of personal identity. How then does Locke use the term person? What exactly does he mean by the idea of person? Quite simply:

...It is a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit, and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness and misery.

Locke p.220

...a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself...

Locke p.211

'Person', then, has two main characteristics - it refers to a thinking being and it is a forensic term. But what does this actually mean? How does Locke get to this conclusion?

1.2 (i) The Rational Being

To get a clear notion of a thinking, intelligent being, Locke's concept of thought must be understood. Locke took the human understanding to function on two basic levels, and from these knowledge is gained. Firstly, sensory information about the world is perceived by the mind: "External objects furnish the mind with ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us." (Locke p.91). Secondly, the mind works upon certain information

that is received to produce more ideas of 'knowledge':
 "...and the mind furnishes the understanding with idea of its own
 operations." (Locke p.93)

Hence, there are two levels, 'perception' and
 'reflection': the one concerning basic information, such as
 taste, colour or sound; the other providing concepts such as
 mathematics, causation and indeed identity. These fields
 correspond to the mind's function of basic experience and
 thinking, and neither can occur without our awareness of
 them:

...sensation, which is such an impression or motion made in
 some part of the body, as produces some perception in the
 understanding. It is about these impressions made on our
 senses by outward objects that the mind seems first to
 employ itself in such operations as we call perception,
 remembering, consideration, reasoning, etc.

Locke p.77

The thinking being must be able to perform both of these
 functions, for without the input from the senses there would
 be nothing for the mind to work upon*. Moreover, the
 product of these two workings is always conscious - we
 cannot have an unconscious idea. This Locke explains is
 because "it is impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving
 that he does perceive" (Locke p.211) and "consciousness is inseparable
 from thinking" (Locke p.211). Hence, both these acts of the
 mind are part of consciousness, for we cannot experience
 sensation or thought without perceiving that we do.

* The view that the mind is blank sheet or 'tabula rasa' (Locke p.89).

The key to understanding why this is so, is to recognise the Lockean use of the word 'perception' to entail not merely passive intake, but some form of affectation. When we smell, hear, or have any other experience, we know that we do so, for we are somehow affected by it: smelling, hearing or sensing, implies some sort of action, not just reception. We are changed in some way when sense, even if it is just from a non-hearing state to a hearing state. In other words, we experience something; and according to Locke, once we do experience something, we cannot but help be aware of ourselves.

Thinking emerges as the conscious act of reflection or reasoning and cannot occur sub-consciously: it is intrinsically tied up with consciousness because, Locke claims, it cannot occur when we are not conscious of it. Consciousness always attends thinking, for to be thinking we must somehow be aware of our perceptions - it is something which we know we are doing, we cannot help but know.

The Self

It is through this consciousness that we come to know ourselves - Locke shows that we experience a thinker or self in the changes made by the thought or experience. Thus he is claiming more than just the Cartesian 'cogito ergo sum': for whereas Descartes* bases the logical existence of the

* Descartes 1641 p.105

thinker in the fact of thinking or experiencing going on, Locke has empirical evidence of that thinker. This link between perception and its effect upon us is evident in the following quotation where Locke questions the ability not to be conscious of changes wrought in us by thought:

...it being hard to conceive that anything should think and not be conscious of it. If the soul doth think in a sleeping man without being conscious of it, I ask whether during such thinking it has any pleasure or pain or be capable of happiness or misery? I am sure the man is not, no more than the bed, or earth he lies on. For to be happy or miserable without being conscious of it seems to me utterly inconsistent and insupportable.

Locke p.94

In this way, Locke produces an idea of a self which does have an empirically observable ascription: in contrast to Hume's 'bundle of perceptions'*, Locke postulates that we do know the self empirically - in the unification of those perceptions:

When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions, and by this everyone is to himself that which he calls self.

Locke p.211

It must be emphasised that this self is no more than the unity of consciousness. Locke does not imply the existence of some separable self or subject: the self here begins and ends with consciousness. It is consciousness which makes the individual or self:

* Hume (2) 1793

For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that that makes everyone to be what he calls self, and there by distinguishes himself from all other thinking things...

Locke p.212

It is only through this awareness of being an experiencer, that the person is formed: person means no more than being conscious of being a self. Since consciousness necessarily entails thought (that is, it is not passive reception of experience but active awareness of it), that which is conscious must be a thinker. The self is a rational, intelligent, self-conscious being.

1.2 (ii) The Forensic Being

But why is this phenomenon subsequently called a 'person' as opposed to simply self or consciousness? Why is it that this thing is what the person is? The answer lies once again in his argument for our awareness of the self. It is through consciousness that we become aware of being a reactive thing which is both affector and affected. The reactions stem from awareness of being changed, and this awareness is often attended by feelings of happiness or pain - we are aware of being things which feel:

All which is founded in a concern for happiness, the unavoidable concomittant of consciousness; that which is conscious of pleasure and pain desiring that that self that is conscious should be happy.

Locke p.220

Thus, we have concern for this self which feels: such

concern extends to all parts we are conscious of - for all of them have the power of affecting or being affected by us. It is simply one step more which takes this concern into the field of responsibility, and with it the attribution of punishment and reward. For as:

This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to itself past action, just upon the same ground and for the same reason as it does in the present.

Locke p.220

In recognising this link between consciousness and responsibility, Locke introduces to the idea more than just the existence of a kind of reflexive thinking - in addition 'person' has a more abstract or social connotation involving right and wrong. The Lockean person is a moral or legal unit of responsibility, susceptible to praise and blame, reward and punishment. All of this is rooted in the real consciousness of the individual.

1.3 PERSONS, MEN AND SUBSTANCES

The definition of person being thus characterised, to what does it actually refer? What is the relationship between the thinking being and other things often coincidental or even constitutive of persons? Is the person the same as the man or human? Is the person the same as some form of substance? In order to make the exact idea clearer, Locke discusses both of these options stating that it is:

...one thing to be the same substance, another the same man, and a third the same person, if person, man and substance are three names standing for different ideas.

Locke p.210

1.3 (i) The Natural Man

The most often and commonly interchangeable of the three are man and person: Locke himself remarks that "in the ordinary way of speaking 'the same person' and 'the same man' stand for one and the same thing" (Locke p.216). Yet in his analysis of their ideas and identity, what emerges is a clear distinction between the forensic 'person' on the one hand and the natural kind term 'man' on the other.

Locke's idea of 'man' is one which concerns both body and spirit. However, although the place of an unchanging immaterial soul is recognised, he argues that the soul does not equate to the idea of 'man'. This he illustrates firstly by describing a case where a man's soul migrates to

another's body, concluding that the new combination could not be identified with the original as the same 'man'; and secondly by stating that even if an animal such as a parrot were to exhibit more reason than its owner, we would never call it a 'man':

For I presume that it is not the idea of a thinking or rational being alone that makes the idea of man in most people's sense, but of a body, so and so shaped, joined to it.

Locke p.211

'Man' emerges as a notion necessarily concerned with a body - not just the material of the body, but the persisting organisation of that material. The concept is grouped with the class of living organisms, and like other natural kind terms, the identity of 'man' is not held in the constitutive matter, but in the unifying life:

...in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organised body.

Locke p.210

Locke's definition of a thinking intelligent being seems to echo that part of man which is not sufficient for the ascription of the idea of 'man' - the soul or spirit. This is the name he gives to the part that thinks, simply as a way of distinguishing it from material substances - a necessary distinction, for when it comes to thinking and feeling he states that they "cannot be the action of bare insensible matter; nor ever could be, without an immaterial thinking

being." (Locke p.193) The contrast between these ideas is reinforced by Locke's treatment of the intelligent parrot - where the description 'man' was denied it, he allows it the status of 'person'. The purely rational nature of person does not then involve any necessary attachments to the 'man' to fulfil it as a concept.

1.3 (ii) Constitutive Substances

It seems that person is not limited to any particular form of animal or collection of substances. But is it necessarily linked to any particular type or even token substance? Since the person is the thinker, and the thinker is associated with spiritual or thinking substance, change of material substance does not affect identity - its relationship to the person is one of belonging, not being as such. And the same is true of individual thoughts: although thoughts which constitute or belong to the person are always changing, the person persists. But what is the relationship of the thinker to thinking substance?

The problem is parallel to the problem of the change of substances in man. The 'man' can survive change of material whilst the new substance is "vitaly united to the same organised body" (Locke p.211). Clarity in understanding of the idea of 'man' clearly shows this to be possible - for although the 'man' is made up of, and in this respect is, the material parts, the idea of 'man' does not refer to this substance

itself, but to the persisting unit of linked substances. In this way, Locke establishes that the idea of 'man' as a link, though dependent upon substance, is not dependent on particular nor persisting substance. Likewise:

...different substances, by the same consciousness, (where they do partake in it) being united into one person, as well as different bodies by the same life are united into one animal, whose identity is preserved in that change of substances by the unity of one continued life.

Locke p.212

But can such a relationship be true in the case of a thinker and spiritual substances? What is the relationship between consciousness and the substance that thinks?

The difficulty arises over the question of uniqueness and ownership - whether the presence of the thinking substance which had the original experience (or thought) is necessary for that thought to be part of the same connecting consciousness. In other words, whether a thought - in a present act or remembered - depends upon a particular thinking substance.

Locke professes that lack of understanding of the nature and workings of thinking substance hinders any certain conclusions; but this does not prevent him from analysing the problem into two distinct questions and then offering a tentative suggestion about the relationship. He claims that 'same consciousness' is ambiguous and can be used to describe two different and distinguishable acts: the

original act of thinking or being aware; and the remembrance or consciousness of that act. The problem involves the possibility of the transference of the individual thought to new substance and the translocation of the memory of that thought. In answer to this problem Locke concludes:

I grant, were the same consciousness the same individual action, it could not; but, it being a representation of a past action, why it may not be possible that that may be represented to the mind to have been what really never was, will remain to be shown.

Locke p.214

Therefore, taking 'same consciousness' (when used in personal identity) to have this latter implication, Locke decides that such consciousness can persist through change of substance: for as we can be aware of unreal representations in dreams, he can see no reason:

Why one intellectual substance may not have represented to it, as done by itself, what it never did, and was perhaps done by some other agent.

Locke p.214

It seems therefore that substances are not essential to the 'person' - it is the quality or nature of the content of the thought, rather than the actual thought or substance itself, which is of importance. The thinker is removed from the mechanics of thinking - what is essential to the person is the thought or consciousness rather than that which makes it possible. In producing such a theory, Locke is not necessarily discarding the necessity of some form of substance, but as such it is a necessity which is purely a

practical requirement for instantiation. The particular substance is not essential. What is of essence is the quality of the thought and the consciousness of ownership.

Such an account of persons shows the person as definable in terms of consciousness - and within that consciousness are many different parts. What is the person, is defined by that which is present in self-consciousness.

1.4 PERSONAL IDENTITY

According to Locke, personal identity over time, like the definition of person, is based in consciousness. His theory simply expands the idea of conscious unity at one time, to embrace a temporal dimension: that is, personal identity consists in unified consciousness extending backwards. Once again, he expresses himself in straightforward terms, which belie the complexity of his suggestions. He states that:

...to find wherein personal identity consists, we must consider what person stands for: which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it; it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive.

Locke p.211

1.4 (i) Consciousness and Personal Identity

In order to understand this clearly it is necessary to remember again the Lockean theory of consciousness. Input from the senses acts on the blank page of the mind and causes in it certain ideas: but it also has the ability to think or reflect, using the mind to understand or acknowledge awareness of certain things. The sensory information feeds reflection and in effect our knowledge is made up of a combination of these two.

Consciousness itself Locke defines as "the perception of what passes in a man's own mind" (Locke p.96), implying that rather

than just plain sentience, consciousness involves the awareness of perceptions. And these are on all levels of the mind, from plain sensory input, to our experience of meditation upon that input. Within that consciousness, we can be aware of perceiving - a logical implication described by the cogito experiment, and, as explained*, the awareness we have of ourselves.

Thus, the consciousness gives rise to the person; and subsequently, it is consciousness which provides our criterion of personal identity. More precisely, personal identity consists in unity of consciousness through time - the past self and the present self must be unified in the same consciousness. Our knowledge of consciousness of past selves is contained in our memories of experiences, and if these are contained in our present consciousness, along with a concern felt for them as being part of us, then they are part of us. It is important that we feel the same concern, that we recognise our present sense of belonging in those past memories - that the content of the memories holds the same relationship to us that our present experiences do. If this relationship pertains, then identity holds. Thus Locke claims that:

For as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it had of any present action, so far it is the same personal self.

Locke p.213

* Section 1.2 (i)

In this alone consists personal identity, ie. the sameness of a rational being; and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person.

Locke p.212

Thus Lockean identity is firmly rooted in the consciousness, and the co-presentation of conscious states creates the self through time. If we are reflectively aware, with the same sort of consciousness past and present joined in the present consciousness by thinking, we know we are the same self. Moreover, it is not just a case of knowing that we are that same self, we are that self. For being a self consists in no more than a unified consciousness.

The person and its identity thus not only has a character of being known by consciousness, but also of actually being that consciousness. The person is the name given to the unity of consciousness whether at one time or over a period of time; the self arises from such consciousness and does not precede it. From what Locke says it is clear that the person is unified consciousness, not the unifier of consciousness. Nowhere does he take the further step of implying that the self might persist independently of consciousness - or, to put it in dualist terms, that the self is the separable and therefore independently persisting subject of thoughts. For Locke, the self is thought and is thus inseparable from it.

1.4 (ii) The Changing Person

This is demonstrated by Locke through all of his work, especially in his reference to the inseparability of the consciousness from thinking and in his subsequent treatment of the person. Because of this inseparability, it is characteristic of the Lockean person to be a precarious thing. If consciousness ceases to be continuous, then the self or person ceases too. Clearly there is no a hint of belief in the person as an underpinning or persistent thing through these lapses of consciousness. There is no self which persists independently of consciousness - simply because consciousness is what the self is:

I say, in all these cases, our consciousness being interrupted, and we losing sight of our past selves, doubts are raised whether we are the same thinking thing.

Locke p.212

Considering Locke's usual realism, the self has a curiously phenomenological character; but if it is remembered that the nature of the self is essentially consciousness which is immaterial and self-dependent, then the surprise lessens, for as such it does not have a further character in an independent physical world. There is no reason why there should be primary qualities attributable to the self, as one might wish to ascribe to 'man', for there is no further fact about persons beyond the experience of the self.

Locke's empiricist background is quite evident in such a conclusion - he will not postulate the existence of anything for which we have no experiential proof. Since the only evidence we have of consciousness is our own experience of it - indeed, since consciousness and the self are defined as a first-person experience (the self is not a physical object but something that is in essence experienced), it makes no sense to talk about persons in anything but subjective terms. Thus Locke does not imply from the phenomena of unified consciousness the existence of anything beyond which causes the phenomena, he simply defines the person in terms of those phenomena.

This becomes more comprehensible if, once again, attention is paid to the account of thought. Locke defines thought as an essentially conscious activity - we cannot be unconscious of thinking for it is by definition a conscious act. Once we are no longer conscious, we are no longer thinking. If therefore, the person or self is a thinking being, once thought and consciousness cease, that being no longer persists. There is no such thing as an unconscious person. Thus Locke arrives at the apparently strange conclusion that:

To punish Socrates waking for what sleeping Socrates thought, and waking Socrates was never conscious of, would be no more of right than to punish one twin for what his brother twin did, whereof he knew nothing...

Locke p.216

The strange conclusions of Lockean theory might be better understood if the forensic nature of person is remembered. The introduction of temporal dimension to the concern felt as a self, extends to cover the past and future selves. The person is aware of the effects of experiences and actions; is defined by the consciousness of them; and thus feels concern at present for the pains and pleasures of past selves, likewise anticipating the future.

This concern is empirically locatable only to the self - there seems little empirical evidence independent of the subject to support a concept of person as a forensic thing. Since Locke is trying to account for persons through empirical evidence, it is with the self's concern that he must remain if he is to produce an account of person that is not just a social construction.

If the person is defined by self-concern, it is reasonable to assume that once the concern is removed or is no longer there, then the person is no longer involved. And since concern arises out of unification to consciousness, once the person is no longer conscious of something, it is no longer his to worry about. Hence, if I no longer feel concern for a past act because it is completely forgotten, then it is not an act of mine as the person I am now.

By retaining his empirical rigour, Locke produces an account of person as a forensic being, which is essentially dependent upon the consciousness of the self. As such, it takes on a character and identity as precarious as the identity of the content of self-consciousness.

1.5 CONCLUSIONS

The Lockean account of personal identity is clearly a complex account of persons - for Locke is concerned to reduce 'person' to unified or self-consciousness. Thus it is not the equivalent of the Cartesian soul, nor is it something like a separable self: the Lockean person is not a basic, it does not underlie the properties. Nor is it thought to be something over and above the consciousness. In effect, it is the experience described by consciousness - no matter how that is maintained.

The self or person in Locke is thus defined purely in terms of certain properties pertaining: that is, person is the property of a unified consciousness. The person can be reduced to a description or list of the properties within that consciousness at any one time and over a period of time - in effect, the person is that for which it feels concern, and therefore is the set of properties maintained within its unity. The unity is not something imposed upon the consciousness from without by some basic form of thing: it is engendered by experiencing unity.

Hence, although there may be a temptation to claim that the Lockean self is not really a complex thing, for the self does persist unchanged throughout, this must be resisted. For the identity of the Lockean self is a very different

form of persistence from that which a simple account of identity describes. The person of a simple view is irreducible; the self of Locke is definable in terms of consciousness united through time.

CHAPTER 2 THE LOGIC OF THE COMPLEX VIEW

The earliest criticisms of Lockean Personal Identity come from Butler and Reid. Their first objection deals with the logical consistency underlying the Lockean criterion of personal identity. If such a criterion cannot be supported with valid and consistent argument, then it remains unjustified. This criticism focuses on the relationship between evidence of personal identity itself: finding Locke guilty of conflating the two, and thus questioning the logical basis of his use of "same consciousness" as a criterion of identity.

2.1 THE PROBLEM

Butler* and Reid+ point to what they see as a confusion in Locke in which, they claim, he fails to distinguish between personal identity and the evidence we have for it: a confusion between the existence of something and the evidence we have of that existence. They claim that:

One should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity, any more than knowledge, in every other case, can constitute truth, which it presupposes.

Butler p.100

...in this doctrine, not only is consciousnesses confounded with memory, but which is still more strange, personal identity is confounded with the evidence we have of our personal identity.

Reid p.115

There are two possible ways of interpreting the intention of these comments: either that they accuse Locke of offering a criterion which presupposes a knowledge of personal identity; or, more simply, that Locke confuses evidence with truth. Subsequent defences of Locke by others differ with the interpretation read; yet whether begging the question or confusing evidence with truth, the logical implication of the original objection remains the same: unless he can support his theory without inconsistency and circularity, his attempt to establish his criterion of personal identity will fail.

* Butler 1736

+ Reid 1785

2.2 PRESUPPOSITION

As said, one way of interpreting the original criticisms is to read them as implying that Locke cannot define personal identity in terms of consciousness of personal identity, for the simple reason that the latter assumes prior knowledge of the former: that the idea of personal identity is needed to help apply the criteria of personal identity; which is a blatant case of assuming that which it sets out to prove.

The problem arises from Locke's account both of the relationship between a person and his parts, and of how that person comes to know himself. To be aware of personal identity, a person must be aware of past consciousness in his present consciousness; but in order to achieve this, he must be able to say accurately whether or not a certain past or present consciousness is his. This of course will involve some method of determining what is, and what is not, a part of the consciousness; and to do this he must have some idea of what constitutes being part of that consciousness - in other words, an idea of personal identity.

The first interpretation of the criticism therefore accuses Locke on the grounds that his theory means that knowledge of what is and what is not the self, presupposes

an awareness of the self; so identity cannot be known unless it is already known what that identity entails. The result is a circular argument in which the explanans is used in the explanandum.

2.2 (i) Sensation and Reflection

If the account explained earlier is remembered*, then the problem voiced by such a criticism becomes less difficult: this apparent difficulty can be simply avoided by recognising the differing activities of thought engaged in sensation and reflection. For within consciousness Locke postulates two levels: straightforward representative experience, originating from sensory information or memories; and reflection upon that experience. It is through the first of these that awareness of the self is given, but it is the second, that is active awareness or consciousness of experiences, which constitutes being the self.

For example, this idea is explained by Behan⁺, who equates the experiences with the public man, and the thought with the private man. Thus he recognises that there is a potential difficulty in the authentication of memories, false memories being qualitatively similar to valid ones. Circularity arises for validation can be done only by the

* Section 1.1

+ Behan 1979

consciousness, and it is the consciousness which is being tested.

Such circularity can be avoided in the recognition that Lockean personal identity in fact involves two stages: firstly, the knowledge of what parts constitute the self at any one time in the present and past; and secondly that there is a consciousness of these memories or parts of the present self.

...an individual must know who he is as a man before he can know what he is, i.e. what is part of his self or person.

Behan p.379

Thus personal identity involves both first and third-person identification. In order to identify the memories as being mine, I must employ certain third-person identification methods linking the content of memories to actual persons of the past and present. If interpreted this way, Locke does not encounter the problem of circularity, for past selves are known by methods used by any third-person identifier, that is, by their physical manifestation, or parts. Behan explains that:

...for Locke there clearly was a subject - moral man - who is able to be aware of who, as a public particular, he is, and, aware of himself as others are aware of him. He can also be self to himself; that is to say, he can then appropriate his actions, thoughts and substances to himself as his. Concerned consciousness, in other words, presupposes the third-person identity of moral man, and constitutes the first-person identity of moral man. But the third-person identity of moral man is constituted in the same way as the third-person identity of natural man, through continuity of life.

Behan p.580

However, this is not satisfactory on a number of levels, not least because Locke claims that natural 'man' and 'person' do not always coincide, persons being equivalent to intangible selves. Moreover, Behan's interpretation deviates from Locke's intention, by introducing the notion of a fixed person prior to self-consciousness of it. He claims that concerned consciousness, or in other words the person, presupposes knowledge of its parts, and in so doing implies that knowledge of our parts is something separable from our concern for them. That is, the 'person' is separable from the parts belonging to it. To state this is to imply that the person exists in an absolute way, independent of consciousness or concern: something to which parts objectively belong; something which exists prior to any belonging parts.

However, the Lockean conception is not like this - his person exists only through a consciousness of parts belonging to a unified consciousness. It is the concern felt towards parts, which makes them part of the self; and concern is engendered by the effect of consciousness. Thus the person is concern for parts; and what are parts of the person, are those for which concern is felt, nothing more. There is no other way of determining identity - it is simply self-consciousness.

2.2 (ii) Synchronic and Diachronic Distinctions

Another approach to avoid circularity involves a further attempt to break the function of personal identity into two stages, this time through a synchronic - diachronic distinction. That is, the knowledge of what we are at any one time is presupposed by any inference showing what we are over time; but since the two are different forms of individuation, circularity is not a problem.

Hughes* produces this kind of interpretation. He maintains that a distinction between synchronic and diachronic identification enables a characterisation of temporal identity in terms of an 'appropriate causal relationship', holding between independently defined synchronic persons. Thus he writes:

...it is easy for Locke to define the diachronic self, or person, as constituted by instantaneous selves linked by the causal process appropriate for the production of a sufficiently rich pattern of memories.

Hughes p.557

However, he does remark that there is a danger that this merely throws the problem back one stage: that is that the preliminary identification of the synchronic self shows signs of further circularity. For in Locke, self-knowledge of the present person is described as something known through consciousness of our different parts; but those parts are united to us if we are conscious of them. The

* Hughes 1975

parts therefore belong to the person if joined to him by consciousness, and the person knows they are part of him if he is conscious of them. It would appear that the act of apprehending the parts is also what makes them to be a person's parts; in other words, the evidence is the same as the truth.

But Hughes claims that this potential difficulty is overcome if, once again, attention is paid to the various uses which Locke assigns to consciousness, for he uses it as a general term referring to all levels of mental activity. Consciousness is used to indicate not only the awareness of living creatures, but knowledge of that awareness. This self-awareness embraces two forms of experience - it is the recognition of straightforward experience at the present and also awareness of such sensations experienced in the past, i.e. memory.

The use of consciousness in Locke, when referring to memory, can be subsequently characterised in two further separate concepts (though to Locke they are in fact inseparable): 'straightforward recall' and 'remembering with awareness of ownership, or thought'. It is the reflex action of remembering which is associated with 'man' and sentience; but, more importantly, it is the forensic memory and self awareness which are associated with the 'person'.

Having made clear these distinctions, the account of Locke offered by Hughes can be more easily understood: parts are united to us by the basic 'consciousness' given through sensation; and our knowledge of such belonging is through self-awareness of those sensations, an awareness which subsequently gives rise to concern. The persistence of the person through time is ensured by the presence of the consciousness of past selves or memories; but knowledge of temporal identity is through consciousness that they are our own memories - that is, memory with concern. He says:

What is included in the present self is explained...by reference to an aspect of consciousness different from both those I have mentioned so far, a kind of concern...Having thus defined the present self without vicious circularity.
Hughes p.557)

2.2 (iii) Continuity Accounts of Personal Identity

The new modern accounts therefore perceive the person as a system of causal connections through time, one stage causally linked to the next - often by a large overlap in particular content to reinforce the link. As seen, Hughes and Behan try to forge a link through successive stages of consciousness of parts - creating a two stage system, the second stage of memory uniting the first stage of independently indentifiable co-consciousness. Others try to force the link into the public field: for example, Williams* perceives the person as some necessarily physically

* Williams 1973

continuous object; Lewis* and Parfit⁺ as psychologically continuous objects.

It is the attempt to reduce the possibility of circularity that results in the further stage being added. The modern complex accounts seem to work from the premise that, if it is possible that one can determine the identity of memories independently of consciousness of them, a circular account is avoided. Thus by introducing this form of two-stage identification of persons, the modern complex view hopes to avoid presupposition, at the same time objectifying the person.

Despite the difference in details, it seems that the intention is to explain the continuity or unity of psychological states in terms other than just the perspective of first-person consciousness. Such accounts force the personal identity into the public arena, for if the person's parts can be identified independently of consciousness, then the ownership rests in something more than just consciousness.

It is therefore possible within such theories that some memories of which the person is conscious are not in fact his. To Locke, this is impossible, but to later empiricists

* Lewis 1980
+ Parfit 1984

it is important not only in terms of an attempt to avoid circularity but also because it introduces an element of objectivity and genuine history to the concept of person. However, it can also be shown that such modifications also fail to avoid the problem of circularity.

2.2 (iv) Circularity in Continuity Accounts

The circularity is of a form similar to that which Butler and Reid thought they found in Locke: that it is impossible to individuate persons without first knowing their identity. The problem arises in this case from the complex view's attempt to provide an objectively reductive account of persons: for any reduction of the person to a set of properties, causally interconnected or not, is an attempt to treat persons or selves as ordinary objects. However, by treating them in this way, it is impossible to individuate or sufficiently account for conscious states.

For the very nature of consciousness is awareness; and awareness makes little sense if nothing is being aware. The idea of a subject is essential to their definition: conscious states cannot exist unless they have a subject; without this extra factor they are merely impulses or events, not perceptions or thoughts. A sound is not a sound until it is heard; a thought is not a thought unless someone is thinking it. The causes of these conscious states may

persist independently of the subject, but the states themselves cannot.

Moreover, it seems that subjects cannot be identified in solely objective empirical terms - a reduction to a list of properties fails to account for subjectivity. It seems that any effective criterion of personal identity must contain within it mention of the subject, if persons with conscious states are to be recognised. Thus, any attempt to account for persons with psychological states which is expressed in purely third-person terms, is doomed to failure. For to do so would be to consider conscious states to be like any other object; and as it has become apparent, conscious things are not normal objects - they have an extra dimension, they have subjects.

The problem in objective empirical accounts is therefore a consequence of failure to recognise logical necessities at a fundamental level: that psychological states must be owned by a subject - they cannot be individuated, indeed cannot exist, without a subject. To speak of psychological states is to imply that they belong to someone - even to isolate them we must know who that owner is. The logic of this is founded in the Cartesian 'cogito' and can also be found in Locke: both claim that the thought cannot occur without the thinker. As Lowe* writes of individual token psychological

* Lowe(1) 1991

modes such as belief states or memories:

...such individual mental states are necessarily states of persons: they are necessarily 'owned' - necessarily have a subject. The necessity in question arises from the metaphysical-cum-logical truth that such individual mental states cannot even in principle be individuated and identified without reference to the subject of which they are states.

Lowe p.98

Thus, any empiricist account suggesting that the person or personal identity can be reduced to a continuum of parts, will find that it is impossible to use particular psychological states except with implicit reference to their owner. As Lowe writes:

What is wrong with the Neo-Lockean theory is that, in purporting to supply an account of the individuation and identity of persons it presupposes, untenably, that an account of the identity conditions of psychological modes can be provided which need not rely on reference to persons. But it emerges that the identity of any psychological mode turns on the identity of the person that possesses it.

Lowe p.78

The problem is clearly expressed in Madell*, who focuses on the empiricist claim that the unification of experience, synchronically and diachronically, can be expressed only in terms of belonging to a certain continuous body or manifestation. This, he states, amounts to the claim that "I know my experiences to be mine in virtue of the fact that they are tied to this body." (Madell p.62). Thus, in order to establish that any experience past or present is mine, I have to identify it as being part of my body. However, to

* Madell 1981

do this, I have to first have a means of identifying which experiences I am identifying:

We are bogged down in a vicious circularity. In order to establish that any group of simultaneous experiences as mine, I have to establish that it satisfies the criterion of being connected with this body, but in order to do this I first have to identify the group of experiences in question, and to identify them just is to pick them out as mine.

Madell p.60

Thus the bodily criterion is quickly shown to be insufficient to the task of individuation of persons, for further criteria than it offers are evidently needed to identify psychological states - and the same is true of any criteria of connectedness not employing an idea of the self. The missing element is the property of belonging to someone, or of being mine.

The physicalist might claim that he avoids this criticism - in his account psychological states are owned by a subject, but that subject is identified with the brain, or some such physical thing. Although this does avoid any irreducible reference to a self at this stage, unless the brain is equivalent to the self, subject or owner, then such theories do fall into the original problem of circularity described by Madell.

2.2 (v) Lockean Circularity

Apart from these difficulties, although such accounts as described above are attempts to help Locke out of his

apparent circularity, they are also inconsistent with the original intention of the Lockean theory. In fact, it is the failure to maintain the fundamental insight of Locke which causes their downfall: where Locke can be read in a way which is far from circular, the modern empiricist cannot.

It is not the case that his personal identity involves somehow knowing the self then attributing certain parts to it. Locke states that it is experiences which give rise to the self, which amounts only to an awareness of being an experiencer. If then, it is through the parts that we become aware of the self, we cannot know the self before we are aware of its parts: moreover, there cannot be a self before the awareness of it occurs. This is not circular: the person is merely defined as consciousness of being a subject to various experiences through having experiences. We do not need to know in any other way which experiences are ours, because if we experience them, then they are ours.

Likewise, this applies to memories. Locke does not need to show that knowledge of memories, such as those of our past consciousness, can be determined in some way before we are aware of them as ours: for awareness of the first-person memories in the present is what makes them part of our present self. In effect, in Locke the evidence about personal identity is also the truth about it.

Locke's notion of personal identity does not then involve two conceptual stages: for him there is only one - the present consciousness. Thus in the present I know who I am because I am conscious of all my parts. I know who I was in the past, if I am at present co-conscious with memories which contain the appropriate feelings of first-person consciousness. The key point is, that to Locke it does not matter whether the appropriate feelings are part of the past of the individual or not - for if they are part of my consciousness now, then they are part of me as a person now.

It is in order to avoid this strange conclusion that complex views after Locke have attempted to remove the unstable perspective-related character of Lockean personal identity. In an effort to make identity fixed and somehow public, they attempt to create a more stable person. This they do through developments in the line of continuities - either in body or mind - having the effect that the person is objectified, or made into an object existing through time. However, as shown*, by doing so they involve the empiricist account in the problem of circularity in a way originally envisaged by Butler and Reid.

Hughes and other such theorists separate the person in actuality from the person as perceived by the person: by creating two-stage identification methods, they offer a

* Section 2.2 (iv)

theory in which the person is a fact independent of the evidence we have for it. This is to read Locke as intending the same - to believe that Locke tried to produce a theory in which persons and their parts are joined in a way more stable and objective than awareness.

But Locke does not make this distinction. He clearly states that the person is what we are conscious of, and no more: the crux of Lockean theory is just that the person is self-reflexive consciousness. We do not have the various parts of the person before we are aware of them: it is the awareness that makes them part of the person. The identity of persons is known in one fell swoop - in one consciousness, and in what is within that consciousness. To say as the Neo-Lockeans try to, that the person persists independently of our consciousness of being persons is to imply that the person is more than consciousness.

It seems that Locke has recognised the unique aspect of consciousness usually associated only with dualist or simple theories: that it is intrinsically related to the subject. Since self knowledge is the only empirical evidence one has of the ownership or subjective awareness of conscious states, the individuation of consciousness becomes solely a first-personal matter. Locke remains an empiricist - for the subjectivity he describes is experienced, moreover it is directly known with certainty. To make claims of

subjectivity beyond the first-person account would be to move beyond the bounds of empirical evidence: a fact illustrated in the later complex views which, when on moving into an objective empiricism, find it necessary to deny the real existence of the subject.

2.3 EVIDENCE AND TRUTH

The last point mentioned above overlaps the second interpretation of the Butler and Reid criticism: that is, that their comment was formed partly in response to a logical error of a different kind from straightforward circularity; that Locke's theory involves a confusion of fact with evidence. As Noonan explains*:

To read Butler as making so sophisticated an objection, is mistaken. His thought is simply that in general, one cannot define what it is for it to be the case that P in terms of what it is for it to be known that P, and that, as a special case of this, one cannot define what it is for personal identity to obtain in terms of what it is for it to be known - or to be an object of consciousness - that personal identity obtains.

Noonan p.68

The complaint thus read, is simply that Locke is guilty of assuming that because we have memories providing knowledge of identity, it means that identity obtains. As Reid states, this is by no means the case, for:

...to say that my remembering that I did such a thing, or...my being conscious that I did it, makes me to have done it, appears to me as great an absurdity as it would be to say, that my belief that the world was created made it to be created.

Reid p.116

Such an accusation implies that either Locke is guilty of making a great mistake, or that he is using a strange form of 'knowledge'. As seen, Hughes offers one defence which relies on the different intentions behind the use of

* Noonan 1989

consciousness; in the following account from Noonan, these differences are reinforced by a clear emphasis on the distinction between personal identity and the knowledge of that identity.

2.3 (i) Identity and Thinking Substances

Noonan interprets Locke's identity theory to be one that defines personal identity, not through knowledge of personal identity, but through our knowledge of the identity of consciousness. That is, awareness of personal identity is based in a knowledge of thinking substances, not persons. Moreover, he claims that this knowledge is not held by persons but by thinking substances. Thus, it is the thoughts that contain the knowledge of identity, not the subject of those thoughts.

Reading Locke in this way, it becomes possible to explain his account in a form which does not express identity in terms of relationships between persons, nor muddle the awareness of personal identity with personal identity itself. For:

...the relation in terms of which Locke defines personal identity, that is sameness of consciousness, is not a relation between persons, but a relation between thinking substances.

Noonan p.69

To clarify this point, Noonan calls upon Fregean*

* Frege 1950

specifications of identity, which define the identity of a thing in terms referring to certain relationships holding between specified parts of it. With respect to Lockean identity, Noonan claims that the identity of persons can be defined through relationships held between thinking substances, in particular the relationship of consciousness of the same actions. Hence, if the content of thought or consciousness is the same, then the two instances are of the same person. He interprets Lockean personal identity to be expressed as:

...the person in which thinking substance 'a' thinks at time t = the person in which thinking substance 'b' thinks at time t' if thinking substance 'a' is conscious of the same actions and experiences as thinking substance 'b'.

Noonan p.70

Crucial to this claim is the maintained distinction between persons and thinking substances, but there is no difficulty in finding this expressed in Locke under the recognition that persons are to be distinguished from their parts and substances. He does claim that the person is a thinking intelligent being, but he strictly denies that this implies anything more than the contingent ownership of thinking substances*. Under this description the person's identity exists in the presence of 'consciousness of same actions', but that consciousness is something experienced by the thinking substance of the person.

* See Section 1.3

This view interprets Locke as holding that, for the persistence of a person, the thinking substance need not be the same but the existence of the same memories within its consciousness is essential. Indeed, it is the continuation of these memories which constitutes the continuation of the person.

Although it seems that Noonan has isolated some truth in Locke, he is still guilty of separating the person from consciousness. It is true that Locke does define personal identity in terms of special relationships to experiences: at one time, self-awareness induced by them, and over a period of time, a self-awareness of the past contained in present self-awareness. Thus Locke did feel that we must have a certain relationship to the consciousness for identity to hold.

But that relationship between consciousness and self-awareness is the relationship between the self and its thoughts. It is concern which entails ownership, for identity of the self depends upon feeling concern for the content of consciousness. It is not just continuity of content that makes identity, it is continuity of self-concern.

Moreover, though separate as an idea, the person is not separable from consciousness in fact. Once again, it is not

the case that Locke is postulating that we observe certain connections between things, consider them and then decide upon identity of a person: the person is the observation of the connection between things.

2.3 (ii) Evidence of Subjective Persons

It is ridiculous, to try separating the fact from the evidence - for to Locke evidence is the fact. To divide our awareness from personal identity itself, is to misunderstand what persons are: identity of persons is the awareness. As Locke shows, the forensic nature of person simply entails that this concern and experience of being are fundamental to the notion of persons: such experience being what fulfils this characterisation. It is only the awareness, rather than some independent 'being' or fact merely demonstrated in awareness, that is of importance.

It is this forensic guilt as conceived by the self which is ultimately what determines the identity of the person; and it may well be that in this final conclusion is the source of the Butler and Reid criticisms. For although at first sight, their objections appear weak, and it is fairly easy to defend Locke against both interpretations of their criticisms, it can be shown that the intuition behind both Butler and Reid not only implies both interpretations, but accurately picks out a failing in Locke's account on a more fundamental level. For it is against the methods by which

Locke reaches his conclusions that the objections hold most force: if they are looked at more closely, he can be found guilty of presupposition and establishment of fact from evidence.

Locke's ideas of persons seem to come exclusively out of self-examination and self-knowledge: he is aware of himself as a thinking intelligent being and uses this as his basic concept of person. He carefully analyses his own self knowledge synchronically and diachronically, and from this constructs a theory not only about persons and their identity but also about the nature of the being of a person. Having concluded that what is important to the self is what the self is conscious of, he concludes that persistence of such consciousness ensures the persistence of the self.

In this method Locke is guilty of using the evidence he has of his existence - synchronic and diachronic - not just to imply the truth of that existence but to characterise it. This can be illustrated in Noonan's conclusion, where the evidence Locke has of himself - that is memories - is used to define himself. Thus he is quite blatantly guilty of that which Butler accuses him: of using knowledge of personal identity to constitute personal identity. Locke employs his findings about personal identity to characterise the person and therefore the truth about personal identity.

As explained, the motivation for such a method can be understood with regard to his empiricism, for if consciousness is something essentially subjective, then the truth about consciousness can only be given in first-person terms. Such a move would be acceptable if the self or the mind were equivalent to persons but Locke needs to argue for this fact in addition to his other claims.

The assumption that only the self can fulfil the concept of person, unduly limits the whole of Locke's enterprise: since the self is characterised as the person, and the self is the only thing that has direct access to the self, personal identity becomes self-identity. But if he were to consider other aspects of the person, most especially the full social implications and limitations of its forensic role, it is possible that the conclusions might not characterise quite such an obscure and ephemeral thing. For if 'person' were not limited to the intangible thinking being, his theory may have resulted in more acceptable conclusions when considered in a forensic light.

The intimation behind the comments of Butler and Reid may well be the realisation that what Locke tells us about selves is not in itself wrong, but it is not the whole story about personal identity. Persons are not limited to the evidence of selves; persons have an existence independent of evidence of them.

2.3 (iii) Evidence of Objective Persons

It is in response to the public aspect of persons that empiricist developments of personal identity theory throw the person into the objective realm. Following on the heels of Humean rigour the modern complex accounts decline to talk about further non-experienced or intangible selves, placing all that there is to know about persons firmly in the field of the objective empirical evidence we have of them.

Hume's empiricism* led him to a reduction of the thing itself to the phenomena, for the inference of anything over and above the phenomenological was meaningless - thus, for example, talk of peaches entails no more than a reference to certain skin texture, colour, or taste; and talk of persons is ultimately reducible to observations concerning 'bundles of perceptions'. Kantian empiricism+ comes to a similar conclusion - that, once removed of all properties, there would appear to be nothing left of the person. Thus the use of terminology referring to persons is empty - no more than a grammatical necessity, for there is no subject or self.

As seen with regard to Locke, empiricists equate their criteria or evidence of identity with the identity itself. The qualities are no longer a part of or sign of some further thing but the thing itself. This stems directly

* For example as found in Hume 1739

+ For example as found in Kant 1781

from the empirical method, for it is vacuous to talk of anything not determinable in empirical terms*. Hence to refer to the persistence of some intangible thing is meaningless - persistence necessarily being measured in terms of continuance of certain properties.

By asking what matters in the persistence of persons, the empiricists naturally fix upon tangible and evidential factors. The empiricist reduction of the person to purely third-person properties results in complex theories of psychological and physical persistence. What matters is expressed in terms of qualities or properties valued in a person and thus there is a move toward a qualitative notion of identity.

Developments of this can be seen in theories such as Parfit's⁺, which concerns itself with the continuation of psychological properties - of beliefs, memories, hopes - essentially those things that he finds when he asks 'what is it that I value in myself and in other persons?' These qualities are not only evidence of persons but they are essentially what persons are - because they are what is of value and importance about persons. Thus it is the persistence of these particular qualities which is of key interest to the person who, in Parfitian terms, will

* Eg. Hume 1739 & Ayer 1936

+ Parfit 1984

'survive' through time with the persistence of them.

From this it might be concluded that within the modern complex account the person is only of derivative value. For, if what is important is the persistence of certain qualities of properties, the person is only needed so long as it ensures the persistence of those qualities. It may be that the person is defined in terms of properties, and therefore is properties and of equal value, but the interest is essentially in the properties and not the person.

Derivative Value and Persons

However, it is this focus on 'what matters' which leads to a major objection to complex accounts. For it is claimed such theories 'lose' the person in favour of the properties: that they cannot account for the idea that there is something more to the person than just its properties and that is, that there is a self who owns them. Once again, there is a return to the idea that properties on their own do not provide a sufficient account of persons; it is only in association with a subject that they can possibly satisfy the concept.

For example, such an objection is voiced by Chisholm*, who uses Hume to illustrate his point. Hume's account of both peaches and persons is inaccurate for it does not

* Chisholm 1976

correctly describe our intention. When we talk of peaches we do not mean just their properties, we have an idea of something that has those properties. Likewise, our idea of persons is not an idea of certain perceptions:

It is not the idea of the perception of love or hate and the perception of cold or warmth, much less an idea of love or hate and of heat or cold. It is an idea of that which loves or hates, and of that which feels cold and warm.

Chisholm (1) p.39

He claims that Hume is mistaken in the fundamental analysis of person in terms of properties - such an account fails to accommodate the true meaning of person. The Kantian argument is rejected on a similar point - his concept also fails to accord with what we mean by person. It gives an analysis in terms only of properties, then declares that it is impossible to conceive of a person beyond those properties. Such an argument clearly begs the point, for it is only true that we cannot make sense of a non-experienced person under a third-person empirical account. Moreover, Chisholm claims that little proof is given for this analysis of person which is clearly inconsistent with our intention to refer to subjectivity.

This objection thus concerns the efficacy of the empirical theory to reflect accurately our use of language. The theories of both Hume and Kant are criticised as incomplete for they do not coincide with our beliefs and intentions in using self-reference. For Chisholm this

problem presents a major objection, for what they propose is contrary to common sense and lacks justification.

2.3 (iv) Empiricism's Failure to Accommodate Meaning

This last point raises a fundamental problem concerning the method by which we investigate philosophical concepts. By appealing to Moore's 'A Defence of Common Sense'*, Chisholm sets out a basis for a criterion of acceptability or justification. His theory takes into account our fundamental sources of knowledge, such as the beliefs we have about our experiences, our bodies and our desires past and present. He states that:

These different facts may have different degrees of justification. At the very least, each of them is something which, for me, has some presumption in its favour. That is to say, it is more reasonable to think it is true than think it false.

Chisholm (1) p.17

As part of our pre-philosophical and pre-analytic information, Chisholm states that such beliefs are justifiable as philosophical data. Moreover "Any philosophical theory which is inconsistent with any of these data is prima facie suspect." (Chisholm (1) p.18)

In effect, Chisholm claims that the empiricists go too far. What they offer is only negative evidence against the subject: that is, they have failed to find it on their

* Moore 1925.

terms. But this is far from proving that there is no subject - indeed they exclude too much, making a claim which goes beyond the realm of their evidence.

Clearly, then, Chisholm considers himself to have shown that empirical theories of persons fail to provide either an account in keeping with our basic beliefs or to give sufficient evidence to support a change in those beliefs. As such, third-person empiricist accounts of personal identity are unacceptable.

The idea that there must be something more than just properties is reinforced by drawing attention to the fallibility of empirical evidence. The fact that bodily criteria, and indeed psychological criteria, can ever be recognised to be corrigible, points to the notion that they are corrigible with respect to some further independent fact. If the evidence amounted to the fact about personal identity, as most empiricist theories can be reduced to claiming, such fallibility would make little sense.

For example, this point is expressed by Swinburne*. He both recognises and accepts that memory plays a part in our awareness of persons through time, yet he does not, as Locke and subsequent empiricists do, take the evidence to amount to what persons essentially are. For despite the

* Swinburne (1) 1984

justification in using the evidence of memory as indicative of personal identity, such information is clearly still fallible. Like all conclusions which go beyond their premises, evidence from the memory is entitled to claim only probability - thus any conclusion reached under its justification is fallible.

Swinburne concludes that our memories can therefore be considered only to be evidence of personal identity. Moreover, the fact that they can be considered as fallible itself implies that there is something more to personal identity than the memory, or that the memory is inaccurate with respect to something; and since all empirical data seems subject to fallibility, that something cannot be guaranteed through a purely empiricist account of persons.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

The problems associated with the employment of empirical criteria of persons (in terms of its properties or qualities) seems reducible to the basic problem encountered by Locke: that in concentrating upon what seems to be the person (both to himself and others), the result is a peculiarly one-sided account of persons.

Although Locke is a realist, his comments about persons do not imply the existence of some further experience-independent object of which the phenomenal representations are only signs. As explained, to Locke the phenomena are equivalent to the reality about persons. In this case, talk about persons is simply talk about how it seems to be. Thus we are certainly and directly acquainted with ourselves as persons through our experience.

Yet where Locke seems to err too far in favour of the self - reducing person to a privately manifested thing, the later empiricists seem to range to the opposite - producing an essentially publicly manifested thing. For in the modification of the account, they encounter more difficulties. As is seen, in concentrating on objective persons, the complex account loses the ability to identify or individuate person without using a circular argument. Some reference to the owner of experiences is needed, yet to

provide this empirically would enforce a regression back to the first-personal account of Locke.

The complex view, then, concentrates upon some perception of phenomena and in so doing enables the person to persist only in terms of a perceived continuity rather than an objective and factual continuity. Thus the person has no further fact about it that is independent of the way it is experienced. Such conclusions create difficulties if a thing persisting through time, rather than a set of apparently connected properties, is desired. The arguments against the complex accounts do focus on the desire for an independently persisting thing for as shown, any attempt to account for the connection between properties denies reference to such a thing.

The criticisms of the complex accounts focussing on logical consistency seem to spring from the desire to see the person as a real and persisting thing. However, all that the criticism of circularity can achieve is to show that we need an idea of a subject of experiences if we are to individuate them at any one time - not that this subject is something persisting through time. This point must be argued for more strongly; for Locke, and subsequent complex theorists, in effect claim that person does mean merely the perceived persistence of certain properties - and that talk of anything more is unjustified.

CHAPTER 3 THE ABSURDITY OF THE COMPLEX VIEW

A second criticism of Locke questions the sufficiency of the criterion to achieve the task of isolating persons correctly. Such an inability is problematic not only because of its apparently absurd results, but also because it might lead to inaccurate identification, and subsequently injustice, as rewards or punishments are meted out incorrectly. This objection centres upon the relationship of Locke's criterion of 'same-consciousness' to the actual fact of personal identity itself: that is can evidence or consciousness provide an accurate criterion of identity and an acceptable account of persons?

3.1 THE PROBLEM

The early critics of Locke interpreted his use of consciousness as a criterion of personal identity as advocating a memory theory of personal identity. They took Locke to be stating that memory forms the identity of the person and that the contents of the memory serve to identify past actions as those of a particular present person. Whilst this link of memory is maintained, the identification of the past agent with that present person persists:

...Mr. Locke attributes to consciousness the conviction we have of our past actions, as if a man may now be conscious of what he did twenty years ago. It is impossible to understand the meaning of this, unless by consciousness be meant memory, the only faculty by which we have an immediate knowledge of our past actions...When therefore, Mr. Locke's notion of personal identity is properly expressed, it is, that personal identity consists in distinct remembrance.

Reid p.115

3.1 (i) Absurdity of the Memory Theory

However, if this is a true representation of Locke, Butler and Reid feel it entails unpalatable consequences concerning responsibility; problems which arise not only through what might be termed 'mal-functioning' of memory, but also in the everyday workings that the memory has. Reid illustrates his objection using a scenario which exemplifies the strange implications of Lockean personal identity even when considered in quite normal situations.

He imagines a young apple-thief who grows up to become an army hero and, in later years, a general. As a young officer, the individual remembers the flogging he suffered as punishment for his boyhood crime and as a general, he recalls the honour won through heroic deeds on the battle field; yet the old man has lost consciousness of the antics of the schoolboy. According to the Lockean account the boy is the same person as the young man and the young man is the same person as the veteran; but the veteran is not the same person as the boy. As Reid points out, this means "that a man may be, and at the same time not be, the person that did a particular action." (Reid p.114) Such a conclusion blatantly contravenes the laws of transitivity of identity, which entail that if $A=B$ and $B=C$ then $A=C$.

However, this is not the only problem of such a theory, for not only does it fly in the face of accepted logic, in doing so it produces absurd and even paradoxical conclusions about a person's identity. For under this view, not only might a person be and not be himself but, in both the extreme case of abnormal memory functioning and that of everyday remembering and forgetting, the result will be that:

...a person has not existed a single moment, nor done a single action but what he can remember, indeed none but what he reflects upon.

Butler p.100

Such implications give cause for concern for they entail that if a person has total amnesia relating to the first thirty years of his life, he is no longer the same person that experienced those thirty years. Likewise, if a person were to have memories of an existence starting thirty years before his birth, he would be classed as the same person that had those experiences. Such a state of affairs might result in an individual, on the plea of amnesia or ignorance, being left unpunished or unrewarded for actions committed by him as a man; and likewise, that a person may be held responsible for actions committed before the existence of his present form as a man.

3.1 (ii) Lockean Acceptance of Multiple Relationships

Such consequences, however are not of difficulty to Locke, nor would they surprise him - indeed he anticipates and accepts them in his descriptions and examples. They are perfectly consistent with his description of 'person' as consciousness. His account entails that those who have no consciousness of certain acts are not the same persons that performed them; and those who are conscious of certain acts are the persons that are responsible for them. It is because his concept of 'person' is essentially located in the feeling of concern, not in some other historical fact or action, that Locke allows these conclusions. Moreover, he goes so far as to state:

Let anyone reflect upon himself...let him once find himself conscious of any of the actions of Nestor, he then finds

himself the same person with Nestor.

Locke p.215-6

Thus, when Butler and Reid object that the 'person' gets away without punishment for crimes he performed 30 years hence, they are using 'person' to mean something different from Locke's intention: they mean by 'person' that thing which historically performed the action. Although it seems reasonable to a Lockean that a person may have a one-many or many-one relationship with an historical individual, to Butler and Reid this is completely incomprehensible. For them the person is historically fixed and can have only one-one relationships with the past and future: hence, one individual cannot possibly have more than one person associated with it; and one person cannot be responsible for the acts of more than one individual.

Butler and Reid work with a far less fragile, more objective and permanent notion of 'person' than Locke. Their person does not rely upon remembrance but is a fixed thing, once action is done, or certain deeds are attributed to the person, those things cannot be lost. Locke's person can and does lose and gain pasts - for all that the person over time can be, is the remembrance of being past persons.

To accuse Locke of absurdity is a failure to understand the full intention of Lockean theory - for the results of

the theory are only absurd if one judges them against a different (ie. some sort of fixed) concept of person. The outcomes which cause such problems for Butler and Reid cannot be used at this level to provide a condemning argument, for they are perfectly consistent with Locke's own account. To accuse Locke of absurdity, it must be shown why his outcomes are unacceptable in a broader framework - for example in their moral or logical implications.

3.2 LOGICAL ABSURDITY

The logical inconsistencies mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are less easy to explain away - indeed as it stands, Locke cannot avoid the problem associated with transitivity. In making consciousness of self-identity the fact of personal identity Locke turns the whole issue into something dependent upon a fallible or representative awareness: the person's identity relies on the judgement of one person, from a first-person perspective, at one time.

This by its nature provides an odd identity relationship for it means that the identity statement will be true only at the present; and that the persons identity relationships with other persons in the past and future can vary from moment to moment. The identity of persons according to Locke is therefore not a linear progression but full of branching and converging individuals. For Lockean theory to be acceptable, then, something must either be changed about the imposed limits of our identity of logic or his theory of persons modified to eliminate the possibility of multiple and branching relationships.

3.2 (i) Modification of Person

There have been many attempts to defend the basic memory criterion of personal identity, modifying the sense in which consciousness provides a link for the person through time.

Rather than accepting Locke's theory to intend literally everything, and thus only that which is present or presentable to the memory at a given instant, they reformulate the theory in terms of 'continuity' of consciousness.

Continuity of Consciousness

Typical of most neo-Lockean attempts, Noonan* tries to defend Locke's account by redefining the meaning of a "consciousness extending backwards" (Locke p.212). In replacement of the possibility of direct and total recall at any one instant, he suggests that:

What is needed is just the distinction between consciousness and continuity of consciousness, where continuity is defined in terms of connectedness by saying that a later person P2 at t2 has a consciousness which is continuous with that of an earlier persons P1 at t1 just in case he is the last link in a chain connecting persons beginning with P1 at t1, each of whom is conscious with the experiences and actions of the preceding link in the chain.

Noonan p.67

Noonan thus characterises personal identity as being made up of a limited chain of memories. Whilst each link is continuous with the next (in the case of Locke, remembered by the next) then the entire chain is one person. If somewhere along the line one link forgets a former one then, so long as that former one was remembered by its successor, it is still part of the same person.

* Noonan 1989

This modification certainly allows for the everyday ephemerality and fading of our memories, yet it still fails to account for the fluctuating effect on identity caused by amnesia between juxtaposed or successive links. For example, if sudden and permanent amnesia occurred in a chain, then a new person would come into being. If the amnesia was not permanent, yet still occurred to all the memories, then the person existing whilst suffering amnesia and the person with the regained memory, will be different persons. Moreover, if the cured amnesiac remembers both the forgotten past and the time of amnesia, he will have the memories of, and indeed be continuous with, two persons. Any number of scenarios can be envisaged in which the end result is that one individual is more than one person. With the introduction of paramnesia, the situation can become more complicated still.

Continuity with an Appropriate Cause

An attempt to avoid the kind of problems above can be seen in a second type of modification, an example of which is suggested by Hughes*. As in Noonan's modification, this type of explanation centres on a causal account of continuity but adds within it the proviso that each memory must have a 'normal' cause. Hughes opposes any account which interprets Locke's theory as claiming "that a merely present memory creates an identity which must have existed

* Hughes 1975

in the past and up to the present" (Hughes p.548), preferring instead one which adds to that presence of memory the condition that it has a 'normal' cause. Thus, he explains that:

What Locke is really and rightly saying is that consciousness is a causal process with at least two aspects, of which present memory of past acts is one. For him, the self X belongs to the same person as the self Y if X's present consciousness about the past is the result, by the appropriate causal process continuing through the past (though not necessarily without interruption) and up to the present, of the consciousness Y had in the past about what was then present."

Hughes p.548

Such an interpretation removes from personal identity the difficulties arising from the effects of an extreme malfunction of the memory by claiming that any memory not genuinely experienced by the individual is abnormal and therefore cannot constitute a bona fide cause.

Despite the logical acceptability of such theories, it does seem that Locke has been pulled away from his central contention: that it is felt concern which is of importance, rather than any kind of actual connection or link through time. If this dislocation from the original intention were to be allowed, his theory not only would be less rigorous and show internal inconsistency but it would create a person divorced from the primary arguments establishing its existence.

To objectify the person so that it consists of linear, objective and historically linked memories, is to move away from the person of the self-consciousness and concern described by Locke. Such a person is something other than consciousness, something perhaps known through consciousness but not dependent upon it. It is true that, by objectifying the person in this way, the absurdities of multiple relationships can be avoided but, as already shown in the previous chapter, the criterion of person consequently encounters the circularity problems originally opposing Locke.

Locke cannot be interpreted in this way if he is to retain his meaning of person and with it internal consistency. Perhaps, then, it is the limits of the identity logic that must be modified or understood more clearly.

3.2 (ii) The Logic of Multiple Relationships

Not all of the modern complex theorists believe that the logic of identity must be linear in the way that the above modifications try to enforce. Some are happy to accept that persons involve a different form of survival from normal identity - something which allows the kind of relationships envisaged in Locke. Parfit* and Nozick⁺ are examples of

* Parfit 1984

+ Nozick 1981

such philosophers.

Despite the fact that their theories are expressed in terms which make use of objective continuity thus rejecting the historical ephemerality of Locke, they do accept that persons can have strange many-one, one-many relationships. Both incorporate this phenomenon into their theories, producing accounts whereby the person deviates from a normal linear causal chain, becoming a branching and converging thing.

It is true that their desire for a near 'normal' causal progression through the past to the future means that once created the person-chain remains historically fixed; but in terms of irregular logic of 'identity', their ideas are similar to those accepted in Locke. In fact, Parfit ceases to talk of 'identity' with regard to persons, preferring to term the persistence 'survival' - a clear recognition that in his account persons do not conform to the usual logic of identity that traditionally might have been enforced.

In Parfit and Nozick, the theories are a result of exclusive concentration on qualitative rather than quantitative identity. What is of importance is the survival of certain qualities, rather than any particular subject or individual possessing them. As seen in Chapter 1, qualitative identity allows and exhibits fluctuation and

change in a way that numerical identity will not tolerate. Thus, anything for which the quality or properties are the essence will become enmeshed in a form of logic unlike that applicable to purely quantitative notion of identity.

The Lockean acceptance of a form of 'persons' which allows for these multiple relationships is not therefore necessarily logically absurd: some later complex theorists also believe that persons are the sort of thing that can branch and converge over time. Is, then, Locke referring to what should really be termed survival, rather than identity of person?

Lockean Logic of Identity

As already shown in Chapter 1, in Locke the concept being employed is clearly quantitative, moreover he does mean to say that the person is an idea which does have identity in and through time. The idea of person is of concerned consciousness, not any particular series or chain of properties (as envisaged in Parfit and Nozick). It would seem therefore that it is something, quite different from fluctuating properties, which leads to the possibilities of multiple relationships in Locke.

To understand Lockean acceptance of this different logic of identity it must be made clear once again how Locke uses the term 'person'. As described earlier, Locke employs a



more complex notion of 'remember' than is contained in just consciousness, for in the act of thinking we are aware of concern and thus recognise our forensic nature as persons.

Behan* recognises this when he analyses Locke's account of humans into two main descriptions: that of the 'natural man' (or man in 'Physike'); and that of the 'moral man' (or man in 'Praktike'). Our memory functions differently for each of the two separate cases, in the first as mere remembrance but in the second as the added dimension of self-awareness and the subsequent feeling of responsibility that it occasions:

When Locke used the word 'consciousness' in physike, he meant by it reflexive perception of thinking. When however, he spoke of consciousness in praktike - ie. in connection with moral man - concern was added to consciousness."

Behan p.578

This notion of 'concern' is not just something which applies to the self - it encompasses the various parts that the self possesses.

The Lockean account considers the relationship between the person and his substances to be one of ownership and owned, the substances being part of and owned by the self whilst they are united to it by consciousness:

...thus any part of our bodies, vitally united to that which is conscious in us, makes a part of ourselves; but upon separation from the vital union by which that consciousness is communicated, that which a moment since was part of

* Behan 1979

ourselves, is now no more so than part of another man's self
is a part of me.

Locke p.219

Whilst any substance is part of the self, the self has a concern for it as its own and as explained, this concern brings with it an awareness of responsibility - of punishment and reward and what that means to the self. Thus forensic responsibility seems to be essentially linked to the self and for what the self feels that concern. It is the anticipation of happiness or misery felt by the self in response to consciousness of actions or events that the memory represents as its own.

It is this reliance on the self-consciousness that leads to apparently strange conclusions for personal identity: for the self in itself and its own consciousness cannot distinguish between true and false representations of memories (internally). It is true that we actually have a memory, but that memory may or may not be a faithful representation of historical fact. However, whether we remember something genuinely or mistakenly, the texture of the memory is the same and likewise our emotional response and concern about it are the same.

For Locke this inability to discern 'true' from 'false' memories leads to the individual's belief that even false memories are his own. He consequently experiences genuine

feelings of concern and responsibility for their contents, sincerely feeling the guilt or lack of guilt and perhaps the appropriate censures involved. All of this is felt, regardless of the factual and historical past, simply because it is his memory informing him how to respond.

Thus, what Locke describes and associates most strongly with the person is the conscience - our "moral sense of right and wrong" (C.O.D.) - and the source of this he literally attributes to our being conscious. Without consciousness of the action there is no feeling good or bad about the act, for we are neither made aware of our self nor the reaction of the self to the experience of consciousness. How then can the self feel responsible if the fundamental link between an action and our moral feelings towards it, is absent?

Identity of First-Person Experience

The Lockean theory clearly links the concept of responsibility to a first-person perspective that is fixed in the present. As Hughes describes it:

The problem of personal identity, as Locke conceived it, is not a third person problem concerning either unity or substance. In fact, it is not a third-person problem at all. It is the first-person problem of how a moral man becomes accountable to himself for his substances, thoughts and actions.

Hughes p.578

The logic of personal identity may well shift to

accommodate this peculiar phenomenological stand-point. It is not the case that Locke is dealing with an objective thing, with an objective identity, for the person is essentially subjective. Thus the logic cannot be the logic applied to the 'real' world but must be that of the way things seem; and the way things seem to Locke from the first-person present at time t_1 may be completely different from the way they seem to Locke from the first-person present at t_2 .

The person has an identity which exists only in the present, and that identity depends exclusively upon the content of its consciousness. The person's identity, that of its past and present, can only be known at one point in time - the next moment it may well have shifted. When it is considered what the idea of the person stands for this notion becomes less obscure, for to Locke the person is linked exclusively to self-concern.

It seems, then, that the logic of personal identity can be altered to accommodate Lockean theory, for he is not concerned with straightforward object identity. What he describes is the identity of self-awareness, which depends upon the phenomena of the experience of co-consciousness - something notoriously fluctuating and ephemeral.

3.3 PRACTICAL ABSURDITY

Although Locke can be shown to be internally coherent, the characterisation of subjectivity still creates a difference between him and Butler and Reid. Belief in an unchanging fact of subjectivity means that their concept of person becomes a fixed and objective thing.

The discomfort Butler and Reid feel when faced with the consequences of Lockean theory seems to be the product of a deep-felt notion that historical fact and certainty play an unwavering role in the attribution of moral responsibility - without some objectivity, problems arise concerning the functioning of the concept. For if the self is the sole determinant of responsibility, and if the self is as elusive and ephemeral as Locke claims, how are we to attribute praise and blame, or administer punishment or reward, from a third-person point of view?

3.3 (i) Third-Person Individuation

If personal identity involves simple self-identity then the matter of responsibility in such areas of doubt can be decided only by a personal testimony from the self. This may seem plausible enough, until it is realised that personal testimony is based in something that is fallible. For as mentioned earlier, it is possible that the self can

be mistaken about the veracity of its memory - resulting in a inappropriate feeling of responsibility towards its past.

We are directly acquainted with our memories as we are with our experiences, but any double-checking of their representations to us has to be carried out using methods beyond our selves. Such verification will ultimately involve a need for third-person methods of identification, for it is the methods of first-person identity that are undergoing examination and therefore cannot themselves be used. It therefore seems that if we are to do ourselves justice in this world we do need some form of third-person identity criterion.

However, Locke's account of person as 'self' excludes the possibility of being directly acquainted with another person, for in a third-person situation we are only acquainted with the parts owned by the person. The self is a thinking and intelligent being, but it is not a material substance. We can, it is true, have indirect access or awareness of another person through its tangible parts, but these are substances that belong to that person only whilst the consciousness unites them to him and are by no means permanently adjoined to that person. It might be thought that a testimony or expression from the person will indicate identity, but this will not provide the corroboration we are

looking for since it is that testimony we are trying to test.

Once more, Locke is fully aware of this relationship between the self and others and perhaps this explains his reliance on self-identity as the sole criterion in his theory. With reference to the identity of the prince who occupies the body of a cobbler, he declares that, since it is the body or man that others interact with, and in this case it is still the body of a cobbler, "...it would be the same cobbler to everyone else besides himself [the prince]" (Locke p.216)

The Moral Ineffectiveness of Self-Identity

The possibility of mistaken identity is enormous, for we have only the first-person testimony of the present to go by. Since not everyone is honest or infallible, there is a distinct possibility of false testimony - intentional or unintentional. Locke himself anticipates this problem, avoiding its uncomfortable conclusions by referring to the Day of Judgement "at the great day, when everybody shall reveal according to his doings, the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open." (Locke p.220) Though we may indeed be comforted by the prospect of God's perfect justice, this will not help us deal with the consequences of genuine or pretended mistakes of memories in this life. Nor will it help the course of

justice on earth - a problem affecting both the self and others.

These remarks from Locke do in fact betray some idea that he believes that God can tell the identity of person in a way different from the way we do. It is possible that he intends by this simply that those intending deception shall be caught out; but it strikes the reader as containing some intimation that there is indeed some objective identity, other than the content of consciousness, by which we shall be judged for our actions. Thus it seems that even Locke is unable totally to divorce himself from a belief in objective responsibility.

It seems unlikely that Locke's notion of a forensic being could exist in a solely first-person environment without the possibility of third-person identification; ideas of guilt or punishment involve more than it is possible to draw from this idea of person centred solely on the self. The concept really needs interaction of persons with the ability to individuate others accurately, and thus the concept of person should involve some manifestation, reliably linked to the self though not solely concerning that self.

This then, is the kind of difficulty associated with equating the person with the first-person self: and it seems that the concept of person employed by Locke is exactly

this. Any attempt at corroboration is dogged by circularity and, moreover, accurate identification of others becomes an impossibility. It seems that such a concept of person cannot therefore be an accurate reflection of the truly forensic entity described by Locke, for it is impossible to identify it with certainty from a third-person stand point - and some belief in certainty is surely necessary for the implementation of punishment and reward.

3.3 (ii) The Modern Objective Complex Person

The difficulty of individuation is a problem only to theorists who portray the person as a necessarily subjectively determined thing. If the person is self-awareness, then it will come and go and be known only by that self-awareness. Logically speaking it cannot be determined from a third-person standpoint. Even if the dependence upon self-awareness is only for evidence or knowledge of the self then the problem, although less dramatic, still involves the difficulties associated with relying upon personal testimony.

Those theories which develop Lockean theory by placing continuity in something less precarious such as psychological continuity, or in something more tangible such as the continuity of brain or body, or even in the simple view's 'self', push the person or self into an actual continuity which can persist and be known independently of

the first-person perspective. It is true that such modifications alter the sense in which 'person' is being used, removing it from the urgency of the 'conscience'; but in so doing, they effectively open the notion of responsibility to the possibility of something objective or historically traceable.

As seen in the previous chapter, to achieve this the complex theorist reduces the person to a set of objective properties. Once these have existed as that person, they remain so, fixed and sure - it is not the whims of memory or consciousness that determine their identity or continuity. Whether these criteria are essentially the person or merely necessary pragmatically (for persistence and identification), it would seem that the intention is the same: to objectify the existence of the history of the person and remove it from the ephemerality of Lockean consciousness.

The Insufficiency of Complex Theories

However, this insistence upon empirical criteria involves most complex theorists in a further problem of individuation: that is, they fail to isolate the individual uniquely. The essence of this problem lies in the fact, noted in Chapter 1, that a concentration upon the properties of the person can produce only type-identity; it fails to individuate token-identity uniquely. Thus, in

addition to the circularity problems, an objective account fails in accurate individuation, which in turn means that it will encounter difficulties in the field of responsibility and punishment.

The problem is articulated in an example found in Williams*, used to criticise the memory criterion, but it can be extended to cover all complex theories of personal identity which use criteria linked to properties of some sort. It is what has become known as 'the duplication or re-duplication problem'.

The argument imagines a scenario in which two persons, Charles and Robert, both claim to be Guy Fawkes. Both have equal claims to such identity in terms of evidence, for both have similar distinct memories comparable with those one might expect of Guy Fawkes himself. If this property of memory is taken to indicate personal identity, then we have two such persons with identical properties which are also shared by a third, earlier person. How then are we to decide who is who? The conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is that both persons are identical with the original.

The possibility that such properties might be only partly continuous opens another difficulty. For it is conceivable

* Williams 1973

that that Guy Fawkes' properties might be evenly divided between Charles and Robert so that each is different from the other (and therefore not identical), yet both are equally continuous with, and therefore to be identified with, Guy Fawkes. In both cases, if properties are taken as evidence, then trying to sort out identity will cause difficulties: but if properties are taken to be the facts about the identity, then we face insurmountable problems. For, as the original complaint against Locke objected, the result is that we have a concept of personal identity which allows multiple-one and one-multiple relationships between persons through time, causing what critics have considered to be forensically and intuitively absurd situations. The conclusion drawn is that evidence must be restricted to the role of evidence, for it is not truth. As Swinburne remarks:

For although there can be equally good evidence that each of the later person is the same as an earlier person that evidence is fallible; and since clearly only one person at one time can be strictly the same person as some person at an earlier time, it follows that in one case the evidence is misleading - although we may not know which.

Swinburne (1) p.20

There is clearly no way of choosing between Robert or Charles as to who is now Guy Fawkes, yet it seems ridiculous to claim either that neither is or that both are. One must be chosen, but it is impossible to do so from the empirical criteria. The choice must therefore be made according to

something else - according to the empirical theory of persons, it is a matter of convention as to who is who.

Objectors to the complex view claim that such failure serves to widen the gap between evidence and identity, supporting the intuition that personal identity involves more than just properties:

There seemed to be a further truth - that I would or would not have those experiences - beyond any truths about the exponent of similarity in apparent memory and matter of future persons to myself.

Swinburne (1) p.20

Thus Swinburne uses Williams' arguments to move towards the view that properties fail to give an individuating criterion of personal identity. Complex theories miss the crucial notion that properties must belong to something and that something, in the case of persons, is not analysable in terms of those properties.

3.3 (iii) The Necessity of Subjectivity

To be able to pick out a person as a token individual, some sense of unity or identity must be given over and above the objective qualities and properties he/she has from a third-person view point. This point comes out more clearly in the discussion of the problem found in Madell*, where he produces a set of arguments illustrating the inability of the empirical criteria to uniquely individuate persons.

* Madell 1981

Each of the illustrations is a restatement of the duplication problem, but each brings out more clearly the failure of any third-person empirical criterion.

Madell puts the argument into three forms: a possible world scenario; a situation involving disembodied persons; and the phenomenon of identical twins. The last of these briefly shows the inability of a purely physical criterion to capture the asymmetry of identical twins. To all intents and purposes, the empirical criteria cannot distinguish between them, yet:

One would suppose it to be beyond question that, if I am one of a pair of identical twins, what we have is something which, to the objective eye, is more or less perfect symmetry, but which from my point of view must appear asymmetrical.

Madell p.72

Likewise, Madell imagines a situation in which there are two exactly similar disembodied persons. Empirically the two are distinguishable whilst embodied, being spatially differentiated. But, once they lose their bodies, they might occupy the same place in space and thus become indistinguishable to the empiricist. This failing arises because they are treated as merely objects by the bodily criterion; it proves inaccurate, for the properties of persons have an extra aspect which other objects do not have - they are or are not the properties of someone:

Experiences certainly exist in time and at the very least, may exist in space, but in addition any experience has a dimension which no object can have: it is either mine or not

mine.

Madell p.22

Recognition of this subjective dimension of experiences solves the difficulties of individuation, for in it, they have a unique and asymmetrical identity: the property of belonging or not belonging to a subject. It is a definition of experiences that has already been noted with reference to Lowe - that conscious states, by definition, are the states of a subject - without the subject they are not experiences*.

This same contrast is illustrated with respect to temporal identity in a further example using the idea of possible worlds. For the argument, Madell imagines the existence of two 'counterparts' of himself, both existing in some possible world. One of these two has an alternative life from his, the other a distinct life. These two terms refer to the difference of being the same person but with altered properties and being a different person but with the same properties. One is considered to be the original; the other is not. It is quite possible that there is a world in which both these 'counterparts' have exactly similar properties. If this is so, then how does one distinguish or stipulate which is the original and which is not?

* Section 2.2 (iv)

Individuation by Origin

Under an empiricist description, which claims that the properties of a person constitute its identity, it appears that there is no way of identifying the original. However, the traditional empiricist line, as noted with reference to Locke, does give each object a unique identifying feature - that of having a particular origin. Thus, one might offer the suggestion that the the original person might be identified with his real counterpart by tracing their origins to the same source.

Yet, Madell claims, this criterion for individuation is not pertinent in the case of personal identity. Though it is true in the case of objects, this does not mean that it is so with respect to persons for, unlike objects, he claims that our personal identity does not depend upon a certain beginning. It is perfectly coherent to imagine ourselves continuing to persist if we had different origins - something many people do if wistfully thinking of an alternative existence from that which they have now:

We lose our conception of what it is for an object to be identical with some object in a foreseeable world if we do not recognise that an object's origin is of essence, but this is far from being the case when we consider persons and their identity.

Madell p.87

It is far from easy to see how this thesis of the necessity of origin can be applied to persons.

Madell p.19

Our origin as objects is not what is of important to us as persons, for we can believe in our persistence through a change of objective identity: what is of importance to our persistence is the continuation of the subject and the individuation of this has more to do with the beginning of subjective awareness than objective origins.

Thus Madell postulates a logical gap between a person and an ordinary object in terms of origin, to reinforce the already looming gap arising from the essential subjectivity of consciousness seen in the previous chapter. These objections demonstrate the inadequacy of any criterion which fails to recognise this essential difference. He states:

It is quite clear that the account we must give of the identity of persons is very different from that which we have to give for the identity of objects.

Madell p.87

For if we do treat persons as just objects, with identities which are similarly reducible to phenomena, somewhere in the account the ability to uniquely individuate is lost.

Despite the obvious differences in the form of the self, such comments have clear parallels to the suggestions made by Locke: that it is the self which is of prime importance in terms of personal identity; that the person can only be individuated with reference to subjective considerations; and that self is created and lost in ways not describable in the realm of objectivity.

3.3 (iv) Personal Identity as Derivative in Value

A reply to such objections is taken up by the more rigorous and therefore more extreme complex theorists such as Parfit or Nozick who, as noted in Section 3.2 (ii), are not worried about identity in persons. What is of importance to them is the persistence of certain qualities, regardless of whether or not they are unique. To them, the token propertyless subject has little or no value in itself.

This is clearly exemplified in Parfit's discussion of the continuation of a loved one. He claims that what is of key importance to us is the survival of certain qualities - the particular individual associated with them is only instrumental to their survival*. But such an outcome is a result of concentrating upon finding some empirical explanation of value: and if that is all one searches for, it is all one will find. Moreover, the outcome is in fact not true: for it is surely not the case that one would be completely satisfied with an exactly similar twin, or clone, or even robotic replacement for the person we love. Is it not so that part of real love is the desire for the unique individual, or subject or self which has those properties?

However, even if it is true that the value we place in others is entirely derivative, it is not so with regards to ourselves. This asymmetry is brought out more effectively

* Parfit 1984 Ch.13

in Parfit's tele-transporter example, in which a man survives at both ends of the tele-transporter*. Where the final individual is no different qualitatively to himself or to others, he certainly is different from the perspective of the original man: and the only difference is in the change of perspective or subjectivity. It is of little comfort to the original (who knows that he will in fact no longer exist) that someone somewhere does continue to exist who looks like, thinks like, and believes that he is, him. The intuition that the person is more than just properties is brought home here with a force.

+ Parfit 1984 Ch.10

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen that the implications to be drawn from this second line of criticism are similar to those of the previous chapter. Although they provide an alternative route, concentrating upon the logical and practical consistency of a complex account of persons, the conclusions and final objections are in essence the same: that the Lockean view of persons fails to accommodate the practical and social role of persons; and that attempts to remedy this, by producing an objectively empirical account, result in problems for individuation.

The intuition behind Butler and Reid's original objections therefore still have force - that Locke's account does not give an account of personal identity that satisfies the demands of the person's forensic nature. The overriding difficulty with the complex view remains - that it is unsatisfactory to its opponents, who believe that the person is a more stable and fixed entity than Locke can offer.

However, these complaints only carry weight if it can be shown that assumptions of the objectors are fair: that is, that the moral or forensic person must be something which can be accurately and definitely individuated. Such a consideration brings the examination to the third and final objection to Locke: that he fails to provide an account

which has real and fixed identity - factors which it is claimed are necessary to a moral concept of person.

CHAPTER 4 THE COMPLEX VIEW AND REAL IDENTITY

In this final objection to Locke, the criticism is that he produces a criterion which is unable to assure real and strict identity. It is claimed that if this proves to be so, the function of the person in a forensic role will be severely limited, if not impossible. The objections focus upon the use of "same consciousness" and its relationship to the form of identity it produces in persons.

4. 1 THE PROBLEM

The objection from Butler and Reid focuses upon the belief that Locke's criterion can provide only an identity that is 'loose and popular' and which is consequently insufficient as an account of persons. This comment arises out of several assumptions: firstly, that substance in Locke is equivalent to being; and secondly, that consciousness means only each individual thought or presentation to the mind. It is from these two basic premises that they make the above conclusion for, under such an interpretation, Locke's characterisation of person emerges as being equivalent to a substance and, moreover, a substance that undergoes constant change through time.

This interpretation of Locke is understandable, for his text holds within it a potential ambiguity in the use of substance, especially if one reads with an assumed Aristotelian notion of substance*. For in Aristotle, substance is a term which applies to units or entities such as horses, trees, men, rocks, etc. Since Locke states that persons are beings, and beings to Aristotle are usually in the substance classification, it is easy to see how Butler and Reid fasten upon this notion, writing:

...he defines person, a thinking intelligent being etc. and personal identity the sameness of a rational being. The question then is, whether the same rational being is the same substance, which needs no answer, because being and

* Aristotle (1)

substance, in this place, stand for the same idea.

Butler p.101

This understanding of substance is then applied to consciousness and the substance of consciousness is each individual thought. Hence, Butler and Reid understand by 'consciousness' a concatenation of individual apparitions and substances and it is this which leads to the problem in Locke. For as noted, Locke draws an equivalence between persons and consciousness, which under this line of reasoning, since consciousness is ephemeral and momentary, will entail that the person be constantly changing. Thus the comment is made that:

Is it not strange that the sameness or identity of a person should consist in a thing which is continually changing, and is not any two minutes the same...

Reid p.116

If this is taken as a true reading of Locke, personal identity is necessarily a weak or loose form of identity, for it is evident only in the apparent or inferred continuity of fleeting substances. The forensic implications of this are wholly unacceptable - as Reid states:

...if personal identity consisted in consciousness, it would certainly follow that no man is the same person any two moments of his life; and as the right and justice of reward and punishment are founded on personal identity no man could be responsible for his actions.

Reid p.116-7

If Locke is to weather this objection, the relationship

between persons, consciousness and substance must either be interpreted in a different way, to ensure that personal identity does not rest in something successive and changing, or the notion that real identity is necessary for responsibility must be rejected. If neither is possible, Locke will be unable to avoid the consequence that 'person' will not be able to fulfil its forensic role.

4.2 PERSONS AND SUBSTANCES

From what has already been said, and from any conscientious reading of Locke, it might be realised that his theory of persons does not have the same intention as that believed of him by Butler and Reid. Apart from the fact that Locke provides a discussion followed by a clear statement that persons are not substances, any attempt to prove that he does equate them flounders in inconsistency and inaccuracy.

4.2 (i) Lockean Substance

The key point to note is that Locke does not employ an Aristotelian notion of substance. In Locke can be found a explicit definition of substance as unchanging stuff which is the basic building block out of which other things are created. All three cases of substance described are consistent with such a reading, bearing more resemblance to Aristotle's concept of 'matter' than to substance*. For example, God, finite spirits and material things are all different types of basic substance rather than different complex units.

This understanding of Locke can be found in Alston and Bennett⁺, who examine the concept of substance that Locke uses in response to the apparent contradiction as expressed

* Aristotle (1)

+ Alston & Bennett 1988

by Butler and Reid, which is involved in taking the Aristotelian line. Their analysis defines the Lockean use of substance in a narrow and special sense, taking it to be a general term not making particular claims about nature but referring to the most basic entity in one's ontology.

This clearly is the use to which Locke puts the term, for in his discussion of substance he refers to the most fundamental building block of objects, the nature of which we do not know but the concept of which we certainly do need*. He even talks of different forms of substance - spiritual and material - intending the distinction to cover the different kinds of things we talk about - for example sentient and insentient beings.

Under this interpretation, substance comes to mean "thing-like item that is quantified over at a basic level of one's ontology" (Alston & Bennett p.38), characterised as a thing to which predicates are ascribed or the basic subject. In such a fundamental role, substance does not have any parts which it can conceivably lose or gain and therefore is practically irreducible. Nothing can be added or taken away from it, for it will not survive a change of parts. This definition of substance produces something which therefore has perfect identity.

* Locke Bk.II Ch. xxiii

Employing such a concept of substance, the problem of whether the same person entails the same substance in Locke (essentially the equivalence suggested by Butler), becomes a question of "when you have one enduring person, do you have one enduring thing of a basic kind?" (Alston & Bennett p.40). In contradiction to Butler's conclusion, Alston and Bennett take Locke's answer to be essentially 'No':

In the widest understanding of substance - that which has properties and stands in relations in contrast to the properties that are had and the relations that bind - Locke does take people to be substance. But where 'substance' is restricted to the most basic thing-like entities out of which all others are in some sense composed or constructed, neither people nor oaks are substances, but are rather composed of, or derived from, substances, in such a way that one and the same oak (person) may be composed of, or otherwise derived from, many different substances.

Alston & Bennett p.40

Person as Substance?

Under such an interpretation, Locke clearly does not equate persons to substances; for the former are things made up of parts, the latter unable to be so. Persons have substances but the particular substances in the person are constantly changing and are therefore not identical with the person.

Even if Locke can thus avoid the identification of persons with substances, there still remains a difficulty. This is recognised in part by Butler, who explains that the original problem still remains, is the consciousness substance or not?:

...our substance is indeed continually changing; but whether this be so or not, is, it seems, nothing to the purpose; since it is not a substance, but consciousness alone, which constitutes personality; which consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently the personality constituted by it.

Butler p.102

As an objection this can be avoided, once more, by an appeal to a mistake made by the accusers. For the concept of person involves complete consciousness rather than its particular constituents. When Butler and Reid identify consciousness in a narrow way to entail only individual thoughts, they misread Locke's intention. For as noted, Locke uses consciousness in a much broader way, characterising it as an all embracing unifier of individual thoughts.

Thus, it is not Locke's intention that the person be identified with anything fluctuating or successive: its parts or constituents might change through time but the essential referent of the concept of person itself, or the idea of person, persists.

4.2 (ii) Actual Distinction of Persons and Substances

Locke does, then, intend a difference between the person, its thoughts and its substances. However, though he makes the distinction, and it is consistent with the rest of his theory, it can still be asked whether persons can really be distinguished from persisting thinking substance or

consciousness. Thus the basic intuition behind the criticism remains intact, for it is on the distinction between the two that the question of real identity rests.

That this separation proves difficult is recognised even by Locke, for in practice persons are always found along with thinking substance. Thus even though he presses for the likelihood that a person might survive a change of thinking substances, he is unwilling to commit himself on the precise nature of the relationship between them, saying:

...that cannot be resolved but by those who know what kind of substances they are that do think; and whether the consciousness of past actions can be transferred from one thinking substance to another.

Locke p.214

The two are quite obviously closely connected, at the very least forming a constant conjunction if not a more necessary link. Can Locke then maintain a clear distinction between persons and substances? Conceptually he can - for it must be remembered that what Locke is interested in are the ideas. There is, as noted in Chapter 1, a clear distinction between the ideas of a person and of substance; and even if persons are to be found in constant conjunction, even in necessary conjunction with substance, this does not entail that they are dependent upon the same particular substance. Conceptually speaking Locke claims that the substances can shift and change completely, without the person being touched or altered at all.

Separability of Substance and Selves

However, the fact of the constant conjunction makes it appear as though consciousness is in fact what the person is. Indeed, some believe that it would make more sense actually to claim that the substances, or alternatively thoughts, were the person. For example, Chisholm* develops an attack upon Locke, which states that the 'thinking substances' are more like persons than Locke's 'persons'.

His argument is founded in the problem at hand - the original Butler/Reid distinction between objects with strict identity and those with only a loose and popular form. The former, he terms mereologically consistent; the latter mereologically variable⁺. Mereologically variable things are those which can survive a change of parts; mereologically constant, those which cannot. Accordingly variable things are ultimately constituted out of the constant things, relying on them for their character at time of possession.

If this description is accurate, Chisholm claims that objects which undergo changes of parts have characteristics only in virtue of those parts: in effect they 'borrow' their qualities from their current substances. Thus an oak tree is only wooden and green in virtue of the fact that the

* Chisholm (1) 1976

+ Eg. Chisholm (1) 1976 p.89

substances that constitute it have those particular properties; and a person will only have a body of flesh and blood by virtue of the materials it possess. In consequence a person will only have certain thoughts if the thinking substances forming it has those thoughts. Of this Chisholm writes:

There is no reason whatever for supposing that I hope for rain only in virtue of the fact that some other thing hopes for rain - some stand-in that, strictly and philosophically, is not identical with me, but happens to be doing duty for me at this particular time.

Chisholm p.104

Such a notion results in the possibility of the thinking substance being more of a person than the person:

If there are thus two things that now hope for rain, the one doing it on its own and the other such that its hoping for rain is done for it by the thing that now happens to constitute it, then I am the former thing and not the latter thing.

Chisholm p.104

In his criticism Chisholm clearly misrepresents or misunderstands the intention of Locke's writing. Chisholm implies that there are two things, the subject and the qualities of the subject, and moreover that the subject exists 'in waiting' for the particular qualities. Implicit in this is the fact that the self comes first and the qualities are joined to it later: an imported dualism inconsistent with the original Locke, for Locke does not make such claims.

As described earlier in Chapter 1, the self arises out of the actions of the consciousness; without the thoughts contained within one consciousness there is no self. Thus particular thoughts are represented themselves in other thoughts of co-consciousness or unity in the mind.

If the person or thinker is equivalent to that thought of self-consciousness, this might lead to the conclusion that the thought and the thinking of the thought are indeed inseparable - for how can a thought be framed without some way of thinking it? But to Locke such inseparability is only in practice: for although the person is reducible to that conscious thought, conceptually it is the idea of a concerned and rationalising individual. Thus the two are divisible - one having the connotation of a consciousness containing different thoughts; the other the idea of a subject or self, the individual who has the thoughts, is affected by and affects them. This difference in the idea extends to a difference in identity: in the former case the identity of the idea relies upon particular thoughts or experiences; in the later the identity depends upon awareness of those individual elements in the consciousness.

Personal Identity is Essentially a First-person Account

The difference in understanding occurs because of perspectives - once again Locke is interpreted wrongly because attention is not paid to the distinction between

first and third-person accounts of consciousness. The Lockean person is essentially subjective and can only be described through a first-person account. The person does not exist in an objective, experience-independent world - to Locke it is essentially subjective. The person is in the realm of phenomena and the experience of it is all that it is. Thus it has a different identity condition from any third-person and empirically objective description of consciousness, simply because it cannot be identified from a third-person view.

As seen in Section 3.2, the Lockean self does not have the usual logical description of objective identification over time. It presents a queer and perspectival form of identity, based in the identity of appearance rather than of 'reality'. Personal identity can be determined from only one perspective and only at the present time. What is the past of a particular person is only what that person can remember when looking back: there is no account of a personal past to be given by reference to objective historical fact. The history of a person can change from moment to moment.

4.2 (iii) Change in the Lockean Person

It does seem from this clarification as though Locke is concerned with particular qualities of the person, rather than a purely quantitative identity. The person knows who

he is by the particular content of consciousness and a change in content will change the person. In terms of identity over time the person knows who he was in the past by the content of remembrance and a change in the particular memory might change who he is and was.

On a synchronic level this presents no problems - it is the same as Butler's objections* and can be answered likewise: the content of consciousness presents us with our personality, but does not amount to our numerical identity which is to be found in the unifying consciousness. But in the case of identity over time, the qualities are elevated to a position of being the quantitative identity as well: for it is in the content of the memory that temporal identity is placed. In this way, the person becomes something which does change and fluctuate through time, for if the memory changes, so does the history of the person.

This can be dealt with once again by reference to the idea - the overriding thought of co-consciousness. The diachronic identity, like the synchronic, is found in the unifying thought. But in this suggestion a fundamental problem emerges, which can be seen to extend to the case of synchronic identity as well. For what is this unifying

* Section 4.2 (i)

consciousness? If it is a thought, then like other thoughts it will change from moment to moment. The act of unification is of certain things now whereas when the next moment arrives it will be unifying other things - it will be a different thought or act of co-consciousness. This is brought out more clearly when considering diachronic identity, for what unifies all the co-consciousness over time is an act of historical co-consciousness; but as seen, co-consciousness changes with each increasing moment to encompass more or less of the past with the present.

Lockean personal identity thus involves a thought of unifying consciousness which occurs only at one moment in time, and then changes to another thought of co-consciousness. The person of the present is strictly identical with all the past things it unifies to it, for the person is one basic and indivisible thought. But such a thought is only at one particular time, then like the rest of consciousness, it is no longer.

Thus it seems that, even if consciousness is taken to represent the Lockean act of thought or self-awareness, the problem remains - that each individual act of self-awareness is only a momentary thing, having no obvious links between them. The person therefore cannot have real identity through time in an historical way and does indeed have the momentary nature that Butler and Reid envisage.

4.2 (iv) Modern Complex Accounts

As seen, the later complex accounts develop and modify Locke in an attempt to extend the existence of person beyond the immediate present. As such their theories can be seen as attempts to give the person some form of historical identity. By concentrating upon the use of 'ideas' and unifying concepts, they try to give the thing identity through time by describing it as a third-person or historically objective thing. By divorcing it from the ephemerality of the first-person, the idea of the person as some form of property can be given persistence through a unifying continuity which is fixed and therefore morally viable.

As also explained, the consequence of the complex view's empiricism - that persons are reducible to some set of their properties which are continually changing - is that persons do not have strict or absolute identity over time. What identity they do have is something conferred upon them by us: that is we group together certain properties and impose a unity on them from our perspective. The identity of one person is thus constructed by an umbrella term rather than a naturally fixed unity.

It is recognised that strict identity cannot hold in such a conjunction, but complex theorists claim that this is not important. At least the person has a form of identity and

can therefore be tracked and individuated in a public way. The loose form of identity they have is all that is needed - it is a convention by which we attribute responsibility in society. What is of interest is that certain crucial properties do survive - and if they do, then the person persists.

Person, in effect becomes a social group term and the rules for its identity are created by the society. Thus it is possible for the identity to appear to be indeterminate for if the concept is forced beyond its usual use, we have no precedent with which to judge the situation. However, new rules will be created and identity conferred but the identity will still be only a matter of social convention.

The notion of such conventional identities is a consequence of empiricism, indeed some claim the ultimate status of any empirical knowledge is a matter of convention - that all the objects we deal with are composed by our interests, the patterns we make of our experience being determined by ourselves. Whether idealist or realist the subjectivity of our perception necessarily enforces a human framework upon the world which entails that our perception of identity will necessarily be a matter of convention.

The Moral Sufficiency of Loose Identity?

It can still be objected to this account that, in effect, persons only "perdure" (Noonan p.122) rather than "persist". Unless the connection is a 'real' one (satisfying the scepticism of Hume), persistence of the idea simply does not involve persistence of a real thing. Where Locke's unifying idea is a real and observable one (if only momentary and first personal), most objectively described continuity can amount only to the imposition of a link reducible to a matter of convention. As explained, this form of identity is intolerable to an advocate of the Butler and Reid style of morality: for although the notion is 'fixed' in our human terms, is not fixed in reality thus relativising the concept of responsibility to the particular society's or person's idea of what constitutes personal identity.

4.3 REAL IDENTITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

If, then, Locke and the complex theorist cannot be shown to have real identity, it must somehow be argued that a sufficient account of persons does not need real identity. It is the claim of the simple view that real identity is necessary for our notion of morality.

4.3 (i) Morality and Identity as Convention

The origin of this problem once again can be found in Butler and Reid, and Madell quotes the latter as characterising the individuation of things with only loose identity as "often a question of words" (Madell p.13). Such a comment is a recognition that, in attributing identity to successive objects, persistence is there only by virtue of a 'conceptual' continuity or unity. This same observation was developed by Quine*, who states that object identity is reducible to what is of importance to the perceiver.

Unity of successive objects is thus arbitrary and noticed only if the object is of relevance to the observer. Objects are created by the priorities of perceivers:

The view is that the unity of a thing at any one time is much like the unity which results from an assembly of building blocks, and that it is a matter of convention whether we call the result one thing or many things.

Madell p.14

* Quine (1) 1960 & (2) 1969

Madell does not consider this implication to be a criticism of empirical object identity; what is unacceptable to him is that persons should be treated so, for the chief consequence of doing so would be that our identity, future and past, becomes a matter solely of convention. What is and is not me would depend upon what I, or other people, decide is or is not me. This is an unacceptable consequence, not least because it conflicts with our notion of responsibility. Madell states that:

...our present notion of responsibility would be destroyed by a view of personal identity as essentially a matter of convention seems to me almost beyond question.

Madell p.16

Like Butler and Reid, the modern simple view relates our rationale for agency to the person. The point is argued at two levels: that, without a real and strict identity exhibited in the self, responsibility, and with it all the trimmings of morality, will dissolve; and that our own personal perspective of responsibility begins with our own concern for our self. Thus the person is to have determinate and absolute identity.

Responsibility and Determinate Identity

It is true that it is difficult to make real sense of the notion of indeterminate identity. It is a contradiction in terms to talk of identity and to describe it with the term 'indeterminate'. Although inability to determine and know

identity is conceivable, indeterminacy of the thing in itself seems absurd. How can an object not have an identity? It is part of being that a being is something; and anything that is something has an identity of some sort. Even if we cannot determine a thing's identity, we do not hold that it has no identity. Even if we believe an object to be a social construction and not objective, we still attribute to that thing an identity.

At this level the notion of indeterminacy does not make sense and the simple view seems justified in rejecting any view that claims as such. However, the complex view does not claim this and one cannot adduce it as an implication. The conclusion that can be reached through the complex view is that it can be indeterminate whether or not a person survives and that survival is not a matter of identity.

The claim of the complex view is not absurd in this respect. But the conclusions it draws are a result of an assumed empiricism and a preconceived notion of the status of the person. That things can have identity, which is just convention, is acceptable. Whether such a form of identity is acceptable in persons is another consideration. For it to be so, it must be acceptable that our belief in persistence, and the morality which depends upon it, be only a social construction rather than a real fact.

Responsibility and Convention

It is true that responsibility hinges upon the belief that the same person is present and this would imply that perhaps identity is, after all, important to our morality. However, it can be shown that our concept of responsibility does not rely upon a fixed and absolute notion of identity, it functions equally well in situations where identity is a matter of convention; where identity is of a loose form.

For example, the concept of a nation or a clan is a group term, relying upon social definition rather than natural kind grouping, yet we still use and apply the concept of responsibility with respect to them. A nation might be held responsible for causing a war, although the action may have been taken by a minority; a tribe is often considered a unit and one member can bring a revenge upon the whole tribe. Although the strength of blame does become diluted, in both cases the whole takes the responsibility for the parts, even though all parts might not have been actually causal in the action. The parts might even shift and change - the glory or disgrace of a nation or tribe can be thought to belong to the descendants through the ages.

Thus the problem of identity and responsibility envisaged by the simple view is not as ominous as first appears. An individual might still function under a concept of responsibility even if exact identity is not upheld. In the

difficulties considered by the reduplication case*, it is far from absurd that responsibility might become a matter of convention: responsibility does not necessarily function on a one-one exact and absolute level. To assume that the self is necessary for the notion of responsibility in persons is to assume that 'person' is an absolute concept. The simple view fails to argue for the point and so fails to prove through this channel that real identity is necessary for our concept of personal responsibility.

In fact philosophers such as Parfit are quite willing to accept that traditional morality, and the persisting self on which it is founded, are no more than conventional beliefs. They acknowledge that we can still have a moral attitude towards ourselves and concern for our own survival, even if that concern is founded in something that changes. Parfit himself goes so far as to state that we would be better off rejecting beliefs relating to identity and focussing on fact - and that is, that the persistence of certain properties is what is of most importance to us as individuals.

4.3 (ii) Identity Does Not Matter

Thus the conclusions about identity encountered by philosophers such as Parfit cause no worry. They claim that our concern is felt for a particular set of beliefs and

* Section 3.3 (ii)

memories held within the consciousness: that they should persist rather than some experiencer of them. Moreover, Parfit claims that the belief in anything more - like an indivisible self - is merely an illusion or taught belief:

The truth is very different from what we are inclined to believe. Even if we are not aware of this, most of us are Non-Reductionists. If we considered my imagined cases, we would be strongly inclined to believe that our continued existence is a deep further fact, distinct from physical and psychological continuity, and a fact that must be all-or-nothing. This is not true.

Parfit p.281

It is in the persistence of certain properties that the moral attitude should be focussed, and these may survive in more than one 'branch' of the person. Parfit, like Locke, recognises that a branching system of indeterminate identity cannot be one which maintains identity and so he casts off identity as unimportant to the concerns of persons. It is not identity which is of prime importance to Parfit, it is the presence of certain qualities.

Concern and Real Identity

In opposition to this empiricist stand, Chisholm claims that, if only this loose form of identity is possible in persons, they will be reducible and describable in terms of their properties. Thus, the empirical account treats persons as "entia per alio" (Chisholm (1) p.104), deriving their nature and ultimate value from something other than themselves. Chisholm believes, as do Butler and Reid, that

this characterisation of the concern we feel for ourselves is intuitively unacceptable.

Chisholm illustrates this unacceptability by showing that characterisation of persons as just properties is absurd. This objection was described earlier - that, under the empirical description, if I hope for rain, I do so only in virtue of something else hoping for rain, something which is not identical with me but is doing duty for me at the moment. Of this Chisholm comments that:

If there are thus two things that now hope for rain, the one doing it on its own and the other such that its hoping is done for it by the thing that now happens to constitute it, then I am the former thing and not the latter thing. But this is to say that I am not an ens successivum.

Chisholm (1) p.104

Hence the empiricist account of persons is thought to be insufficient - that, in fact, intuitively there is more to the person and its identity than the successive properties that the body and manifest person form. This extra factor is something which thinks or feels; not merely something which is thought for or felt for. Moreover, it is this thing for which we feel concern.

Madell also argues for this point. If we consider our future, we feel concern for ourselves as the same person who will experience that future, we fear pain as people who will feel that pain. In an empiricist account, this fear

amounts to the fact that our concern "that the person who will be in pain will have certain memories and personality traits" (Madell p.15). Yet this is clearly inaccurate, for surely what we fear is that the pain is something that we ourselves might experience:

...and it seems absolutely clear that this is not what one is afraid of at all. What one is afraid of is just that the person who will be in pain is oneself. Pains are one sort of thing, memory impressions quite another and it is truly difficult to see just why the fearfulness of the one should rest on the presence of the other.

Madell p.15-6

In this way, Madell gives a clear reason to believe in a subject which does not reduce to the psychological properties of the person, for our concern for our imagined future takes its meaning from the existence of just such a subject.

4.3 (iii) Responsibility and the Self

There is a strong intuitive belief that the concern and responsibility starts with the self. This idea has been described in Locke, and his entire thesis of persons is built up on it. As seen, his is different enough from most complex views to place the value of the self in this concern, rather than just the properties, and although giving a complex account of personal identity, Locke avoids the problems associated with real and loose identity at one time.

However, concentration upon the self's idea of the self means that the logic of Lockean identity is something impermanent - it does not hold through time in the traditional way. The simple view demands a fixed thing that is factual and in the objective world. If morality can be reduced to 'how it seems', chaos will ensue for such a person cannot support a truly forensic role.

In Locke, persons do not conform to the usual rules of cause and effect. The peculiar workings of the mind, and the random possibilities of experiences represented to it, are removed from the orderly world of causality in which one experience is thought to cause another and individuals are held responsible for certain actions they have performed. The Lockean person labours under no such predictable links to the actions done by its parts. The cause of the person is the presentation in the consciousness - and what causes the ingredients of a particular consciousness at any one time is to a certain extent accidental, or at least unpredictable in normal causal terms.

To understand the Lockean person and its identity will thus involve deep research into its psychology. What is or is not represented to the mind at any one particular time, and therefore what is or is not the person, will be a case for psychologists to determine and this will only be rough approximation, for the person is essentially subjectively

determined. The field of responsibility would be likewise dependent upon the workings and representations of the present mind, first-person consciousness alone determining whether or not a person is guilty or innocent.

It is in identity's dependency on this asymmetry and unilateral perspective that the real problem exists, for it is claimed that something with such 'identity' cannot produce a satisfactory unit of social responsibility. For social responsibility involves attribution of praise or blame from others - yet if those others have no perspective from which to individuate, how can they apportion or direct their judgements? Responsibility demands some form of objectively discernible identity and, as I have shown, Locke's account effectively removes the logical possibility of such a view.

Responsibility and Concern

Linked to this problem is a further difficulty concerning the action of the person in society. Although Locke gives good reason for the basis of our concern for ourselves - in terms of awareness of being experiencers - he does not provide sufficient reason why this should give rise to a feeling of responsibility. The understanding that we are affected and respond to certain input means only that we feel a concern for our present and future experiences. Such

a situation cannot give rise to a feeling of responsibility: for that we need to have some idea of ourselves as agents.

Thus it seems that in the self-appraisal of the Lockean view, the person cannot have a social role. It will neither feel socially responsible nor will it be publicly reprehensible. Once again then, the intuition of the Butler and Reid objections still stand: that the person of Locke is unable to fulfil its forensic role, being only a fleeting and momentary thing of the present.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Once again an essential difference has emerged between the thinker and agent, thoughts and deeds. The division is that between the rationalist and the empiricist, each arguing their case from their own corner.

It has been shown that Locke endorses a strange form of empiricism, which results ultimately in an ephemeral and fluctuating person - not much good as a socially forensic unit but understandable in terms of self-concern. Subsequent complex theorists develop and modify Locke into more stable and historically objective accounts. But, if they are to be accepted, it seems that we must also accept the possibility that our beliefs about persons and the foundations of morality are not what we think: that in fact the person does not persist in anything but a conventionally agreed way.

The objective empiricist will accept no reference to a mysterious sort of self with no empirical manifestation, so he chooses to adopt the properties and qualities as personal identity. The repercussions this has for our beliefs about persons and morals are either embarrassingly forgotten or brazenly faced out with new prescriptions for our beliefs offered.

The rationalist claims that empiricism takes its claims too far. But to make the step of claiming more beyond empirical manifestation needs proof other than the particular objections voiced so far. The appeal to our basic beliefs and concerns about ourselves is attractive but unless it can be proven rationally that this view of a persisting self is essential to our ideas of morality, there seems little to go on, apart from background epistemological beliefs, when making a choice between the two accounts.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY CONCLUSION

The complex view produces a concept of person which is the result of an empirical approach. Unexplainable intuition is not a justifiable basis, it must be possible to account for persons in terms of experienced evidence. Hence the complex accounts try to provide a concept of person referring to properties - psychological or physical - with persons being reducible to these criteria.

The actual criterion of personhood varies from theory to theory - from pure psychological phenomena to the entire body. What is universal to all theories is the claim that the person can be characterised by some quality or property and it is that property which is of chief importance in personal identity. Thus, the person persists only by virtue of the continuity of some property, its identity and essence resting in this alone. In the empiricist's view, what the philosopher must do is to find which is the essential criterion of person, rather than to discover whether or not an empirical criterion can be found.

5.1 LOCKEAN PERSONAL IDENTITY

The Lockean theory of persons is based in the definition of the person as a rational and moral thing. It has both the ability to think and reflect and, in addition, it is a unit of moral responsibility. The self emerges as the best candidate for this definition, for it is a being which thinks and feels concern for its condition. Evidence of the self is given in self-consciousness: it is in the awareness of being conscious that we become aware of ourselves as existing.

Thus in his empiricism, Locke focuses upon the self, the evidence for which is found in subjective experience or self-consciousness. Since the only evidence we have of other subjects is through argument by analogy or other indirect experience, it is impossible to provide any degree of empirical proof of persons from a third-person perspective. Hence the Lockean theory of personal identity is expressed solely in first-personal terms. His account remains essentially subjective, with identity and persistence of persons described only in terms of self-awareness.

5.1 (i) Problems in Locke

Although Locke's theory is both empirically rigorous and internally consistent, it fails on two levels. Firstly it

produces a concept person which is intuitively at odds with our beliefs of persistence; but more profoundly, the person of Locke is unable to fulfil its forensic definition. For in its obscurity to all but the self, it cannot play a socially interactive or morally responsible role. The self, as described by Locke, cannot therefore provide a sufficient account of persons.

5.2 MODERN COMPLEX ACCOUNTS

In reaction to this problem, subsequent modifications and developments of Locke have attempted to force personal identity into an objectively empirical realm. In order to produce a socially effective person, these have been focussed upon tangible properties and qualities associated with persons, rather than upon subjectivity. Since most empirical criteria are fluctuating, the complex account of persons postulates an entity which changes over time yet is still considered to persist. Most posit some form of continuity or persistence through the change, either actual and therefore 'real' or imposed and therefore constructed. Thus the person is recognisably something with loose identity. Its parts and character change, yet it is considered that it still persists.

The more rigorous complex theorists acknowledge that persons cannot have strict identity, subsequently discarding identity as a concern and emphasising the importance of the survival of what seems to be of value. Hence, the role of objective criteria, empirical value and what appears to be the case are pushed to the fore-front of complex accounts - personal identity emerging as a thing of qualitative concern rather than numerical.

The advantage of the complex view is that it provides a criterion of identity - we can understand what persons are in terms not referring to the word 'person' itself and without recourse to something mysterious or intuitive. This extends to explanations of the value of persons and their identity - we are provided with a list of qualities or properties by which we can judge the existence or persistence of persons.

By concentrating upon objective criteria, the complex account produces a person which is a public thing. It can be observed and judged from a third-person, objective stand point as well as a first-person perspective. Since it appears that consciousness or the self cannot be accounted for in objective empirical terms, subjectivity is sacrificed to ensure this empirically supported social viability.

5.2 (i) Problems in the Modern Complex View

However, this line of account encounters problems of its own or, rather, it falls prey to the original objections which Locke himself manages to avoid. For the modern complex theories produce a criterion which cannot identify persons without circularity; and further, a criterion which fails to individuate persons uniquely.

This can be attributed to the failure of the complex account to recognise the fundamental gap between the

properties of the person and the person himself. It has been suggested that empirical criteria for personal identity can be treated only as evidence of that identity, not the truth or fact of the identity. By stating that properties are the person, the complex account fails to make this crucial distinction between evidence and fact: an assumption of which leads to the exclusion of the subject.

For in providing an account of persons based only in evidence, the complex view fails to capture the essence of subjectivity. Not only is this anti-intuitive but it results in a circular and incomplete account, failing to identify persons both synchronically and diachronically. Without the idea of a subject, properties cannot be individuated as belonging to any particular persons. It seems that by elevating objectivity to a primary role, the modern complex account excludes the only method by which unique and non-circular identification can be attained, that is through the property of subjectivity. In effect the nature of persons is forgotten and lost in the evidence we have for them.

Moreover, it is claimed that despite their objectivity, empiricist theories fail to provide an account of persons which is morally satisfactory. In theories advocated by the empiricist line, the issue of identity is ultimately reducible to a matter of convention, something which is not

only instinctively but forensically untenable. That the empiricist account is insufficient is emphasised through an examination of its implications for the concept of identity. The properties in which it claims identity consists can in fact hold only a loose form of identity and this is out of keeping with our beliefs about ourselves and our ideas of ourselves as unified persistent beings. Thus, the concentration upon the phenomena of things entails that modern complex theories ultimately fail to give an account of anything which has real or strict identity.

5.3 INSIGHTS OF THE COMPLEX VIEW

It is ~~against this last objection to the form of complex~~ personal identity, that the modern empirical accounts can claim some success. For they do show that strict identity is not necessary for a fully functional concept of responsibility: that responsibility can function based on an agreed and conventional persistence. Thus it also seems that one of the main objections to Locke might be removed. If it can be shown that morality can function on conventional identity, then the loose identity in persons is no longer a problem.

Having explored and rejected the avenues of objectively empirical persons, is it possible that modern complex theories might support a return to the Lockean subjective account of persons? If the problem of loose identity is removed, might not Locke's concept of person succeed? It is true that as an account of subjectivity, Lockean theory remains intact and viable. Indeed as an account of self, self-awareness and first-person evidence of the self, it displays both sense and rigour; with the added bonus of being empirically supported..

However, Locke still cannot avoid the intuitive difficulty of postulating a person without a fixed history; and even if this intuition can be shown to have no

foundation, the subjective character of self raises fundamental moral difficulties concerning public individuation of persons.

5.3 (i) Conclusion

In conclusion then it seems that the obscurity and ephemerality of the Lockean self makes it an insufficient account of persons. In the face of the failure of the complex account of personal identity, I shall turn next to an examination of the simple view.

PART II

THE SIMPLE VIEW of PERSONAL IDENTITY

My dinner, dress, associates, looks compliments,
dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or
woman I love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or
ill-doing or loss or lack of money, or
depressions or exaltations,
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the
fever of doubtful news, the fitful events:
These come to me days and nights and go from me
again,
But they are not the Me myself.

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'

CHAPTER 6 THE SIMPLE VIEW

In contrast to the empirical reductionist view, stands the simple view of personal identity. This holds that the subjectivity necessary to persons can only be encompassed by some further fact over and above empirical properties: that the person is more than mind or body, it is a subject. Hence the simple theory centres upon the notion of the subject, claiming that persons are essentially equivalent to a self which forms the unanalysable fact of personal identity.

The simple view is an attempt to capture the subjectivity central to Locke without necessarily involving the fleeting nature characteristic of self-consciousness. Thus in an attempt to avoid the implicit reductionism involved in a posteriori argument, they focus instead upon providing proofs of the historically persisting persons in a priori terms.

6.1 BUTLER, REID AND THE SIMPLE VIEW

The theories of personal identity offered by Butler* and Reid⁺ really only emerge through their analysis and criticism of Locke. Few positive arguments are given in support of their claims and we are made aware of their ideas chiefly by negative definition.

6.1 (i) The Butler and Reid account of Personal Identity

Their concept of person sets out to achieve that which the Lockean concept cannot: that is, it tries to accommodate real identity and forensic applicability. Like Locke, they focus upon consciousness and thought in persons; but unlike him, they reject a reductive account equating persons to consciousness - for the simple reason that it cannot exhibit a 'real' identity through time.

The basic definition of person Butler and Reid give is an account of the person as a subject or self. As in Locke, 'person' is that which wants, hopes, feels, reacts - all the activities of a subject which is affected by its environment and experiences. The person of Butler and Reid is that for which each individual feels concern; the centre of experience and action; what each of us thinks we essentially are; "That which each man calls himself." (Reid p.103).

* Butler 1736

+ Reid 1785

However, it is only in definition that their views and Locke's coincide. Once they move on to discuss what will fulfil such a concept, to describe the ontological status of person, vast differences between them emerge. Where Locke is happy to produce an account identifying the self simply with the property of consciousness, Butler and Reid choose to argue that it is something over and above the properties. Where the self of Locke is a complex amalgamation of consciousness and subjectively connected phenomena, in Butler and Reid self emerges as a basic, objectively persisting unit, independent of what seems to be the case. Locke provides a reductive account of the self in terms of self-consciousness; Butler and Reid refuse to allow that the self can be explained in terms other than its subjectivity.

Thus both Butler and Reid insist that any concept which does justice to our beliefs must attribute strict identity to persons. It is this demand which engenders the distinction they enforce between the person and its properties. Since properties and parts which belong to a person fluctuate through time, they cannot provide real identity. If then, persons are to persist in a strict sense, they must be in essence something other than these properties. Rather than an objective, property-based entity, the person is characterised as an empirically intangible subject of properties and experiences:

That indivisible thing which I call myself. Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates,

and resolves, and acts and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling. I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers.

Reid p.109

It is this notion of a separable subjectivity which leads to the rejection of the person as consciousness; and this extends through to the complex idea of temporal identity which states that persons are linked to past selves only through some sort of continuity of memory or psychological state. Although Butler and Reid admit that remembering gives rise to our knowledge of past selves, they cannot accept that this amounts to the truth or fact about who we were or are now. Firmly insisting upon a distinction between evidence and reality (something ignored in Locke's account of persons), they state that our persistence cannot be dependent upon certain properties; that the memory is evidence for, but not constitutive of personal identity:

It is very true that my remembrance that I did such a thing is the evidence I have that I am the identical person who did it...but to say that my remembrance that I did such a thing or my consciousness, makes me the person who did it, is, in my apprehension, an absurdity too gross to be entertained by any man who attends to the meaning of it.

Reid p.115-6

Emerging from this distinction is a kind of dualism: one between the subject and the properties. What Butler and Reid focus upon is the necessity of the subject - that there is something that owns the properties which is not reducible. There are two things involved in persons and

they cannot be reduced down to one type of thing: there are properties of persons and persons themselves. It is the aim of the simple view to show that the self is separable from its properties.

6.1 (ii) The Necessity of Real Identity

The impetus behind this demand for real and fixed identity is based in the fact that properties, though providing good evidence, cannot fully account for the concern we feel for and the awareness we have of ourselves. Any attempt to reduce the person to properties misses something - and that something seems to persist through time.

Belief in a fixed and therefore more objectively persisting self has been noted as one reason for the rejection of the complex theory*. As seen, Locke himself produces an extremely ephemeral and subjective account of persons; and even later empiricist attempts to produce a historically fixed self, fail to provide anything more than a loose form of identity in their criteria of persons. The fact that loose identity entails only a conventional kind of persistence has been explained⁺, and it is this conclusion, applied to personal identity, which forms the main reason for the simple view's argument.

* See Part I

+ See Introduction

Thus in contrast to the empiricist line, Butler, Reid and all subsequent simple accounts believe that rather than the loose identity evident in successive things, persons must have a strict or real identity; and this demand finds its source in two main arguments: that the foundation of morality depends upon the belief in a persistence self; and that our fundamental beliefs must take priority in any epistemological conflict.

They claim that if persons have only a loose form of identity, they cannot really be said to persist, any kind of survival they exhibit is merely a matter of convention or custom. Yet this conflicts with beliefs about ourselves which inform and underlie the foundations of morality. For it is a fundamental belief about ourselves and others that persons persist in actuality rather than just as constructed things. Moreover, it is this belief which forms the foundation of concern and responsibility for ourselves, now and in the future, and which in turn is necessary to all moral action. Without this belief moral chaos will ensue.

The distinction made by the simple view, between persons and properties, can therefore be seen to rest upon a belief about ourselves; but at base that is really all it amounts to - a belief. Butler and Reid are simply responding to the basic intuition that we are more than just our properties; that any theory which tries to effect a

reduction to properties must be rejected just because it produces conclusions contradictory to our basic intuitions and beliefs.

In allowing this to be such a persuasive factor, the early simple view lays great importance upon the role of intuition and imagination in epistemology. In both Butler and Reid such considerations are given a central position at the very base of our knowledge. Both stress not only the limits of doubt to which we may reasonably go but also insist upon innate beliefs as central to our notion of rationality:

The consciousness; which every man has of his Identity as far back as his memory reaches, needs no aid of philosophy to strengthen it, and no philosophy can weaken it without first producing some degree of insanity...that this conviction is indispensably necessary to all exercise of reason.

Reid p.107

Dissatisfaction with the empiricist account thus stems from its inability to provide the intuitive and morally effective person. What emerges then, is a very different methodology from that of Locke the empiricist - one which appeals to innate and therefore a priori and rationalist evidence of the self. In placing such fundamental importance upon intuition, Butler and Reid commit themselves to a rationalist path - one which they hope will give them knowledge of a person which does indeed persist with real identity.

6.1 (iii) The Modern Simple View

A revival of the simple view has recently emerged and this takes up and extends the original Butler/Reid thesis. It considers personal identity to be essentially different from ordinary object identity, rejecting the straightforward empirical thesis which holds that personal identity consists in the persistence of apparent memory or psychological connectedness.

The motivation behind modern simple views is likewise similar to that of Butler and Reid. It demands that personal identity be of a strict kind, forming a solid base for moral responsibility and rationality. It supplements the original account, stating that, as well as being in accordance with basic intuitive moral beliefs about ourselves, real identity is necessary for our knowledge of any identity. In effect they claim that without the knowledge we have of identity in ourselves, we could have no conception of true identity at all.

The modern simplists follow Butler and Reid in demonstrating that empirical accounts are insufficient to describe our sense of persons. They too show that 'person' defies any reduction into an account using properties. Their claim is based primarily in the fact that empiricism cannot account for our beliefs about ourselves: that it does not capture the sense we have of our own identity as

something real. Like its predecessors, the modern simple view concludes that persons are more than just their properties; and this something more they call the self.

However, the modern simplists argue for the existence of a propertyless subject through more than just our intuitive awareness of it. They show that we are intimately aware of ourselves, actually experiencing the self synchronically and diachronically, and thus having a priori certain knowledge of the self's identity. Their proofs find a common base in Cartesian arguments concerning the awareness of the self through experience, the essence of which can also be found in Butler:

So likewise, upon comparing the consciousness of oneself or one's own existence in any two moments there immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity.

Butler p.99

Although he is writing here of temporal identity, Butler's fundamental idea relies upon the notion of the experiencer being known through experience.

In using this form of argument, it would seem that the simple account follows closely upon Lockean characterisation of persons. But here as before with Butler and Reid, the modern simplists carry the implications beyond the phenomenon of unified consciousness to the postulation of an independent subject. Where Locke claims that the unity is

the self; the simple view holds that it is only evidence of the self.

The simple view demonstrates this separability of the self through the use of thought experiment and logical argument. It is claimed that one can readily imagine the separability suggested, and that this conceivability entails the logical possibility that a person is essentially non-property based. Moreover, it is possible to identify the self independently of properties, which possibility is held to entail that the self is distinct from them. From this it is concluded that we are actually more than just our properties. Although personal identity can be evidenced by the empirical features, it is not constituted by them.

Subject/Property Dualism

The crucial feature of the simple view is that it wishes to maintain a form of dualism with regard to things: it is not necessarily a mind/body or mental/material distinction - it is a subject/property dualism. It is of central importance to the simple theory of personal identity that such a dualism can be maintained, that subjectivity cannot be reduced to empirically objective terms. The main thesis of the simple view that the subject is different from mere properties, it is the owner of the properties.

Such an account is more than the Lockean description of subjectivity, for Locke claims that the self is a property, being self-consciousness. This is clearly insufficient for the simple theory, for any property-based criterion will ultimately fail the test of persistence. What the simple view aims to achieve is proof of the self which does not resort to a reduction to any criteria, thus ensuring the possibility of a real persistence of persons.

The simple view must therefore be judged on several levels: firstly, on its ability to prove that there is a self which is separable from properties; secondly, that such a self is necessary to morality; and finally, if this self does exist, why it is necessarily equivalent to the person.

6.2 THE ARGUMENTS OF THE SIMPLE VIEW

The primary implication of the Butler/Reid theory is that persons are intangible, unanalysable and indivisible subjects of experience. As said, few positive proofs for such an account are given by the early advocates, the major support of their claim being the logical fact that their description of persons is necessary for our conceptions of morality and reason. What few throw-away arguments they do give are generally mere statements of what is taken to be fact; however, their presence has served to associate the person of the Butler/Reid theory inextricably with the 'soul' of Descartes' writings.

6.2 (i) Arguments of Descartes

It is to the writings of Descartes that one must look to find the arguments for the existence of the separable self and indeed the supplementary arguments offered by the modern simplists, as briefly noted before*, can also be shown to find some of their sources in Cartesian rationality. On a superficial level, the description of persons in Descartes and the simple view amount to the same - both characterise them as intangible extra-bodily entities. On a deeper level too, the accounts coincide, focussing on consciousness and the separability of an indivisible subject.

* Section 6.1 (ii)

The Cartesian concept of the self or soul is to be found clearly stated in the 'Meditations'* - specifically in the second and sixth. The discovery and characterisation of the soul is a by-product of Descartes' more general search for knowledge and truth, yet it subsequently forms a fundamental building block for his thesis.

The argument arises from the 'Method of Doubt' by which Descartes sets himself the task of systematically rejecting all doubtable impressions, accepting only certain percepts as knowledge. His conclusions find that all of his beliefs based in experiences of the world can be doubted - that it is not logically impossible that all such things are mere deceptions. However, to this he finds one exception - that he cannot doubt the existence of his doubt and this fact implies that there is something that doubts:

No indeed, I existed without doubt, by the fact that I was persuaded, or indeed by the mere fact that I thought at all.

Descartes p.103

Thus, Descartes established for himself a grain of certainty, and it is from this certainty that he then argues for the existence of his soul. The fact of conscious experience or thought entails the existence of a thinker; and what we become aware of in thinking is ourselves as thinkers. In short, Descartes believes himself to have proof of himself as a persisting subject of thought: the one

* Descartes 1641

fact that can be known with certainty is knowledge of the self as a thinking being - 'cogito ergo sum':

But what, then, am I? A thing that thinks. What is a thing that thinks? That is to say, a thing that doubts, perceives, affirms, desires, wills, does not will, that imagines also and which feels.

Descartes p.107

The Nature of the Soul

However, Descartes does not stop at this realisation, for he goes on to a further investigation of the subject. With the intention of isolating its indubitable essence, Descartes undertakes to examine the various aspects attributable to the person.

His bodily characteristics, and all functions or attributes dependent upon them, are quickly disqualified from his real being, for such parts are subject to the possibility of demonic deception. In his imagination too, he can separate himself from his body and its perceptions; in effect, he can make sense of the idea of continuing without his various bodily and psychological properties.

However, awareness, or ability to feel, is not dependent upon these dubious experiences; indeed, as soon as he considers the removal of the ability to think, he can no longer make sense of continuing to be. In fact, he concludes, it is impossible to imagine the subject of experience without the ability to experience. This shows

that the ability to think must be the essence of the person, for in this he discovered "an attribute which does belong to me; this alone cannot be detached from me." (Descartes p.105)

It is by thus extending the 'Cogito' argument through the use of the imagination that Descartes establishes the essence of the soul as thinking. Where the body can be doubted and discarded, the thinker cannot; the two are separable concepts, the one being contingent, the other necessary to the person. Hence he concludes that the body is only contingently associated with the person, and that:

...I do not observe that any other thing belongs necessarily to my nature of essence except that I am a thinking thing, I rightly conclude that my essence consists in this alone, that I am a thinking thing, or a substance whose whole essence or nature consists in thinking.

Descartes p.156

The essence of the person being 'a thinking being', personal identity consists in the persistence of the thinking being. Therefore, to continue as a person, ability to think must persist; indeed, "it might perhaps happen, if I ceased to think, that I would at the same time cease to be or to exist." (Descartes p.105).

Of importance to understanding clearly the nature of Descartes' self is the underlying assumption of substance dualism: that there is a mutual exclusion between mental and physical things. Thus, if the self is in essence associated

with the mental, it cannot be also material. It is this fundamental belief, combined with the findings of his imagination, which leads Descartes to the conclusion that the self is separable from its properties.

6.1 (ii) Descartes and the Simple View

Even through this somewhat brief account of the Cartesian soul, it is clear that its implications for persons and their identity coincide with the Butler/Reid ideals. Descartes' characterisation of the person is almost exactly the same as the definition that Reid offers of a person, in which he states that "it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers." (Reid p.109).

Moreover, despite the fact that like Locke, Descartes places the identity of the self in thinking, there is a crucial difference between their accounts which makes Descartes more attractive to the simple view than Locke. For although in some places Descartes does seem to imply that thinking is the essence of the soul, elsewhere he argues a separability from the individual experiences and sensations he has, giving reason to believe that he means that the soul is the thinker rather than the thoughts.

Descartes forges a clear distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness: that whereas sensations imply only the existence of awareness, thought

necessarily involves the presence of a subject. For to think, one must actively think: the subject is necessary to something thinking. Whereas sensations imply merely a consciousness (and non-human animals can be considered conscious in this way); thinking implies self-consciousness - the act of a soul. Thus thinking can be distinguished from sensation; for thinking involves the action of reason, the awareness of being.

It may be that this is the sole reason that thought is distinguished from sensation and that indeed Descartes does equivocate the soul simply with thinking, rather than the thinker. But thought necessarily entails the existence of a subject, and it is definitely the thinker rather than just thought that Descartes is interested in. For unless the distinction is made, his account amounts to no more than the Lockean notion of self-consciousness, and there are strong reasons for believing that this is not so, that rather in Descartes, the thought is only indicative of the subject, not the subject itself.

For another characteristic of the soul is that it is indivisible, and thereby persists unchanged - Descartes cannot imagine it having parts as the body or sensations might. Clearly individual thoughts in the mind can be divided into parts. Moreover, just thoughts do not have real identity through time: it is the thinker that seems to

persist undivided. To interpret Descartes' intention with consistency, one therefore needs to focus on the thinker, or subject of thoughts, rather than the thoughts themselves: for thoughts clearly do not persist.

The difference between Descartes and Locke becomes further entrenched when Cartesian substance dualism is examined. Moving from the premise that anything that is made of parts cannot be the mind, he argues that since material substance is made of parts, the thinker cannot be material. What is not material is surely immaterial; thus the thinker must be immaterial. This in its turn entails that immaterial substance must be indivisible; which in effect excludes the differing empirical content of thought from being what Descartes means by immaterial substance. It seems that the only candidate for being the thinker is a subject which does not change through time. The Cartesian soul thus seems to amount to the mind as an indivisible subject; anything more does not have the essential qualifications.

Descartes thus makes a point of inferring actual separability of the person from all empirical properties apart from thinking, whereas Locke rests content with distinctness of idea. This means that whilst the Lockean person is made up of many parts (being identical with consciousness), Descartes' self is a soul, of which he "can

distinguish no parts" (Descartes p.164) and which is logically separable from its body. Hence, unlike Locke's account, Descartes' theory satisfies the most important condition of acceptability to Butler and Reid: that persons are not subject to the identity problems incurred by material and successive objects:

A part of a person is a manifest absurdity...a person is something indivisible...My thoughts, and actions, and feelings change every moment; they have no continued, but a successive existence; but that self, or I, to which they belong, is permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions and feelings which I call mine.
Reid p.109

Subject/Content Dualism

The Cartesian account of the soul can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to impose a form of subject/properties distinction as well as the mind/body dualism; or rather what it maintains is that the soul has only one property, that of thinking. For as seen, a simple distinction between mind and body is not enough to account for identity: Locke implies a mind/body dualism, yet is not committed to a subject/property separability or real identity. There must be a fundamental difference between the nature of the soul and its properties if persistence is to be upheld: for properties are divisible or changing; the soul is not. Through this difference, Descartes postulates a substance dualism - that the soul must be made of indivisible immaterial substance; and this in turn enables him to enforce a subject/properties distinction: the

difference between a persisting unity and the changing parts it is aware of.

Even if this is wrong, and such an interpretation is not the intention of Descartes, the fact that there is a fundamental distinction between an indivisible and divisible substance, between the mind and body, implies that he is concerned with a subject/content distinction. At this stage, it seems that this is enough to associate the subject/property dualists with his endeavour, for the intention is to isolate something which has real identity - to free the self from the fluctuating content. Perhaps, then, the term subject/content dualism would be a more accurate description of Descartes' theory, and would mark out the distinction between a single property simple view and that which wishes to postulate a total subject/property dualism.

It may well emerge that in the simple view the distinction between properties and the subject extends even to the basic property of thinking; but the similarity of approach - the belief in an immaterial further fact has served to associate the early simple view with Cartesian dualism. For the soul of Descartes possesses the necessary conditions to satisfy the person of the simple view, and the impetus behind the account seems to have a fundamental commonality - that is that the self cannot be divisible;

that it persists with real identity through time. It seems reasonable, then, to consider the subject/content distinction in Descartes; to discover whether it is indeed enough to maintain the concept of the self as the simple view sees it.

6.2 (iii) Rational Argument

It is not just in their accounts of the self that the theories of Butler, Reid and Descartes are alike, but also in the fundamental under-pinning of knowledge of that self. Through the rejection of empirical criteria, both accounts are forced to find justification elsewhere. Butler and Reid do little more than state the certainty of the conviction that each man has of his identity, and the impossibility of imagining the person to be different. Yet even these unsupported assertions link their theory to Descartes. For their certainty and obviousness closely ties in with the Cartesian notion of clear and distinct perceptions.

As seen in Section 6.2 (i), the bare logical conclusion that a thought must have a thinker, drawn from the 'Method of Doubt', is joined by a further argument to conclude that thinking is the essence of persons and these are justified by an appeal to the reliability of our conceptions. In turn, this appeal is based in Descartes' belief that a good God would not allow him to go so badly astray as to have strong convictions of the truth of things which are in fact

false. The certainty of the 'cogito' is an obviousness he puts down to just such clear and distinct perceptions: it has a logical certainty that seemingly cannot be otherwise. Moreover, he feels quite justified in extending such certainty to further cases of clear perceptions: hence, if he can quite readily imagine his existence without a body or its attributes, and do so without hesitation, then it must be true.

Relying upon this idea, Descartes claims that the disjunction of the soul and the body is possible because he can clearly and distinctly perceive such a thing; and because it is conceivable, it must logically be possible. Descartes supports this further move by linking his conceptions to the omnipotence of God - if he, a mere mortal can think of something, then God, who is omnipotent, must be able to instantiate that state of affairs. Thus, he feels, he has sealed the reliability of his imagination:

Because I know that all the things I conceive clearly and distinctly can be produced by God precisely as I conceive them, it is sufficient for me to be able to conceive clearly and distinctly one thing without the other to be certain that the one is distinct or different from the other, because they can be placed in existence separably, at least by the omnipotence of God.

Descartes p.156

The use of imagination underlies much of Descartes' rational enterprise. The 'Method of Doubt' is fundamentally a thought-experiment, its conclusions relying ultimately

upon what can and what cannot be imagined. Furthermore, the conclusions of such an experiment are formed from our intuitive reactions to situations of an imagined world which we do not come across in our normal everyday experience. The Cartesian theory is therefore effectively resting in this basic premise: that we can trust our instinct and ideas as justifications of knowledge.

As explained, it seems that intuition provides the predominant source of arguments used by the simple view against empirical theory. The belief in ourselves as persisting and the fundamental role this has in morality, is very similar to the reason for which Descartes insists upon dualism - that he cannot imagine the soul to have parts.

As will be seen these primary intuitions are joined by developments made through thought experiment. Like Descartes, the simple view uses the imagination to postulate logical possibilities: and although not a wholesale modal shift from possibility to actuality, there is a distinct leaning towards accepting, as strong proof, suggestions which are conceptually acceptable.

6.2 (iv) Non-Cartesian Interpretation

However, this claim that the simple view upholds a form of Cartesian dualism, is just one possible interpretation. Since the distinctness of the properties from the self is of

main importance, it is conceivable that ontological dualism and independent separate persistence is not implied. It may be that when Reid states that "I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling. I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers." (Reid p.109), what he means is simply that there is more to himself than just activity - there is something which acts. Such a claim does not entail any form of separateness or independence between that which thinks and the activity of thinking.

This possibility of an alternative interpretation will be explored, and it will be considered whether a denial of ontological separateness is consistent with the idea of a real self with real identity. If it is not, then it can be asked whether the simple view is able to uphold its claims to have produced an account of person which accords with our moral intuition and does not dissolve into a Lockean-type account of the self?

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

It has been shown that the simple view holds strong similarities to Cartesian Dualism and, although it must not be assumed that the simple view advocates mind/body or substance dualism, the fundamental intention of some form subject/content dualism is common to both. Parallels can therefore be drawn between the simple view and Descartes, for there is a degree of overlap both in intention and argument: both Descartes and the simple view wish to hold that the self cannot be reduced to a list of properties; and both make extensive use of imagination and logical possibility to support their ends.

However, it is also possible despite these similarities, that the simple view, though maintaining a subject property distinction, does not wish to follow Descartes into ontological dualism. It may be that although the self of the simple view entails more than just properties, it does not have an independent or separable existence.

The simple view must therefore be considered in the light of both of these interpretations. Through an examination of its reasons and arguments, this thesis will suggest the most likely and consistent intention of the simple view. It will consider first the Cartesian line, for it is certainly true that the fate of the earlier advocates of the simple

view was determined by the strength of Descartes' account. Moreover, the objections to Cartesian dualism when directed against the simple view can help to clarify the aims of simple view thesis - even where the target of criticism is not so obviously similar many criticisms hold through the transition between theories.

The comparison to Descartes and the failings of such an interpretation, lead to a discussion of alternative possibilities and meanings. Subject/property dualism will be considered apart from ontological separateness - especially in the light of comments from modern advocates of the simple view and their possible intentions.

CHAPTER 7 METHODOLOGY

The strongest criticisms raised against Descartes find their sources in empirical philosophy. The fundamental empiricist approach has been explained: it is evident, for example, in the philosophy of Hume who claimed that to talk of anything beyond what is given through experience and deduction is to make empty statements about things we cannot possibly know to exist. Such concepts, for example causation, are the products of our psychological nature and, as such, are the subjects of psychology not philosophy.

The force of this basic objection against rationalism concerns proof and justification: it is claimed that the conclusions of such theories as that of Descartes move beyond the legitimate confines of empirical and deductive evidence. It is from this background that the major criticism of dualist theories emerges: that is that they fail to support adequately the postulation of a separable self with a continued existence.

On a fundamental level, therefore, there is a conflict of method; and perhaps this should be clarified and decided before the details of the arguments considered. If, indeed it can be shown that the simple view's methods are

insufficient to support their claims, then large areas of its position will be discredited. It will then have to rely upon other forms of argument to support its dualist account of personal identity.

7.1 A USE FOR THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

The most fundamental objection to both Descartes and the simple view concerns the basic role they ascribe to the role of imagination and intuitive knowledge.

7.1 (i) Rational Use of Thought Experiments

As noted in Section 6.2, Descartes relied on both imagination and intuition to support his main thesis and these allowed him to move beyond the confines of his empirical data, to provide evidence of the existence of a separable self. Descartes justified their employment ultimately by reference to a deity.

The modern simple view justifies its own reliance on intuition with the common-sense argument and with the threat of the alternative - total scepticism. On a general level, the use of intuition relates to the beliefs we have about ourselves and our properties and the concern that we feel for our present and future. Thought experiments are used to clarify and evaluate these instincts, which subsequently play a central role in the rejection of empiricism and acceptance of dualism. More significantly, the simple view produces arguments to justify their use, formulating an epistemology founded in instinct.

Such arguments employ a notion of rationality which claims that it is irrational to go against our instinctive and basic beliefs. It is only by relying on our "pre-philosophical beliefs" (Chisholm (1) p.104) or a "credulity principle" (Swinburne (1) p.55) that we can ever produce a satisfactory body of knowledge. Indeed, any theory which contradicts such intuition must be severely tested before it can be acceptable.

For example, Chisholm considers the idea of a momentary self which does not persist through time. Such a self would entail that the convictions we have of ourselves with a past and a future are false:

...then the things I think now about my past history may all be false even though they may be true of the person I now happen to constitute) and I may have no grounds for making any prediction about my future.

Chisholm (1) p.104

However, since the arguments supporting this momentary self are themselves weak and, Chisholm claims, incoherent, he feels we are justified in clinging to our original beliefs that we persist.

Swinburne too makes use of such knowledge, by appealing to the validity of our basic and intuitive beliefs. He suggests that we have a right to take at face value the information we receive through our senses and treat as valid the inferences we instinctively make about an independent world:

The most basic principle for making inferences from experience to the world, which I have called elsewhere the principle of credulity. That states that probably things are as (in the epistemological sense) they seem to be...there is no other access to justified belief about the world except by means of the principle of credulity. If you refuse to believe anything until you have other evidence for it, you will never believe anything.

Swinburne (1) p.53-5

In this way, the simple view employs the imagination and intuition, both to heighten the insufficiencies of empiricism and to suggest a dualistic replacement. But in doing so it commits itself to a path of argument which is far from straightforward. For such methods can produce conclusions which are not only surprising but often inconsistent and puzzling. For example, Bernard Williams* comments on the conflicting impressions arising from thought experiments that:

...we seem to reach an impasse. On the one hand, we have a type of speculation which can, perhaps rather compulsively, seem to make sense; on the other hand, considerations which show that the speculations must fail. The way out of this impasse lies, I think, in diagnosing an illusion that lies in the speculations. This illusion has something to do with the imagination."

Williams p.43

In consequence, it seems wise to question the use of imagination to reach our conclusions, before adjusting or rejecting any particular theory under scrutiny.

* Williams 1973

7.1 (ii) Thought Experiments

On a general level, the use of thought experiments produces forceful disagreement which centres upon ability to actually prove anything employing such a method of argument. On one side of the fence, critics offer an argument of relativism. Frequent dispute and inconsistency over the implications to be deduced, added to the evident conflicting responses of the intuition, lead them to conclude that relativism is endemic to the use of such arguments. Consequently, critics claim that thought experiments cannot be used to prove anything. In contrast, supporters of thought experiments declare that intuition forms an ultimate truth-base for all knowledge, without which we are doomed to scepticism. For example, Kripke* writes:

Of course, some philosophers think that something's having intuitive content is very inconclusive evidence in favour of it. I think it's very heavy evidence in favour of anything, myself. I really don't know in any way what more conclusive evidence we can have about anything, ultimately speaking.

Kripke p.265-6

The abstractions and extensions described in thought experiments are used in many fields of enquiry (including science and philosophy) to extend our range of knowledge beyond the present conditions. They place a concept in different, often unencountered situations in order to test its parameters. The value of this method is that it highlights the limits or possibilities of the concept -

* Kripke 1980

often attention is drawn to overlooked or assumed factors as ideas are contrasted against unfamiliar backgrounds. The realm of possible knowledge is also significantly increased when thought experiments are used to predict the action or reaction of a thing in future or different situations.

7.2 THE PROBLEM OF PRECONCEPTION

However the unfamiliarity of the situation, which is considered the imagination's greatest advantage, proves also to be its greatest disadvantage: for this means that we have to use the criteria of the known with which to judge the unknown. If we have never encountered a particular in a certain environment, nor have ever needed to use our concepts in the extreme conditions imagined, we will not have witnessed how that concept functions outside our everyday limits. Thus any conclusion drawn can be done so only with uncertainty: for although it will be made on the strength of deductions, those deductions are based in limited known situations.

Hence, the process falls foul of true logic because its conclusions extend beyond the content of the premises it relies on. In effect thought experiments are condemned for the same reason that all inductive statements are thought to encounter problems; that is, they are not justified in using the conclusions drawn from known facts in order to make predictions about the unknown.

7.2 (i) Assumption

This basic difficulty brings with it a plethora of subsequent uncertainties and associated problems. If the background conditions of the experiment are unfamiliar, we

cannot guarantee that the change of environment will not induce a change in the object or idea we transfer to it. To minimise the effect of such unknowns, we must familiarise ourselves with all the background relevancies.

However, this too is problematic, for what is or is not relevant may also be unknown: if we move to unencountered situations, the practical limitations of our environment may be removed and then anything becomes conceivable. The rules of logical necessity will remain in place, for their parameters are fixed and defined by us anyway; but beyond the logical restrictions, anything becomes a possibility. If our range of potential is limitless, how can we even begin to dictate background conditions?

In the absence of usual limitations, it will be left to an informed guess or a personal choice as to what conditions will prevail. Consequently, the justification for any such descriptions ultimately will be based on non-objective preconception and dogmatism - personal and social. Under such guidance, thought experiments will be far from objective, for the method will be influenced by our own set of social or natural interests. In fact, as Williams shows in 'The Self and The Future'*, by changing the set of background assumptions and perspective, thought experiments can be used to prove anything:

* Williams 1973

It looks as though there are two presentations of the imagined experiment and the choice associated with it, each of which carries conviction, and which lead to contrary conclusions...I'm not in the least clear which option it would be wise to take if one were presented with them...

Williams p.61

If the starting conditions are thus uncertain, the conclusions produced will be influenced by the situations that the thinker prescribes: in effect he will be able to 'choose' the outcome by dictating the starting point. Moreover, in drawing those conclusions he will need to rely upon his background of encountered situations; once again influencing the results with certain preconceptions and ideas. Even the articulation of the account will affect the results; for in the realm of thought experiments there is no objectively agreed viewpoint. Faced with the unlimited possibilities provided by our imagination, the conclusions drawn will effectively depend upon what we are capable of imagining - which will vary from person to person, society to society.

As a method of gaining knowledge, this free-for-all situation is not logically justifiable: contrary to what Descartes claims, conceivability is far from actuality. Being able to imagine or think of a thing does not make that thing so. It is true that it may be so in some other possible world, but that is of little use to us and our concepts as we use them in this world. We need more

evidence than conceivability to draw conclusions about anything. As Wilkes* states:

...although we can in a sense imagine all sorts of things - anything in fact, that is not a logical impossibility - this kind of imaginability does not validate thought experiments built upon it.

Wilkes p.21

7.2 (ii) Natural Necessity

The solution to the difficulty is to curtail the range of potential with some notion of practical possibility. This would mean that the experiment is controlled throughout by a set of parameters describing the background of situation and possibility. To avoid problems of preconception, such limits need to be based in agreed 'objective' rules - perhaps those of scientific law which, of any laws, seems the least subjective. Thus the sense of 'anything goes' begins to recede. What emerges is a form of limiting synthetic necessity, contingent upon the way the world is.

Within science, this is a generally accepted method and provides the framework for thought experiments. Kuhn writes:⁺

...the imagined situation must allow the scientist to employ his usual concepts in the way he has employed them before. It must not, that is, strain normal usage...Though the imagined situation need not be even potentially realizable in nature, the conflict deduced from it must be one that nature itself could present. Indeed, even that condition is not quite strong enough. The conflict that confronts the scientist in the experimental situation must be one that

* Wilkes 1988

+ Kuhn 1964

however unclearly seen, has confronted him before. Unless he has already had that much experience, he is not yet prepared to learn from thought experiments alone.

Kuhn p.265

Yet even the necessity of natural laws is only a second-rate necessity, ultimately based in the disputed status and subjective observation of the world. Any philosopher of science is aware of the difficulties involved in establishing conclusions from real experiments: that scepticism, relativism and social influence all affect the outcomes. Moreover, many important advances of natural science are often made through intuitive leaps, and research is often commissioned according to need. Indeed, in a philosophy based on the implications of sceptical empiricism, Feyerabend* highlights the influence of preconception and social dogma upon science. He takes such an idea to its logical extremes claiming that an account of science or scientific method amounts to no more than social science and history.

Scientific experiments are thus open to relativism: if our scientific experiments cannot produce justifiable results, what hope can we have that our thought experiments might? It would appear that any conclusion ranging beyond the limit of analytic necessity or logical deduction, has its ultimate authority in intuition and preconception.

* Feyerabend 1975

In effect, the problems involved are reducible to that affecting all empirical knowledge - the impossibility of providing a completely objective account. The use of empirical method is underwritten by the problems of subjectivism and its attendant preconception of interpretation. Our use of thought experiment does leave the realms of empiricism but as such, if it is to have any credibility, it needs to delineate its framework with some notion of possibilities. It appears therefore that the rationale for the use of thought experiments comes to rest ultimately upon the justification of relying on intuition as a basis for knowledge.

7.3 THE JUSTIFICATION FOR USING INTUITION

The debate concerning such justification is radically polarised: as a justification for knowledge, intuition is considered by one extreme to be the only objective method and by the other, the most subjective approach. This dispute can be understood by characterising it as being entangled in the debate over the status of the concepts we use: that is, whether those concepts refer to something in the world, or to a construction we impose upon the world.

7.3 (i) The Pro-Intuitionist Claim

As seen, the simple view, along with those philosophers such as Russell* and Kripke⁺, give intuition a basic and fundamental role in our justification of knowledge. In reaction to empirical sceptical arguments (that is, the impossibility of empirical knowledge being justified in making claims about an independent world), they cite our intuitive beliefs as providing fundamental knowledge. Their fundamental tenet states that without the possibility of relying on such beliefs, we can have no justification for synthetic knowledge. As Russell wrote: "All knowledge, we find, must be built up upon our instinctive beliefs, and if these are rejected, nothing is left." (Russell p.11)

The arguments of such a view range from a simplest

* Russell 1912

+ Kripke 1980

explanation theory to epistemological necessity; yet all try to establish intuition as a basic principle or truth, known a priori and being non-controvertable. Philosophy's task is considered to be one of building a system of knowledge consistent with these beliefs - Russell even goes so far as to claim that its purpose is to "Show us the hierarchy of our instinctive beliefs" (Russell p.11). Anything which conflicts or goes against the grain of these basics is to be disputed and even rejected. As seen in Part I, this is the very way the simple view treats the the complex account of persons.

Yet such arguments in support of intuition amount to little more than a dissatisfaction with the alternative empirical scepticism: they claim that without intuitive knowledge, we cannot have knowledge about the world. Yet this belief that we can or must be able to have knowledge about the world collapses into no more than intuition itself. There is clear circularity in such an argument, for it must be assumed that an instinctive dissatisfaction is a powerful enough argument to reject non-intuitive theories.

If the above argument were its only support, intuition would not have a very strong case. However other arguments can be and have been used to try to explain its justification, rather than point to its necessity. For example, the Kantian* notion of a priori synthetic

* Kant 1787

knowledge. This notion, that space, time and causation are frameworks which we impose upon the world, can be used to explain and justify other intuitions. In this way, intuition is characterised as part of the human way of reasoning - a way that we cannot avoid*. The facts it evinces may not be necessarily true in all possible worlds, but they are true and necessary given our situation in this world as rational men.

Thus beliefs can be given a form of objectivity in that they are common to all men, an objectivity which justifies our reliance on them for knowledge. Intuitions become absolute rather than relative, having fixed truth and objectivity. It is true that they are still fundamentally subjective in that they are linked to man's perception of the world, but they are given a form of objectivity through their universality. There is something of this idea to be found in Sartre⁺: that despite the freedom and contingency of all things, all humans are still in a universal condition, ie. we are all born, we all have labour through life, and we all die.

Subjectivity of Intuition

However, as mentioned earlier in Section 7.2, the notion of intuition is fraught with difficulty, not least in the

* See also Marr 1982

+ Sartre 1946

fact that intuition varies from race to race, person to person. Our basic 'animal' reactions (if we have any) become befuddled and modified by subsequent influences and persuasion, resulting in a mixture of dogma and social conditioning. The consequence is an apparent relativism, for the basic and universal instincts (if there are any) become completely screened by these subsequent influences. Thus truth becomes seemingly, relative for there is no further ultimate justification or distinction to which to appeal other than the intuition. If intuitions disagree, we can do no more than acknowledge the validity of both opposing views and the relativity of truth. Ayer* makes just this point with regard to ethical intuitionism:

...it is notorious that what seems intuitively certain to one person may seem doubtful, or even false, to another. So that unless it is possible to provide some criterion by which one may decide between conflicting intuitions, a mere appeal to intuition is worthless as a test of a proposition's validity...as far as subjective certainty goes, there will be nothing to choose between them.

Ayer p.109

Such an objection is simplistic, for it fails to account for the possible subtleties of an intuitionist position - critics like Ayer might be reminded of the logical objectivity of basic beliefs compared to the relativity of intuitions related to social dogma. Careful modification and articulation of the beliefs should 'cream off' these relative influences, leaving the basic common reactions.

* Ayer 1936

As such, any objections to the use of intuition can only be practical.

Yet such a 'mere' practicality forms an almost impenetrable barrier; indeed the impracticality verges upon impossibility. To isolate these fundamental beliefs is impossible in practice, for to produce a list of those beliefs which count as basic, once again seems to result ultimately in personal preference. Satisfactory scientific testing would involve keeping a person in a controlled and isolated environment from conception - something which could never realistically be done.

Moreover, this problem of proof does not rest in mere practicality. Intuitions are not empirically verifiable, they are known to us subjectively, and the validity of the claim to intuition is accessible only to the claimant. Like our experience of anything by definition subjective, there is great difficulty in explaining how a universalisation of their information content can be justified. Hence there is also a logical objection against holding intuitions to be basics. Since it can be no more than likely that they are a universal phenomenon, the conclusions based in them can be no more than probable. Any committed intuitionist must therefore abandon the rigour of Cartesian doubt and, in effect, build the edifice of his knowledge upon uncertain foundations.

7.3 (ii) Empirical Certainty

One might at this stage suggest refuge in the writings of linguistic and positivist philosophers who argue that the meanings of 'knowledge' and 'rational justification' do not demand the extremes placed on their definition by Descartes' scepticism. They claim that what we mean by knowledge is knowledge based in methods such as intuition or induction, and to exclude such arguments from our justified use would itself be irrational. Ayer uses such a justification for the use of induction:

It is a mistake to demand a guarantee where it is logically impossible to obtain one...For when we come to define 'rationality' we shall find that for us, 'being rational' entails being guided in a particular fashion by past experience.

Ayer p.35

Such a move though, would be inconsistent with the intuitionist's primary objection to empiricism. It moves the concept of truth from being about an independent world to being something concerning a socially constructed world: it robs truth of objectivity and confers upon it relativity.

However, this empiricist line does produce a possible role for intuition as justified knowledge, without involving it in the problems suggested in relativity. For to approach from this empirical perspective enables intuitive belief to have at least the logical possibility of certainty. The empirical extreme holds that what is meant by 'table' or

'chair' does not depend upon an independent world, it depends upon the framework built into the concept. Thus for example 'table' means this particular phenomenon before me, 'solidity' means when I reach out I feel a certain sensation. The intuitive concept will be part of that framework and be given its meaning from it. Thus the possibility of verifying the intuition is available to everyone, for all that such testing entails is a consultation of the shared and objective framework.

One does not need to denounce all reference to an independent world to make use of this idea, for even if it is not the case for all language, at least part of it does make use of concepts which do not refer to some further 'reality'. As Locke acknowledged, the difference between the animal and the material is an imposed collective idea upon the shifting material. It must be made clear what idea is being applied to the material we have before us: for the idea might apply to something we consider to be real, such as a substance, or to an idea which is clearly a constructed notion, such as a nation or company.

The source for knowledge about constructed concepts will be found elsewhere than in the world, and often we need look no further than the social background to the language to find the meaning and connotation of the word. This being so, we might justify a use of intuition if it is used to

judge or understand the meaning of constructed concepts. For all the influences, cited earlier as positive objections to its use, will now count in its favour. The intuition will be the product of the same background which produced the meaning of the concept. Thus the preconceptions caused by society will hold the truth about the meaning and use of the concept, and consequently knowledge with regard to the intuitions society has. A. Rorty* suggests just such a possibility:

Because the definitions of such entities change historically forced by changes in social conditions, and in answer to one another's weighty inconsistencies, there are layers and accretions of usages that can be neither forced into a taxonomy nor be safely amputated.

Rorty p.301

Logical Certainty of Intuition

Our intuitions can therefore provide a sense of certainty. It is true that they will still be subject to the practical problems of subjective interpretation, and there remains a problem associated with the relativity of response. But the practical difficulty is far less than the task facing the realist intuitionist, for the certainty here is at least logically possible. Of course, the status given to such knowledge is relative, for it has no absolute reference to an independent world. But such a sacrifice appears necessary if certainty is to be attained. The ground rules for such a method are neatly laid out by

* Rorty 1967

Johnston*:

The method of theorizing about personal identity solely or mainly by appeal to our intuitive reactions to puzzle cases which exhibit all sorts of variations in kind and degree of continuity and dependence would be justified if two requirements were satisfied. First, our grasp of the concept of being the same person should be able to be correctly represented as a grasp of necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the predicate "is the same person", conditions that should be cast in terms of statements about continuity and dependence, statements not themselves to be explained in terms of statements about personal identity. Call this the reductionist requirement. Secondly, our intuitive reactions to the puzzle cases should be able to be taken as manifestations of our grasp of those necessary and sufficient conditions, and not as overgeneralizations from the everyday run of cases or manifestations of a particular conception of people, be it a religious conception (eg. that people are reincarnatable souls) or some more inchoate secular counterpart.

Johnston p.60

* Johnston 1987

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

Although this discussion has by no means exhausted the possible arguments in favour of or against intuition, a picture does emerge of the difficulties involved. It seems that its use can indeed be justified if we are willing to sacrifice Cartesian rigour and absolutism. The nature of the concept being explored will play a key role in the justification of our methods. If it is a natural term, we must be satisfied with probability, but if it is considered to be a constructed term, then certainty might be possible. These fundamental differences are reflected in the debate over absolute and relative truth.

Returning to the issue at hand, it remains to be asked whether those who hold the simple view concept of persons can justify its use of the imagination and intuition. It seems that their concept of the person is far from a socially constructed idea. Indeed they pursue a concept which can guarantee real and objective identity - rejecting empiricism for its consequences of convention and loose identity. They consider the self to be more than just an idea or construction - it is experienced, is separable from its properties and to an extent more than just conceptually dualistic. Moreover, the self is given a role of epistemological centrality: without self, we can know nothing of real identity, indeed we experience nothing in

reality. Such a self is hard to characterise as merely socially created. It is safe to assume that the intention of the simple view is to produce an objective and absolute concept of persons.

It must therefore be concluded that the simple view can be criticised over the arguments it uses to support its claims. The self is not solely supported by these arguments, but its dualism and rejection of empiricism rest firmly upon intuition. But, as shown, conclusions drawn from such premises can amount only to probabilities and recommendations. As confirmation or support for theories they are able to add likelihood, but as proof or refutation, on their own they lack weight and philosophical rigour.

The simple view must therefore rely upon arguments other than intuition or thought experiment to support its concept of person. Since it has rejected the possibility of an empirical account, it seems that to justify its subject/content dualist position, the simple view must depend upon a priori knowledge of a different form from intuition, upon logical necessity, and upon the appeal to the definition of the concept of persons.

CHAPTER 8 THE CONCEPT OF A PERSISTING SUBJECT

The next criticism of the simple view concerns the Cartesian claim that there is a persistent subject. Critics do not deny that the arguments used by Descartes establish the necessity of the existence of a thought at the time it is thought; but they claim that this is all his arguments can establish. Thus the empiricists object that Descartes claimed too much when he inferred from the 'cogito' that he was a persisting thinker: for a single thought does not entail a separable subject, still less a persisting subject.

Such comments base their reasons in the observation that a self is not experienced. Thus some empiricists believe that 'self' is empty of any real content over and above reference to certain thoughts or chains of experience. This line has been explained in Part I: for example Hume claimed that, when he tried to locate this self, all that he found were individual thoughts or 'bundles of perceptions' - no persisting entity or subject at all. According to the 'hard-line' empiricist, on the basis of acceptable evidence, the idea of a persisting self apart from its properties is insupportable by the 'cogito' argument.

The simple view must therefore defend itself against the empiricist objection that the concept of a subject is irreducible to properties is merely a convention.

8.1 THE SELF IN EXPERIENCE

The response to such an objection is to argue, as Locke does, that the self or subject does not elude empirical evidence: we can and do have direct experience of the subject, it is just that this is only possible from a first-person position. This response relies on the idea that we are made aware of ourselves as experiencers through changes caused in us by sensation. It is the modification effected by this experience which makes us aware that we are active, rather than passive, subjects. The fact that we are changed by experiences entails that there is something to be changed. It is this that is the self. The simple view employs this form of argument to give evidence not only of the existence of a subject, but of its persistence through time as well.

8.1 (i) Self-Awareness in Perception

An example of such an approach is the theory put forward by Chisholm* who uses an argument based in the theory of perception. He suggests that sensations should no longer be described as sense-data, for this implies that they have some form of ontological independence from us. Instead, we should characterise experiences as modifications of the experiencer. If this is done, sensations will be described as ways of appearing, characterised by the change brought

* Chisholm (1) 1976

about in the subject:

The sentences in which we seem to predicate properties of appearances can be paraphrased into other sentences in which we predicate properties only of the self or person who is said to sense those appearances.

Chisholm (1) p.50

The Existence of the Self

If this is taken to be accurate, then as we experience we are modified in some way. Our awareness of that modification is an experience of ourselves, "For in being aware of ourselves as experiencing we are ipso facto, aware of the self or person..." (Chisholm (1) p.51) In effect, by defining experience as something necessarily associated with the change and existence of the subject, he shows that, in existence of the experience, the subject is necessarily entailed.

Moreover, this approach finds support not just through the 'Cartesian type' demand that every conscious state has a subject, but also in the comments made by Locke. For this link between consciousness and the subject is not simply a logical move - Locke provides evidence of the subject in experience: we are made aware of the self because it is changed by experience. Thus, in a way similar to the description Locke gives of our reflection and internal thinking, Chisholm states that in every reflection on our experiences we consciously recognise that we are aware of

experiencing, and attribute to those experiences the property of being related to ourself:

If you are now awake and conscious, then you have certain properties such that you are now known directly by yourself to have those properties.

Chisholm (1) p.25

These claims are a recognition that in the effect of sensations or thought we are made directly aware of ourselves as subjects of experience - it is not knowledge gained in any indirect way or inferred from something else. This awareness is of a unity, of one thing being affected by disparate experiences; and this is true of consciousness at one time and over a period of time. It seems that in our experience we can find direct evidence of a single and persisting subject.

8.1 (ii) The Persistence of the Self

Arguments providing what is thought to be evidence of this subject persisting are fundamentally similar to those supporting the existence of the self: that through the unity of experience we are aware of the unifier. This line is to be found in Swinburne* who utilises an argument he attributes to Foster⁺. It states that the existence of the soul is proven through our experience of it, not just at any one time but as persisting through time. For in being aware of a unified experience through time, we are necessarily

* Swinburne (1) 1984

+ Foster 1979

aware of the unifier - the subject or self.

In synchronic terms, we are aware of being the subject of many disparate experiences. This awareness is not explainable in terms of brain or behaviour continuity, for under such a description the experiences and actions are still discernible as individual events rather than parts of a whole. The unification or linking of experiences can only be accurately expressed by reference to a common subject: it is the experience of being subject to disparate experiences and unifying them which makes us aware of ourselves as a subject at any one time:

...the only way to bring out the sense in question in which the experiences are not distinct is to say that they are experiences of a common subject. One person is having both experiences. And he is often aware of doing so.

Swinburne (1) p.47

Our knowledge of diachronic identity is similarly argued for. Once again it is our experience as the unifier of distinct experiences, on this occasion those which are successive in time, which gives an awareness of ourselves as a subject. Swinburne states that in perceptions of the world, we experience temporally successive events and objects; and our experience of them is of one and the same persisting and changing object, not many distinct ones. Our awareness of these things as successions through time forms an experience in itself - an experience of unified perceptions. In effect, we are aware of a unified temporal

perception, and that experience is unified by us as subjects. In this way we become aware of our temporal persistence:

For if those were all the data of experience, S would need to infer that the second experience...succeeded the first (rather than being one which occurred on an entirely different occasion). Why he does not need to infer this is because it is itself also a datum of experience; S experiences his experience as overlapping in a stream of awareness.

Swinburne (1) p.43

A link to past selves (that is, knowledge of our identity over a long gap of time rather than the experience of persistence) is also something which we are aware of in this way. Our evidence of this relies exclusively upon our memories. Swinburne claims that memory is our only evidence of the past and, although fallible, enables us to identify our present selves with past selves with confidence that we are correct. In a similar way to that described by Locke (with the difference of the status of memory pointed out) Swinburne explains that the memory is directly presented to the mind. In this way we are aware of being the same person as the subject of those past states, the two subjects being unified in our present consciousness by our present self.

8.2 A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

The arguments above make use of the distinction between direct and indirect empirical evidence: that there is a branch of our experience about which we can be certain, the existence of our particular sensations. The element of doubt in empiricism occurs when one begins to make inferences about what those sensations and experiences mean beyond their existence. In this way, it is recognised that we can have certain knowledge of our experience, for we are aware of it directly, but we cannot have such certain evidence for anything more. In effect, it realises that any certain knowledge is limited to the first-person, anything beyond that becomes known only indirectly.

8.2 (i) Knowledge by Acquaintance

This idea is described by Russell*. He makes the distinction between direct and indirect knowledge, labelling them respectively 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'knowledge by description'. He holds that we can know with certainty things which are the content of our experience - we are acquainted with data such as our sensations and memories in a way which they themselves cannot be doubted. By contrast, things we know by description are beyond the direct perception of our experiences, and so physical objects and other public items are not known with such certainty.

* Russell 1912

Under such a theory, anything which is presented in our experience is known with certainty as an priori truth. It is not the case that we have to infer anything more to postulate its existence - we know that it exists. If this is applied to accounts of first-person awareness of consciousness, it can be seen that our knowledge of the self is at this level - by direct acquaintance, and therefore a priori and certain.

8.2 (ii) Direct Acquaintance with the Self

Russell expresses this idea, noting the certainty of immediate perceptions, and suggesting that they give rise to an awareness of ourselves. For, he claims, if the self is aware that it is thinking (that is, it is self-consciously aware of thinking), it must be aware that it is a self. Such knowledge is a direct acquaintance, not merely knowledge by description. Thus Russell postulates that in our acquaintance with our experience we become aware of our relationship to those experiences as an experiencer, and so become acquainted with ourselves:

All acquaintance, such as my acquaintance with the sense-datum which represents the sun, seems obviously a relation between the person acquainted and the object with which the person is acquainted. When a case of acquaintance is one with which I can be acquainted (as I am acquainted with my acquaintance with the sense-datum representing the sun), it is plain that the person acquainted is myself. Thus, when I am acquainted with my seeing the sun, the whole fact with which I am acquainted is 'self-acquainted-with-sense-datum'.

Russell p.27-8

The self, then is something known directly and known for certain: it is not inferred from anything other than our experience of it and we need not apply any other consideration to know of its existence. And it is this method of knowing which is of key importance, for it entails that self knowledge is not by reference to properties. The subject is not aware of himself as anything other than having the unanalysable property of being a subject. He does not infer his existence from anything, he directly experiences it:

It is something of which we are often aware without our knowledge of it depending on our knowledge of anything more ultimate.

Swinburne (1) p.42

8.2 (iii) The Difference Between Locke and the Simple View

These arguments demonstrating the experience of the self are very similar to those given by Locke. He too describes something of which we are aware of in experience: moreover, he holds that the unity of experience gives rise to an idea or the self as unifier. Yet in Locke the self remains only a separable idea, and is in fact reducible to consciousness. Thus its criteria of persistence rely upon that consciousness: as soon as awareness of self ceases, then that self no longer persists. Lockean persons emerge as holding only a loose form of identity.

However, this is not the conclusion drawn by the simple view, which parts company with Locke upon this very point. The awareness of the self is, to the rationalist, simply awareness of evidence, no more. It does not constitute the identity of the self in the way that Lockean consciousnesses does: the subject of the simple view is thought to be independent of our knowledge or awareness of it, and therefore to have real identity through time.

This division necessitates a further divergence in the theories, for the simple view holds that to enable this real identity, the subject cannot be reducible to its properties; that is to say, it is not equivalent to the mere awareness of consciousness. Unified experience of parts may provide clear evidence of the self, but it does not constitute its identity:

In simultaneous experience...the unity of experience is something of which the subject is often aware, and no mere inference from the unity of brain and behaviour.

Swinburne (1) p.47

This last comment illustrates the clear difference between the conclusions drawn by the simple view and Locke: for Locke refuses to take the subject beyond the properties he experiences, arguing that the self is occasioned by the unification; whereas the simple view wishes to uphold that it is in fact the other way around, that unification is occasioned by the self. Where Locke is willing to extend

what he calls self only to that which is aware of being a self, the simple view wishes to push the notion beyond consciousness-dependent, ephemeral concern. It aims to isolate the subject as a consistent and persisting thing, linked to the change wrought by all perceptions, conscious and sub-conscious. In effect, the simple view's self is a subject which precedes and affects the unity of the properties. How then can it argue for this independent or, at least logically prior self on the strength of what has been proven so far?

8.3 THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT SELF

8.3 (i) Persistence Through Change

Support for the independent self might be found in the notion of modification by experience. If some experiences make us consciously aware of being affected, then surely there must be something which is being changed. This thing may or may not be aware of all changes, but the fact that it is aware of some, means that it exists. Thus, when it is not conscious of being affected by experience, why should we not believe that it is, nevertheless still there and being affected?

However, this idea is not enough to prove existence beyond the present moment - although it is true we are aware of a change, there is nothing to say that the change is not just one in a succession of changes in which there is no underpinning substratum. For the only evidence we might have of such a substrate is our awareness of the past and the change to the present; but that knowledge and idea of a continuity might amount only to a Lockean type self-consciousness - an idea that we persist and no more. For all that we can be certain of is that we are aware of a change occurring at the moment in time it occurs; more than that is only evidence presented to the current consciousness by the memory.

8.3 (ii) Experienced Persistence Through Time

More then is needed to support the notion of persistence, and the simple view tries to argue for this. As described above*, it suggests that the unity of our experience of temporal events entails the persistence of a subject to unify it. Thus the simple view claims that it is not just the rather negative idea of the experience of being changed but also the fact that we actually experience that persistence, that gives proof of a persisting self. Thus they claim that it is possible to directly experience the persistence of a self through time, rather than just infer it.

However, it is clear that this attempt fails too: for the persistence over time they point to, still only achieves a Lockean-type persistence. Our experience of time can be explained only by the existence of a current state of consciousness uniting to it past conscious states: and this is so even over a momentary time lapse. The only way we can know what has happened a moment before, is by the imprint of that past-present consciousness upon the memory which is directly experienced together with the current impression of consciousness. By comparison of the two states, we get an idea of change and persistence: but it is still only a current conscious experience making use of the memory.

* Section 8.3 (i)

8.3 (iii) The Reduction of Persistence to Self-Consciousness

As such, it may be that the awareness of our persistence through time is reducible to a self-conscious thought: for we have a memory and a present conscious state, but it is only the present consciousness which is known for certain. There is no empirical evidence to point to some link over and above the present consciousness. Thus the experience of unity over time still proves nothing more than that there is an experience at the moment, which contains within it memories of experiences of the moment before. It may be that this awareness of past combined with present is all that persistence involves; to infer anything beyond the Lockean idea of self-consciousness, and the present thought of persistence, is to go beyond the evidence available.

8.4 THE NECESSITY OF AN INDEPENDENT SELF

Present direct experience will not then give us evidence of a self persisting independently of properties. However, there are logical arguments, relating to this direct experience, which might be called upon at this stage.

8.4 (i) The Prior Existence of the Self

As already noted in Part I*, there is reason to believe that the self must exist if experiences are to exist: that the subject is a necessary element of psychological states. This insight is linked to the problem of circularity in objective empirical theories: that psychological states need a subject, for without one, no such states could possibly be individuated, ascribed to a person, or indeed exist. The notion of experiences and properties are thus tied to a necessary and underpinning knowledge of the self - and they can neither be identified nor made sense of in isolation from their subject. The idea of a subject is therefore something not necessarily limited to concern or awareness of particular properties - it has a necessary life independent of its own self-consciousness. Any theory of persons and their identity which does not take this into account will necessarily fail.

It is this line of argument which is pursued by Madell⁺,

* Section 2.2 (iv)

+ Madell 1981

with reference to McTaggart*, in an attempt to show that the subject is not only necessary to the identity of persons, but our knowledge of it is entailed by the attribution of any properties. In this way he hopes to show that the self must exist prior to and independently of any properties of the self; and thus that the self must be independent of the property of self-awareness.

Madell argues that the idea that we can attribute any properties to the self, without knowledge of that self, is absurd - indicating that in order to attribute any properties we must have prior knowledge of the subject. If the subject is to be more than just an idea or convention, we must be able to identify it without circular reference to its properties; and the only way that such independent self-knowledge is possible is if we know it directly, and therefore independently, of the properties it has. He writes that:

If we consider the truth that 'I am acquainted with this sense-datum', it is hard to see how we could be said to know this truth, or even to understand what it means, unless we were directly acquainted with something we call 'I'.

Madell p.24

Thus he concludes, along with McTaggart, that the knowledge we have of the persisting self must be independent of any knowledge of properties; and that such awareness of the self by acquaintance is essential before we can have any

* McTaggart 1927

knowledge of ourselves at all:

...for unless we were directly aware of ourselves, unless we know ourselves by acquaintance, we could not tell that any such description applied to us...I can only know myself to be that one and the same person to whom these various descriptions apply, if I have knowledge of myself, an awareness of myself, which is independent of those descriptions.

Madell p.24

Since such direct acquaintance is possible (as has been shown above*), we can have knowledge of the identity of the self prior to knowledge of our properties; moreover, if this were not possible, we could not have any knowledge of ourselves at all.

8.4 (ii) Prior Knowledge of the Self?

However, this approach can be criticised on two main points. Firstly, it is difficult to see why the self must exist prior to the properties. All that is really necessary is that self-conscious states have a subject, whether that subject; is generated by the states, or whether it has an independent existence is unimportant - at least to the individuation of psychological states. This is clearly illustrated in the Lockean account of the subject, in which the self is generated by, and not prior to, unified perception. For Locke's account has been shown to provide a sufficient concept for the individuation and existence of psychological properties. Yet it is not the case in Locke

* Section 8.4 (i)

that the self exists independently of self-consciousness: it is known simultaneously with conscious states - it is in effect necessary to self-conscious states, but not different from them. It is only through its properties that the Lockean self can be known, for the property of self-consciousness is all that the subject amounts to.

The idea that the self must be known prior to consciousness of it, and indeed prior to the existence of self-conscious states, only seems to be necessary if one insists that the self is a separable and real thing. There is no difficulty in Locke, where the self is defined as knowledge of certain states and is thus known at the same time as awareness of those states. But where the states are thought to belong to a self which is independent, then of course it makes no sense to talk of associated properties unless one already knows with what those properties are associated. However, since the separability of the self is the very fact that the simple view is trying to prove through this argument, it cannot assume such separability in order to make its argument effective. To do so would clearly be circular.

Thus it seems that this problem of circularity and prior existence is only a problem to theories which demand a self/content dualism. Where the self is simply a content of

consciousness, no problems of individuation on this level arise.

8.4 (iii) Necessity of Consciousness to Self?

Thus it must be shown that the self is independent of its states of consciousness before any such necessity can be enforced. But it seems that this in itself might be difficult to understand.

It is true that we have knowledge of our selves independently of any particular property; but this is far from the claim that we can know them, or that they can exist, independently of any properties at all. It seems that there is a fundamental error in supposing that, because the self is irreducible to any particular content or properties and because we know it directly rather than by inference from those properties, it has no properties at all. For it can be argued that both the existence and our knowledge of the self are in fact dependent upon some sort of property: that without them it can neither be known to exist, nor indeed exist at all.

For the claim is that the self is experienced through its association with other experiences: that is, we are acquainted with it directly when we experience. This line of argument therefore depends upon the fact that we do experience. It is surely only possible to infer the

existence of the self from a unified experience, or an experience of subjectivity; but without either of these two how can we come to know that the self exists at all?

The knowledge of the self is direct and by acquaintance, but it is elicited by experience. Without the experience it is difficult to know how we could arrive at any concept of self. We are only aware of the self in conscious experience; and only have knowledge of the self in a self-conscious awareness. From this we make a distinction between experiences and the awareness of experiences - giving the name of self to the thing that is aware. But without the property of self-consciousness we could not even know that the self exists, less so identify it.

However, this only shows that we need some properties to be aware of the self; but it does not show that the self's existence depends upon properties, only that our awareness of it does. But when one does move on to think about the existence of the subject, a similar problem arises, for subjectivity needs things to be the subject of: without the existence of some conscious states, does the idea of the self make sense? It is possible to hold that the subject exists independently of our acknowledged self-consciousness; but it surely cannot exist independently of any properties or consciousness at all. The only reason we might have for believing so is where there is more to selves than being the

subject of conscious states; but so far this has not be shown to be true.

Thus it seems that a mistake has been made: that, because no particular properties or content seem to emerge as necessary to our knowledge of the subject, no properties at all are involved. But it seems that our knowledge of what subjectivity entails can only be defined in terms of conscious properties: it makes as little sense to talk of the subject without experience, as it does to talk of experience without a subject. It may be that the self is independent of awareness or self-consciousness; but this does not entail that it is independent of all psychological states.

Although these suggestions do not conclusively prove that the self does not exist independently of properties, they do show that to support this fact more argument is needed. It seems that by the appeal to experience and direct knowledge, all that can be postulated is that the self exists and is a necessary part of conscious experience - but no more.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS

The modern simple view builds upon and develops Descartes' ideas to produce a rational account of a real and persisting self. It uses the fundamental insights of the 'cogito' - which needs no more than a full recognition of its potential to support their claims. For awareness of the self as a persisting subject, though not explicitly demonstrated by Descartes, is derivable from his views.

Our awareness of the self as a subject can be developed to a knowledge of the self as a unifier of synchronic experiences; which in turn can be extended to an awareness of the self as a unifier of diachronic experiences. This knowledge takes the form of both a unified perception of successive objects, and the unified perception of our present self and memories of a past self. In such consciousness we are made aware of the self, and that self amounts to the unifying experiencer.

It is important to note that all of these theorists wish to put forward not just the idea of a subject, but of a persisting subject independent of its properties. From the strictly logical insight of Descartes, all that can be inferred is that we exist at any one time; but as such, we might merely be transient and momentary beings - indeed only parts of some other successive and loosely identical being.

In defiance of the strictures laid down by empiricists such as Hume, the modern simplists insist upon the absurdity and incoherence of believing that we are no more than such momentary selves.

However, the simple view fails to show that this subject is independent of the properties themselves. All that has been demonstrated is that it cannot depend upon awareness of the self to exist. That conscious states demand a subject entails only that there is a subject: not that it exist over and above, or even before, the properties existed. The self might still be a product of consciousness - it is just that it is not a mere ephemera of a certain conscious state.

The arguments so far, then, amount only to an account equivalent to Lockean consciousness. For despite the fact that experience needs a subject, this does not in anyway prove that the subject is separable from those experiences. Nothing within the experience of this self of the simple view points to the fact that it is separable from its properties in any way other than conceptually. In other words, both the simple view, and Descartes need more than experience of the subject to prove their ontologically dualistic claims.

CHAPTER 9 THE LOGICAL POSSIBILITY OF DUALISM

From the discussion so far, it has emerged that if the simple view is to be seen as a form dualism, then it is necessary to defend its claims by methods other than just our experience of the self. To move beyond the Lockean subject/property monism, more rational argument must be found.

Such an attempt to support dualism encounters a third objection, a criticism which focuses specifically upon the separability of the soul from the body. The Cartesian argument is based on the belief that because it is possible that body and soul can be divided from each other, the soul is not actually linked to the body, which is therefore not essential to its persistence. However, this conclusion is far from entailed by the premises, for it is not deductively valid to infer actuality and truth from mere logical possibility. Thus, Descartes is criticised for taking his conclusions beyond the power of his evidence - inferring actuality from what is only established as logical possibility.

Yet there is a reliance upon similar justification in the modern accounts too. As in Descartes, logical possibility

is taken to indicate conceptual distinctiveness and is used as the basis for the possibility of actual separation. As shown before*, our common sense beliefs are employed to make judgements in these imagined scenarios, pointing to an idea of ourselves as subjects existing both at one time and through time.

The use of such thought experiments has already been called into question.+ Yet, even if they are accepted as offering some help in understanding persons, there is an additional logical error contained within their use that the simple view and Descartes both miss: that the claim of actual possibility is derived from the mere logical possibility envisaged by the imagination.

* Chapter 6 & 7

+ Chapter 7

9.1 LOGICAL CONCEIVABILITY

It has been shown that to make the move from logical to actual distinctness of subject and content, Descartes employs a notion of God, and in so doing he ensures that reality is not merely subjective, but absolute and objective. Wanting to admit that logical possibility somehow involves actuality, he needs to show that this is a fact about an independent world if he wishes to avoid an idealistic account of reality. Thus, he invokes the notion of an absolute (God), in which all logical possibilities are contained - even those beyond the conception of the mere mortal.

9.1 (i) Logical Possibility and Actuality

The argument above relies heavily on the idea of the perfect and omnipotent God: and the idea of this God is supported using, once again, the powers and capabilities of the imagination. Descartes' God is a god of perfection and, it is argued, could not be a mere product of the fallible and limited imagination of an imperfect mind. Since Descartes acknowledges that his mind is fallible, the idea of God must come from elsewhere. Because we can only get an idea of perfection from perfection, God must exist.

The two above arguments share a common ground in that they rely upon the belief that we cannot come by an idea of

anything unless it exists. Hence, both the logically possible and the Godhead must exist because we have an idea of them. But this is to assume that thought and ideas must have some corresponding reality to inspire them - that there must be corresponding referent for all concepts. But this simply is not so. Unicorns are a logical possibility, but this does not entail that they exist outside fairy tales. Perfection is a logical possibility, but our idea of it may originate simply in a negative comparison - that an idea of perfection is simply an idea of freedom from all imperfections.

It can therefore be shown that the move from logical to actual possibility is not adequately supported by Cartesian argument - any attempt to do so will result in dubious conclusions. Hence, although the separable self is indeed a logical and attractive idea, this does not entail that it exists independently of our imagination. To prove that it does, more argument is needed.

Despite this, holders of the modern simple view treat the presence of logical possibility with great deference - using it to signify not only that dualism is probably true, but that empirical accounts of the self are false. Their arguments range from straightforwardly Cartesian-style thought experiments, to more complex and linguistic attempts to prove the separation.

9.1 (ii) Modern use of Cartesian Thought Experiments

The use of arguments focussing on the separability of the self from its properties is common to most modern dualists. Relying on religious beliefs about disembodied souls, and the idea of life after death; they claim to show that there is nothing illogical about the separation of material and immaterial parts of humans. The view believes such ideas to be possible because they are presented in coherent and conceivable forms.

These appeals to religion are supplemented by more secular arguments, imagining the gradual and total separation of properties from the self. The conclusions drawn from such thoughts are very Cartesian: that although we can make sense of ourselves devoid of our bodies, we cannot even begin to entertain the idea of persisting without our self.

For example, Swinburne* uses an argument imagining a situation in which the control over his body gradually decreases, whilst his control over his wife's body increases, finally resulting in his functioning through the body of his wife. Swinburne claims that the idea of having such control, even partially, of a different body from his own is conceivable. As is the further development that he imagines, whereby he is no longer restricted to

* Swinburne 1984

controlling just a body, but finds he can function though other things in the environment. In this situation, the soul no longer seems to be 'embodied' for its power for feeling or responding reaches beyond the body, it is in fact, disembodied. This argument is used to support the logical separability of soul and body, and:

From the mere logical possibility of my continued existence, there follows the actual fact that there is some more to me than my body, and that more is the essential part of myself.
Swinburne (2) p.154

Madell* too claims that separation of the subject from these properties is logically possible. For we can clearly imagine without absurdity, ourselves without part of, or indeed all of, our current properties or particular personality traits. Yet whilst we can understand such a change in our state, we continue to feel it is our state - we cannot imagine ourselves as not being part of the new state. If we do, then it is no longer us.

Finally, Chisholm combines the insights of both Swinburne and Madell in a thought experiment whereby he can imagine himself completely separated from his properties, his memories, his beliefs and his dispositions⁺. Like Swinburne, he says of such a situation that he can readily conceive of their transference to someone else; but like

* Madell 1981

+ Chisholm 1976

Madell finds it impossible to imagine such a transference of himself.

However, unlike Descartes, the modern simple view does not attribute certainty to such beliefs, merely probability. In agreement with the original objection to Descartes, it can be seen to recognise that conclusions from thought experiments point only to possibility and conceptual reality, and not to actuality. The simple view might be interpreted as using these illustrations to show the logical possibility of such a dualism, if proof or logical certainty is intended then it must be done through other arguments.

9.2 OBJECTIVE EMPIRICAL DESCRIPTION

One such argument, rather than showing the logical possibility of the self, tries to illustrate the impossibility of providing an empirical account of the subject. It bases its arguments in the necessity of a subject of experience. As shown earlier*, the subject is necessary for any coherent account of experience - to speak of experiences without a subject makes no sense.

9.2 (i) Scientific Description

This first attempt to prove the truth of dualism makes use of an argument linked to the criticisms of objective empirical theories mentioned in Part I: namely that although the subject defies any attempt to account for it in objective empirical terms, it is still a necessary ingredient for a sufficient account of persons. The point is made that because it is logically impossible to account for the self in terms of a reduction to its properties, there must be something more to the self than these properties. It is thus claimed that a dualism with regard to the subject and its properties is logically necessary for a sufficient account of persons.

The starting point is this fact that we are subjects; and it is claimed that it is by definition impossible to capture

* Section 8.4

such a subject in empirical terms. This is more than merely a claim that there is intuitively more to us than properties; it aims to show that what we know must be there, that is to say, a subject cannot be accounted for in traditionally empirical way. Thus there is a necessary part of us which cannot be encompassed in an empirical description: therefore, there is a part of us that is separable from the properties described empirically.

The explanation focuses on the nature of subjectivity in the self. As a subject, the self is something which feels and experiences, rather than actually being that feeling and experience. It is the subjective experience of the world and the quality of how it seems or feels that is what concerns the self or person; in fact the ability to feel is what it means to be a person.

Subjectivity is Beyond Empirical Description

Such a thing as a subject cannot be described or isolated in scientific or empirical terms. For it is the practice of science to treat things only as objects - there is no language or way to account for subjectivity empirically. Science studies what it considers to be objective criteria, separating 'measurable' concepts from phenomenological, and therefore subjective, manifestations.

If this is so, it will be beyond the realms of scientific law to give an account of the soul, particularly in form of necessary connections between it and the body: for it has no language to link the subjective to the objective. The connections cannot be described, for one half of the union is totally elusive to science. Swinburne states that:

Natural laws then, we assume, dictated how this globe would evolve, and so, which arrangements of matter will be bodies of consciousness, and just how apparent memories of consciousness depend on their brain states. My point is that what natural laws in no way determine is which animate body is yours and which is mine.

Swinburne (1) p.25

Hence, Swinburne claims that it is a fact about the world that the body, or properties of the person, are only contingently part of the person. It is this lack of naturally necessary connections which leads to a conclusion that the body is not practically necessary to us as persons: for if we study evolution and physics, it becomes evident that there is no discoverable natural necessity linking the two:

Not merely is it not logically necessary that a person have a body made of certain matter, or have certain apparent memories, if he is to be the person which he is, it is not even necessitated by the laws of nature.

Swinburne (1) p.25

That persons defy any form of deterministic link to the body shows not only that the person is independent of a particular body but also, more broadly, that the person cannot be accounted for in terms of its bodily properties.

The match is not explainable for it "needs either God or chance to allocate bodies to persons." (Swinburne (1) p.26).

9.2 (ii) Failure of Scientific Argument

Swinburne's line of argument can be analysed as follows: he claims that the subjective is by definition not accessible to the realm of empirical inquiry. In doing so, he assumes that subjective and empirical descriptions are mutually exclusive - that the subjective knowledge we have of the self cannot also be accounted for in terms of properties. It is this that allows him to draw the above conclusions, for if subjectivity excludes all properties, it is entailed that the subject cannot be the object of empirical enquiry: which in turn points to the existence of something which cannot be explained in terms of properties.

However, in this argument, Swinburne makes an error by mixing categories. In the face of the failure of all objective empirical accounts, he claims that any attempt to reduce the person to properties fails. But this is to assume that the objective account of the subject is the only possible empirical account. To do so is to equate empiricism with mind/body monism and then to argue, from this premise, that since consciousness cannot be reduced to a description of the body or individual thoughts, the the subject cannot be accounted for by empiricism. But in equating empiricism with monism, he misses the vital fact

that it is possible to hold a mind/body distinction and remain an empiricist.

For it is exactly this position that Locke illustrates: that the self is empirically identifiable in subjective terms. Moreover, in Locke this does not necessitate a dualism between the subject and properties, for as seen the subject is the property of self-consciousness. It is true that the objective empiricism cannot provide a sufficient account of the subject; but Lockean subjective empiricism can, whilst also maintaining that the subject is only separable from all properties conceptually. It is true that the self is not reducible to plain consciousness, however it is reducible to the property of self-consciousness.

For Swinburne's argument to carry any weight, it must be shown why all reductive empiricism fails to account for subjectivity. But to do so, he needs to show that the Lockean account of subjectivity is not sufficient - that the self must be ontologically separable from its properties. In other words, for this line of argument to succeed, it must be shown that actual subject/property dualism is true. But this is exactly what the argument itself is trying to prove. Once again, it seems that the argument offered to prove actual separability of the self, is only effective if it is already known that the self is ontologically distinct.

9.3 SELF-IDENTIFICATION

This argument is a development of the use of self-reference described earlier*, in which it is established that the concept of the self is necessary to individuate other properties of the person. This inability to individuate the subject in objective and empirical description, is joined by an argument to show that we do individuate the subject regardless of properties. As such, the simple view tries to show that we can, and do, use the term 'I' without need to refer to properties at all. If this is possible, then the identification of the self can be achieved regardless of properties. This, the simple view might claim, is tantamount to proving that the self is separable from the properties - for the two have different criteria of identity.

9.3 (i) The Content of Self-Reference

The objective empirical accounts of the self, in effect, deny that the self has a fixed referent of any sort - they explain the use of 'I' by reducing self reference to some other form of demonstrative. The nature of this may vary from theory to theory: it might be reduced to simply meaning 'here'; to be no more than a content-less indicator or non-referent; a non-fixed referent with a varying field of applicability; or even something which is a purely

* Section 8.4

referential term with no allusion to properties at all.

Yet analysis by some philosophers of the use of self-reference indicates that the demonstrative 'I' clearly refers to a subject or self; for example, Madell*, under whose consideration all of the above reductions prove to be mistaken. He argues that the position claiming that 'I' is not a fixed referent is inaccurate: for we cannot choose the extent of our field of reference, but are necessarily limited to the range of our unified experience. Moreover, to say that it is not a referent proves false for in saying 'I' we do refer to the subject of sensations. He further denies that it is reducible to other forms of demonstrative: for use of self-reference evades all attempts to match it to expressions such as 'here'; indeed it is the case that all other referents are relatively dependent upon the possibility of both a fixed and meaningful self-reference. Thus, he states that, far from being a mere grammatical necessity, the self has a fixed and meaningful referent.

The subject fulfils the role of being this referent perfectly: in that saying 'I' we are expressly referring to the subject of our experience, the self and if this is true, then the 'I' most definitely does have a content. It cannot be reduced to being merely shorthand for a combination of

* Madell 1984

other 'real' referents, for the self, which is the intention of 'I', has an ineliminable role in the individuation and identification of our properties.

9.3 (ii) 'I' as a Logically Proper Name

In rejecting reductive accounts of 'I', Madell is led to adopt the suggestion of McTaggart*, who analyses self-reference in terms of the use of a logically proper name. In this role, the subject is something with which we are directly acquainted, not something which is known through description, inference or mere convention. When we use 'I', we denote an existing and particular thing which is the subject of our experience. Because certain knowledge of the self is possible, we can be directly acquainted with ourselves. The term 'I' is therefore rightfully termed a logically proper name, for it is not shorthand for something we only know by description.

Such an idea builds upon the theory of direct acquaintance described in Section 8.2. The experiences which give us direct acquaintance with ourselves can be classed as self-presenting states. They involve individual concepts, which refer to individual essences: that is, they pick out only one thing at a time, and only ever apply to that one thing - the self. Hence such self-presenting states not only ensure that we are aware of the self, but they enable us to use self-referring statements accurately:

I would say then, that if I feel depressed or if I feel happy, or if I seem to see a sheep (seem to me, that is, to see a sheep) then I am directly acquainted with myself. For in each case, there is a self-presenting proposition which implies me to have a certain property. The individual concept implied by the proposition is that of being 'I' or being identical with me. And the proposition, since it is self-presenting, is known by me to be true.

Chisholm (1) p.31

This individuation is not based in anything other than the awareness of the subject - it is made per se - in virtue of the thing, not in virtue of some other related factor or property. Thus we can isolate the self and individuate it without recourse to its empirical or objective properties: when we refer to the self, we do so directly.

9.3 (iii) Identification of the Self Without Properties

Added to this idea of direct knowledge of the self is an argument designed to prove that we can do so without reference to any properties whatsoever. To support this position the simple view builds on an argument borrowed from Castañeda*. This gives an account of a person perceiving himself in a mirror, yet not realising that it is himself. Despite not recognising his own properties from the reflection, the individual is able to refer to himself and know himself. Although he does not know his properties he still knows and is able to individuate himself.

That this is possible clearly shows that we use self-

* Castañeda 1976

referring and individuating expressions regardless of properties; and this indicates that the identity criterion for our 'self' differs from any criterion of our properties. If this is so, and we are able to uniquely individuate ourselves independently of the knowledge of our properties, we must be something more than, and separable from, those properties. Thus Chisholm argues that:

Castaneda has shown that statement of self-attribution, such as 'Jones believes that he himself is wise' (S), is not implied by the corresponding quantified statement, 'There is an x such that x is identical with Jones and x believes that x is wise' (Q). Thus (Q) might be true and (S) false if: Jones reads the lines on his hand and takes them to be a sign of wisdom; he doesn't realise the hand is his (for it is one of many protruding from a blanket); and he is unduly modest and entirely without conceit. What, then, does (S) tell us that (Q) does not? I suggest that it tells us this: 'Jones has an individual essence H; he accepts a proposition which is self-presenting for him and necessarily such that it is true if and only if whatever has H is wise.'

Chisholm (1) p.37

9.3 (iv) Self-Reference and Separability

Despite the fact that these arguments support the existence of a subject which is irreducible, in terms of reference and meaning to the various properties that it has, they still fail to show that this necessitates any form of ontological dualism between the subject and its properties.

For, once again, it seems as though a mistake has been made concerning the lack of any particular properties in that, because no particular properties are necessary to identify the self, it has been taken that no properties at

all are associated with the identity of the self. But this is to assume that the individual content or qualitative properties of the mind and body are the only properties: the role of consciousness or self-consciousness is ignored, yet these seem integral to the existence and the knowledge of the self.

Thus the use of 'I' in self-referential terms is an extension of the argument claiming that we have knowledge of the self independent of all properties. It was argued* that this idea failed to prove the separable existence of the self; and this extension of the argument gets no further. For the fact that we refer to the self independently of properties does not necessarily entail that the self is completely separable from all properties. All that has been shown is that the use of 'I' has the intention to refer to more than just the properties associated with the self; and from this, one can infer that subject/property dualism is possible, but not that it is actual.

Furthermore, this idea that we are distinct from properties has been disputed, for it seems to work at only one level of description. Whilst it is certainly true that these arguments show that the self is not reducible to its constituent properties - that is to say thoughts, emotions or body - it does not seem to be so obvious that the self

* Section 9.3 (iii)

can be thought of as propertyless. There is a distinction to be clarified between having properties which belong to the self and the properties which are necessary to actually being a self. Whilst it may perhaps be true that the self needs to know its character or the quality of its existence to know and refer to itself, it is becoming increasingly apparent that perhaps there are certain properties that a self must be in order to qualify or exist as a self; namely those associated with being a subject: consciousness and even perhaps self-consciousness for example.

Thus it seems that the claims of propertylessness made by the simple view rest in a fundamental confusion between individuation and identity of the self. For whilst it seems that we need not know certain qualities to identify ourselves, there may be certain properties necessarily associated with our identity. This idea will be developed later, but suffice to say at present that, the phenomenon of self-reference entails no more than the existence of a subject that is irreducible to its properties. More than this cannot be concluded.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS

The simple view arguments supporting subject/property dualism, base the claim of separability upon the premise that if two things have different identity conditions, then they cannot be the same thing. The fact that we isolate the self, and indeed experience the self in different ways from the way we identify our properties, indicates that the two things are somehow distinct. This idea is reinforced by the fact, demonstrated earlier, that we can know the identity of the self directly.

The simple view wishes to add to this conclusion the notion that we can experience the self with real identity: for if this is possible, then the person can have identity over a period of time, satisfying both instinctive beliefs and moral necessities. If the self is to have persistence it cannot be reducible to any properties it has, for such identity is considered impossible for anything essentially composed of properties or perceived empirically. Moreover, the naturally successive nature of our properties means that even as a unified collection of our own properties, they cannot have a real identity over time, because they are constantly changing.

On face value, this view does seem to be a fair reflection of our beliefs about ourselves. We do

distinguish between the self and its properties and do not feel that the one is reducible to the other. Yet the fact that the two are conceptually distinct does not entail that they are physically so. Despite the convincing nature of these arguments, they still fail to produce anything like the proof needed for a dualism. The fact that 'I' has some meaning over and above the properties; that it is irreducible to those properties; and that it evades empirical determination; does not prove that it is anything more than a conceptual entity or, as Locke might put it, an idea.

An idea of a self which has no reference, other than as an idea, might still fulfil all the above considerations, and yet still be only a classification or socially constructed term imposed upon the world. Locke's own account of self-awareness as consciousness would satisfy all the above arguments - that we have an idea of ourselves as thinkers, and that the identity criteria for this idea is not equivalent to a mere reference to properties. For properties and the person are different ideas to Locke, and thus to him different things. However, as Locke cannot use this as a basis to infer the self as something existing separately, so neither can the simple view from the arguments so far.

Although the self exists and is distinguishable from its properties conceptually, it is not proven that the self exists separately from its properties in actuality. If the simple view intends to claim this, it needs to provide more evidence of actual separability. Indeed, as will be shown, the problems involved in pursuing ontological subject/property dualism provide convincing reasons for remaining with conceptual possibility.

CHAPTER 10 THE POSSIBILITY OF SUBJECT/CONTENT DUALISM

Hitherto there has been a concentration upon the particular arguments in support of a subject/property dualism. The focus has been upon why those arguments fail to support the separability between the self and its properties. It has not been proven that the suggestion is false; merely that it has not been adequately supported.

However, in this next chapter, the argument will change tack: in a development of the ideas already suggested in criticism of the simple view and, through an examination of the meaning and implications of a subject/property dualism, I shall attempt to show how the simple view approach, if interpreted as ontological dualism, is likely to be false.

In addition to his supporting arguments, Descartes himself is criticised on this level, for his theory falls down when considered in the light of its consequences. For in offering a mind/body and substance dualism, he necessarily encounters practical and logical problems associated with mind/body interaction.

Likewise, the greatest criticism of subject/property dualism is that it does not make sense - that, when pushed

we cannot understand the use of 'I' in total separation from properties and, that, logically, it is self contradictory to maintain the subject/property dualism whilst insisting on the reality of the separable self.

Although it has been shown that we can use the term 'I' with meaning and without reference to any particular property, I have suggested that it cannot be used without the intention of any properties at all. The following sections are developments of that idea from both a conceptual and logical point of view.

10.1 CONCEPTUAL DIFFICULTY

There are convincing arguments in support of the intuition that we are essentially propertyless selves: not least that we have an idea of ourselves as something over and above, or underpinning, the various properties which we have. However, at the same time, we have beliefs about ourselves as actually being and having certain properties: that when we think of and refer to ourselves, it is rarely without the intention of including certain properties within our reference. Moreover, this belief is not just that such properties are merely associated with us, it extends to the idea that without some of them we could not persist.

If closely studied it seems that our conception of what the self is fails to support the suggestion that we are propertyless over the idea that we have properties, both are conceivable. For despite being instinctively and even logically acceptable at one level, it appears that, in practice, it is very rarely indeed that we do separate the self from the properties and, when it does occur, it is only in an abstract sense. The notion of a totally propertyless subject holds little meaning or even practical use.

10.1 (i) Reference to Properties

As we refer to, think about and even experience ourselves, we rarely do so without intention to attribute

properties of some form. Ourselves and others are characterised with certain connotations, whether it be in terms of material properties, psychological phenomena or, what might be termed, character traits. Even if such properties are removed from our explicit intention, it is rare that self-reference is made completely without connotation. At the very least we believe we have certain potential such as emotional, effective and affective ability. All of these things we do consider to be, in some way, ourselves.

Reference to our self normally encompasses some of these properties but it is not fixed, and does not always include each and every property. In general we use an expanding and contracting conception of ourselves, the extent of which is determined by the interests and background of the specific reference. Thus 'I' might encompass a field of properties extending beyond the body to creative works or children, or may be as narrow as the mere subject of experiences. What is, or is not, included in the range is dependent upon the specific case in point.

Such belief about ourself is not merely confined to our linguistic self-reference - similar accounts can be given of both our concern for ourselves and our experience of our unity. What we consider of special concern to ourselves will change and the range of fear and happiness will

fluctuate with situations. In a situation where I am to have my tooth out, my dominant frame of reference is my tooth and the experience of pain in my mouth; but if I am to be tortured for state secrets my field of concern will expand beyond my individual self to the nation I am part of and therefore attain some of my identity from. Likewise unity, or what I consider to be unified with me, will fluctuate, at times encompassing my family, at others merely myself as a subject. The point is that, there is a level at which our conception of ourselves is not fixed and does indeed incorporate properties.

Although in referring to others the range of verifiable characteristics is limited to empirical, or inferences to empirical, phenomena, in our selves such properties are not merely empirically known. We can and do perceive them directly and our knowledge of them is a priori. We have knowledge of our properties in the way that we have direct knowledge of being selves - we are aware of them as their subjects in a way which no-one else can be. It is this subjective awareness which seems to make such properties part of our selves.

10.1 (ii) The Propertyless Self

However, it still remains that at the extreme of our self-reference sense can be made of ourselves as propertyless. There is a clear idea that what is

fundamentally the owner or subject of the properties is different from the properties themselves, and that what is of most concern to us seems to be the subjective experience of the self. Properties can be classed as part of us but are they essentially part of us?

Some particular properties are not essentially what we call our selves and we believe that we can persist with or without them. It seems that a sliding scale of connection or continuity to the self can be produced, and the importance of properties is proportionally linked to value in persistence. The properties at the edge of our control are more flexible and their inclusion seems to be a matter of preference, consequently they are valued less in terms of future survival. At the base of the scale is placed the subject of all the properties, and idea of this self is of something immovable and fixed.

To the self is accorded the maximum value for it is considered to be necessary for persistence of the person. It seems that the person can continue to persist without the particular properties possessed at the present time but that, at the core of our existence, there is a belief in a self without which we will not continue. To change the self in a given individual would be to create someone different - if we lose our self we fear we will cease to be.

The capability we have to separate ourselves from particular properties indicates that they are not in essence us. If sense can be made of pure subjectivity, of the subject without certain properties, then surely properties cannot be an essential feature of ourselves?

10.1 (iii) The Self and Non-Specific Properties

However, it can be asked what a propertyless self actually means? How can we grasp what it is to be propertyless? If we try to think of, or describe, what such a state would entail, it is impossible - we end up imagining some sort of property. Even if we consider our persistence in a disembodied life after death, we still imagine that existence in terms of some form of properties. Moreover, the value in having such a self, without the affectations, effectations and aspirations offered by the possession of properties, can be questioned.

When closely considered, a propertyless state becomes a meaningless persistence and valueless existence. Whilst we are willing to give up our particular properties, this is not necessarily indicative of a willingness to forego all properties in our future. At the very least we would expect this bare subject of experience to carry with it the potential for experience - remove that and it loses all practical value in persistence.

It would seem that the value of the self in practice lies in its specific continuation, not its complete separateness from properties. The specific properties are valued less and it seems that they can change and alter without the particular self ceasing to be, yet ultimately the conception of a self actually existing without any properties becomes empty and meaningless. In practice it appears that we cannot separate our self from certain properties.

10.1 (iv) Having Properties and Being Properties

It seems, then, that our conception of the subject is not actually as propertyless, it is of something which has properties. The subject is the subject of something and it makes as little sense to talk of the subject without properties, as it does to talk of the properties without the subject.

However, it might still be maintained that, whilst the essence of the subject is to have properties, this does not entail that it is any property itself. Thus, although the self has to have some properties to be the subject of, this is as far as its connection with properties goes. Such an idea is perfectly consistent with the possibility that the subject can exist without properties, for under this account its essence is in no way dependent upon them.

But in reply, one might pursue the suggestion made earlier*, that, although the self is not reducible to the properties it has or owns, it is associated with other properties, over and above content. In other words, the idea of being a subject is not unanalysable either logically or conceptually, for we can reduce the idea of self and what is meant when we refer to self, to talk of the properties that are necessary to subjectivity.

One such property is surely consciousness, for subjectivity itself means the ability to be a subject, which in turn means that something is conscious. When we talk of the subject what we refer to is the subject of consciousness, not some obscure propertyless thing. The subjective experience is a conscious one - without ability to be conscious the subject makes little sense. Even if it is only a potential for consciousness, rather than actual consciousness which is the essence of subjectivity, potential is surely a property.

It seems that when we refer to the subject, it is very difficult to separate it from its ability to be conscious. Since, then, being conscious, or having the potential for consciousness, is a property, and consciousness is necessary to our idea of being a subject, the self does have a property - consciousness. Thus when we think of ourselves,

* Section 10.1 (iii)

we do think of a certain property which is essential to our being a self or subject, that is, the property of consciousness. We may not think of being certain content-properties but this does not exclude from the reference certain other essential properties, such as that which enables to have content - subjectivity or consciousness.

Confusion Between Knowledge and Identity

It can be argued, then, that when we refer to ourselves or think of our selves, we do not think of something which has no properties at all, we think of something which is the subject of the content of consciousness, something which is conscious. It is the thing which has direct knowledge of the content of conscious states, including knowledge of itself. But the fact that we know it is independent of its particular states of consciousness does not entail that we mean it has no properties in itself. The self is not only something directly known but the thing which directly knows.

To claim that the self is propertyless would be to confuse the way we know or individuate the self with the facts about the self. For although we need not consider any properties to be aware of its existence (being directly acquainted with it through experience), this is not to say that it has no properties at all. It is just that we do not need to know the properties to know it exists.

10.2 LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY

It has been suggested that, when we refer to the self or subject the intention is to isolate consciousness, not some completely propertyless thing. That the self or subject does have some property is further supported if it is considered what is actually meant by 'separable self'. For in such an examination it is revealed that, if it is intended to refer to something which exists in reality, then the concept which 'propertyless self' represents is self-contradictory.

It must be made clear then, what the simple view means by propertyless self. It has been seen that the claims it makes are based upon a differentiation between the qualitative and numerical identity of the self: it shows that the qualitative identity or content of the person is not its essential or numerical identity. Because the particular content of mind and body are not necessary to its persistence, they cannot be part of its identity. They may be used in individuation of the person but they amount only to evidence. Thus, the simple view concludes that the self is a propertyless thing - its identity does not coincide with its qualitative or property-based description.

However, it seems that the non-coincidence of qualitative and numerical identity does not in itself effect a division

between properties and the subject, for it is possible that the same results emerge from a division existing only between certain properties and the subject. Once again, then, it must be asked, What does the simple view mean by a propertyless self? Does it mean a subject completely separable from all properties?

10.2 (i) Practical Absurdity

The idea of a self which is actually separated from properties can be reduced to a practical absurdity. Such an objection, although recognising the use of 'I' in reference to actual objective properties, denies the possibility of a referent for the term 'I' without any associated properties. Moreover, the existence of self-reference, self-concern and even unity of the self are unable to exist without some properties instantiating them.

Interaction

Firstly, a parallel to the difficulties seen in Descartes concerning interaction, emerges in the modern simple view. For it insists upon a form of mutual exclusivity between subjects and objects - the self cannot have any properties since it is pure subject. Yet if this is so, how can the subject be affected by and affect the world around it? If the self is only subject, how can objects affect it? The subject experiences, feels and acts - how can these things be achieved unless through some interface with the objective

world? In making the self a completely separate thing, it isolates it from the world and its function, thereby making it redundant.

This difficulty can be extended to the location of the self in space and time. In most uses of 'I' we are identifying and isolating something - the self. If we have a concern for this self, that concern usually extends beyond the immediate present; and when considering the unity of the self, unified experience is both synchronic (ie. spatial) and diachronic (ie. temporal). As such self-reference firmly locates the self in space and time, or at least implies an idea of the self as such. Yet if the self is to be essentially characterised as separated from its properties, it becomes impossible for it to be located in space and time. It has no dimensions and, as such, is not within dimensions. Thus, if the idea of the self is to be used as we do actually use it on occasion, it needs to have at least some properties, if only those of dimensions.

Articulation of 'I'

Even if one denies that the self is necessarily locatable or that it is involved in any interaction problems, there are more theoretical difficulties associated with the idea of total separation. For it appears to be an absurdity to disassociate the articulation of 'I' from the thinker, the feeling of concern from the concerned, the experience of

unity from the unified. Indeed, it seems logically impossible: to articulate 'I' there must be involved something which can articulate, which means that what ever it is must therefore have the property of being able to think 'I'. So, the expression 'I' must involve more than just a propertyless subject, it must entail also the ability to think 'I'. Likewise, this can be extended to the concern and unity associated with the self: the subject having concern for its future must be able to feel concern, and the subject which experiences unity over time must have some sort of property of being able to experience.

It might be argued that these are not particular properties but are faculties or some other mode. Yet even if this is so, they are ways in which to ascribe qualities of some form to the self, moreover, qualities essential to the arguments disassociating the self from properties. The arguments themselves cannot establish the separableness of the self, for they rely upon the ability of the self to do things, which necessarily involves properties of some sort.

This is, in effect, the conclusion reached by Descartes - that the self does have at least one property, and that is to think. Descartes' soul does not fall into these absurdities, for it has the ability to provide all the evidence of its existence from within its essence.

Properties Necessary only for Evidence

However, to argue as above, is to forget the distinction between the truth and the evidence we have for that truth. For although these properties enable us to talk about and communicate about the self, they are not thereby necessarily the self. Indeed, when Descartes ascribed thought to the self it was only because he could not imagine the self without thinking, but this is to link the essence of the self with the way in which we are made aware of it.

The simple view recognises the intimate connection between the properties and the self, characterising it along with other a priori synthetic knowledge. It is through empirical methods that we can become aware of the self, but it is not through empiricism that we know the truth conditions for the persistence of the self. Hence, the simple view clearly holds that the person is to be disassociated from the parts allowing attribution to it.

However, by enforcing the disassociation of self and evidence, holders of the simple view fall into a further confusion, failing to distinguish between that by which we know the self from that which it is. Thus, although they make clear the difference between a self and its individuating or qualitative evidence, they fail to separate our direct knowledge of the self from what the self actually is. For although we may know the self independently of any

particular qualitative property, that does not entail that the self is not essentially associated with any property at all.

Subjects have to be Subjects of Something

The above argument shows that in claiming separability of subject and properties, the simple view goes beyond its evidence, for the dualism envisaged is not necessarily entailed by a distinctness between some qualities and the self. However, these practical disabilities are not in themselves reason enough to reject the actual separability. To do so would be to assume that evidence is equivalent to truth, slipping into an empiricist-type method. Such practical insufficiencies can be construed as mere human limitation, or distortion of the real thing, rather than to do with its actual nature. Thus, it is possible to keep open the possibility of the concept of a propertyless self being pursued by the simple view.

The theoretical possibility that the self is separable from the properties is still an open option - that, even in a world independent of human perceptions, the self would be separable from its properties. Nothing so far has conclusively proved it wrong.

However, attempts to do so try to show that the propertyless self is in fact a logical absurdity. For

example, it can be asked, What does the subject of experience mean unless it is experiencing, and this, surely is a property in itself? Yet, despite the attractiveness of this line of argument, it is only if one assumes that evidence is fact, that one can use it, for it is possible that the self is more than just experiencer - that it can exist independently of both experiencing and our awareness of it: it is just that we cannot know about it if it does.

One can develop the line, however, by referring not just to experiencing but rather to consciousness, stating that the ability to have conscious states is what a subject is. Thus, although it does not need consciousness to exist, or indeed to actually be conscious, nevertheless it does need to have the ability to be conscious. And this, in itself, as suggested earlier, is a property.

10.2 (ii) Self-Contradiction

The above arguments illustrate a need to ascribe the subject properties of some sort: that to even comprehend what it means to be a subject involves it having certain necessary properties. But there is a defence of propertyless-ness which views the claim in alternative way, that is, it holds that in trying to ascribe these properties we are misunderstanding the meaning of the term 'subject', that in fact, 'self' refers to a bare particular or propertyless substratum.

Such a characteristic describes the self as an idea quite distinct from any properties: it has no particular properties itself but is necessary to the existence of certain other properties such as psychological states. In this way, the self can be defined as something necessarily entailed by consciousness, but does not itself amount to that consciousness, and therefore has no properties. As such, it is placed at the fundamental level of an unanalysable basic - one can analyse it no further than to say it is a subject. It is propertyless simply because it needs no properties to be understood.

The self can therefore be described or defined as a logical necessity. However, at this level its status is no more than an idea or logical concept by which we understand conscious states. Its standing might be compared to that of bare matter - another concept which is held to have no particular properties but which is a necessity to those things which do have properties. Bare matter or substance is a building block, a thing we know must exist but do not necessarily know what it is. It can therefore be made sense of as an idea without knowing of any properties or qualities associated with it.

However, if we want 'substance' to be more than just a conceptual tool, if we wish to hold that it actually refers to something which exists, something the nature of which may

be discovered, we must believe it has certain properties. To exist, it must exist as something, for with existential status comes the status of being, and being involves being something. Moreover, if it exists as something, we will then be able to attribute some sort of property to it. Thus, if the idea of substance is to be more than just an idea, it must have some sort of property.

Hence, if the self is to exist as more than just an abstract concept or term, it must exist in some particular concrete form. Since the simple view wishes the self to exist in actuality, rather than merely be a conceptual tool, it too must exist as something, and if this is so, we can attribute some property to it. If subjects are more than just ideas then they must have some property, for the concept of an actual propertyless self is self-contradictory.

10.2 (iii) Subject/Content Dualism

In effect, what emerges is that the subject/property dualism in itself makes little conceptual sense, and this can be supported by the logical inconsistency inherent in it. That is, the subject cannot be separated from all properties, for if it is, it cannot exist in reality, only as a concept. If the intention of the simple view is to hold that a propertyless subject exists, then it is a self-contradictory account of persons.

To be logically consistent, the simple view must therefore adopt the notion of a self that does have some properties. It would be reasonable to assume, that, if this is the case, the intended property is subjectivity. Their line of argument can thus be re-interpreted as intending to pick out a self with one continuing and unchanging property - subjectivity. This subjectivity is different from the properties which the self has, for it is the essence of the self, it is what the self is.

So, once again, the argument arrives at a description of the self as being a certain property and as having certain other qualitative properties. This marks a difference between essence and character, between numerical and qualitative identity. The dualism envisaged is between the self and what belongs to it, between the subject and the content of its mind and body. The simple view can still hold that there is a difference between qualitative and numerical identity, it is just that 'qualities' must now be taken to mean the properties or parts which belong to the self rather than all properties of the self.

What must be considered next is the possibility of such a subject/content dualism. That is, an actual separability between the subject and the content of the mind, between the self and the properties which it has, not between the subject and the properties which it is.

CHAPTER 11 SUBJECT/CONTENT DUALISM

The acceptability of the simple view has been shown to rest in the possibility of maintaining a subject/content dualism rather than the stronger subject/property dualism first suggested. Such an understanding places a different interpretation on the claims of the simple view, no longer characterising the self as totally propertyless but rather that as separable from the content, quality or character of its various parts.

Through this analysis, the interpretation of the simple view has reached the second option*. That is, without implying any form of ontological dualism, the self is characterised as being more than just thought, action and awareness; it is something which thinks, acts and experiences. This view avoids the complete reduction of the self into various experiences and properties, emphasising the need for a subject of those experiences. It is a dualism of sorts - in that there are two things, the subject and the content of its experiences - but it is not a dualism which implies any form of ontological separability.

* See pg. 185

It must now be considered whether the simple view can support this form of dualism - the concept of the contentless subject must now be examined. To be consistent with simple view demands, it must not only be shown to be possible but also that such a self can hold real identity through time. In effect, it must be possible to produce an account of such a subject without necessitating a reduction to constitutive properties of body and mind.

11.1 THE PROPERTY OF SUBJECTIVITY

Firstly then, it must be established what the property of subjectivity entails. The concept of a single-propriety self is very similar to the original Cartesian idea of the soul - the essence of the soul is the single property of thinking, which persists through time. As seen*, to maintain this concept, Descartes felt it necessary to invoke a further substance dualism which allowed thinking to be associated with one indivisible and persistent thing through time.

It is through the existence of different substances that this approach effects a subject/content distinction. The property of subjectivity differs from other properties because it is ascribed to a different kind of substance, moreover an indivisible substance. Thus the subject, which is a simple thing both at one moment and through time, is constituted of the kind of substance which exhibits no change, for its property of thought belongs essentially to something immaterial, indivisible and therefore capable of real identity. Thus the problem of unity at one time and persistence with real identity over a period of time, is solved. The property of subjectivity cannot be ascribed to material changing things, only to immaterial and persisting selves.

* Section 6.1 (ii)

Problem of Interaction

However, this form of substance dualism runs into fundamental difficulties, not least in the problem of interaction. In Descartes' version the fact that he insists upon the mutual exclusivity of mental and physical substances, causes difficulties in terms of how the person actually works as an integrated system. If the soul is mental, then it cannot be physical, and if the body is physical then it cannot be mental. How then can the soul affect and in turn be affected by the body? The substances are incompatible and cannot therefore have any form of the other in them. How then does the interface between the mental and the physical occur?

The answer to this is that, under such a description it cannot, for to find a solution without serious inconsistency is almost impossible. The result is a useless and impenetrable soul or 'ghost' in an independently functioning and self-sufficient body or 'machine'. It is a short step from this realisation to the acceptance of a simpler empiricist account, discarding the soul as a vestigial organ and replacing dualism with some form of monism.

It is therefore an untenable position to hold that the subject attains identity and distinctness from its parts through being a different substance. In the face of this failure, exclusive substance dualism cannot be accepted as a

reasonable account of the self. If the simple view is to succeed in its claims, it must provide a more acceptable account of a persisting and contentless subject.

A successful idea of one property persisting unchanged through time does not depend upon the postulation of different kinds of substances. Real identity is the necessary element and to satisfy this, it is sufficient that no change occurs. The property of subjectivity need not be something completely different from other properties, it just needs to persist. It may have separable parts which are not essential to it but the basic property of subjectivity must be indivisible and persistent through time. Hence, if the property of subjectivity can be shown to persist unchanged, then there seems little difficulty in producing a valid concept without recourse to substance dualism.

It must therefore be shown that subjectivity can in fact fulfil this demand: that it does not change through time, that it cannot be reduced into a number of different parts and, in effect, that subjectivity has a simple rather than complex identity.

11.2 MODERN SIMPLE VIEW SUBJECTIVITY

In some of the modern simple view accounts just such an account of subjectivity can be found. Within them it is held that the self is a single unanalysable property - the property of subjectivity. Such an account is to be found in the work of both Madell and Chisholm.

11.2 (i) Experience and Subjects

As seen in previous sections*, Chisholm makes the claim that experiences and the self are uniquely linked. Experience is characterised as a modification of the self rather than some different or extra entity in combination with the self. This suggestion is based in the observation that it makes little sense to invoke two separate things when one will suffice. For example, if someone is 'hoping for rain' there are not two things - the hope and that which experiences the hope; there is just one, the subject hoping.

In Chisholm's description, the self is given the prior role - it is experience which is dependent upon the self. For it is the self which is modified in consciousness - the experience is nothing more than a change in the self, which moves from one state to another. There are not two separate things, for experience is part of subjectivity. Chisholm in effect turns tables upon the reductionist, claiming that rather than the self being reducible to properties or

Eg. p.147

content, that content is reducible to subjectivity. It is the subject which provides the medium for the content, not vice versa.

Seen in terms of the present discussion, it is clear that this theory gives the self a necessary place in experience. Without the self the idea of experience makes no sense - there cannot be just a hope for rain, something must be hoping, and according to Chisholm that something is the self. The subject is therefore characterised as a necessary accompaniment to experience. Such a conclusion allows the further implication that the self need not necessarily be dependent upon the experience, and thus enables it to have a persistence independent of the fluctuations associated with the identity of experiences.

However, the description might equally well be turned to a different perspective, reaching an opposing conclusion. For it is equally possible, from the evidence available, to describe the self as dependent upon experiences. Without the assumption that the self exists prior to the content and is modified, all that can be claimed is the constant conjunction of experience and subjectivity. Hence, this line of argument takes the simple view to the Lockean conclusion and no further - that the self is the subject of consciousness. Although it shows that the subject is a

necessary feature of experience, it can be concluded only that the two are interdependent.

11.2 (ii) Subjectivity in Experience

This alternative description, characterising the subject as part of experience, is more evident in Madell's account of the self. His theory follows McTaggart*, characterising the unanalysability of subjectivity as similar to that of the concept of redness. Since no criteria are needed to understand and know an awareness of redness, it is classed as unanalysable. Likewise, on account of the fact that we can know our own subjectivity without reference to any criterial properties, the self too is considered to be unanalysable.

The sense in which these things are unanalysable is clearly on the level of their meaning. In an account of the phenomenon of a red patch no further description or account of it can be given except that it is red. Any attempt to give further analysis fails to capture the real experience of redness - it is something that is known directly, the meaning of which cannot be further explained. Likewise, the same is true of our experience and understanding of subjectivity in general. There seems to be no further thing to which we can reduce the concept for fuller understanding.

* McTaggart 1927

Substitute descriptions, such as 'awareness' or 'feeling', give partial accounts but nothing captures the true meaning of subjectivity.

It is at this level of the phenomenal experience that further analysis is impossible. However, if subjectivity is thus characterised as a phenomenal experience, what kind of thing is represented by the concept of selfhood? When we talk of the phenomenon of redness, there is a sense in which the redness does not exist beyond that particular experience of it. It is not some objective form-like red thing which unites all red things - the universal term 'red' is more akin to an abstract idea. The reality of 'redness' does not exist beyond each experience of it.

If then, the self is considered to be similarly phenomenal, the same will be true of subjectivity. What entitles us to call something a subject will be its association with an abstract idea, not a real 'form of subjectivity' existing independently of the individual subjective experiences. The only reality of the subject will be the particular self being experienced at a particular moment. Moreover, like our red experiences, the phenomenon of the self will not last beyond the experience of it.

If subjectivity really is like redness, it would appear that it is only a characteristic of certain experiences, indivisible from those particular experiences. What is more, as such, it exists only within the experience, having no persistence outside individual examples of it. Such a subject would appear to be essentially the same as the Lockean self - that is, a certain kind of phenomenon existing no longer than each particular experience of it. As such, this analysis, seems to result in a subjectivity which persists no longer than the given moment we are aware of it. For McTaggart this would pose no problem for he is an idealist. But if one wishes to maintain the reality of the self beyond the idea - and it would seem that the simple view does - then a conflict emerges between the desired and the actual status of the self*.

Moreover, it is difficult to see how this self, which is only a kind of experience, can fulfil the moral role demanded of it. Not only does it encounter the problems associated with non-persistence - but the very characterisation of the self as a kind of experience seems inconsistent with a description of the self as a responsible agent. As Vinit Haksar⁺ remarks:

Madell might argue that he does allow for the existence of a self and so he can account for the activity of the self; we are responsible to the extent that our self is involved in

+ Haksar 1991

our action. But if the self is just a property like redness it is difficult to see how the self can influence actions.

Haksar p.242

11.2 (iii) Subjectivity as a Location

An alternative interpretation would be to read the meaning of 'property' in a different sense, ignoring references to McTaggart and redness. For one might state that subjectivity is a locating property of experience. That is, just as one could ascribe to my left arm the property of being attached to the left side of my body, one might also say that experiences of a common self have the property of being located within the same subjectivity. In this way the property of subjectivity ascribes a position to experiences rather than a quality.

Such a reading does make some sense - it does appear that when experiences are ascribed to a self they are being given a location. However difficulties arise if this idea is examined in parallel to concepts of space in general. With respect to space, it can either be denied there is really an absolute thing called space - the concept stands for a constructed idea of relative position; or it can be claimed that real space exists independently of the objects in it. When applied to the idea of subjectivity as a location, neither of these alternatives makes much sense: if it is claimed subjects are independent of experience, then as with absolute space, it is difficult to avoid a return to the

ontological dualism rejected by earlier analysis. Yet if the alternative is adopted, then the subject is characterised simply as a description of experiences relative to each other. This ultimately results in the conclusion reached with regard to qualitative properties - that subjects cannot exist without the particular experiences they are properties of.

Furthermore, it is difficult to make real sense of the person if it is described as merely a location or position. For it seems strange that such a neutral non-qualitative kind of property, which ascribes no real positive characteristic intrinsic to the experience, could be held to be an active and moral agent. Once again, under such an interpretation, the self as a property of experience fails to uphold the necessary moral role of the person. Such an interpretation would therefore seem unsatisfactory.

11.2 (iv) A physical Description of Subjectivity

However, it might be suggested, that such problems arise only if self is treated merely as a phenomenon or property of experiences. If, like 'real' redness as opposed to red hallucinations, it is thought that something more causes the phenomenon of subjectivity, then persistence may be possible. Moreover, if it is considered that there is more to the location of subjectivity than just subjective experience, then perhaps more solidity can be achieved.

To make this clearer I shall return to the question of redness and qualitative phenomena. Interpreted this way, the theory recognises the fact that redness can be attributed a form of existence beyond our experience of it. That is, certain pigments and light conditions cause the phenomena in our experience - a physical description can be given. As such, redness, or the potential for redness does exist unperceived. Similarly, the self might be characterised in this way: although subjectivity needs to be experienced for a full realisation of it, there is a way in which the potential and the cause of subjectivity exists independently of the way it feels. Such a theory pushes the subject beyond the Lockean realm of mere appearance.

To characterise the self in this way is also to move it into a realm of further analysability. Under such an account neither redness nor subjectivity could be described as completely unanalysable. For clearly it is possible to give a causal description of the phenomena. Although it is true that the full meaning cannot be captured, some account of what might be called 'synthetic necessary conditions'* can be given for the phenomena to exist: given concepts we use and knowledge of the world we have, certain conditions appear to effect and be necessary for certain phenomena to occur. Whilst it is true that some other cause might

* For example as found in Kant

result in similar phenomena (eg. hallucinations of redness are not caused by the usual pigments and light conditions), it is considered that certain physical and physiological conditions must exist for us to call it 'real' red.

In this way a partial analysis of subjectivity can be given. Although in physical or physiological terms part of the meaning of subjectivity cannot be captured, nevertheless some of what it means to be a subject can be explained. However, analysis takes the concept of subjectivity beyond the account given by the simple view, for it links the self to certain underlying properties which can be analysed. Unanalysability remains on a level of meaning, and we cannot produce any criterion by which we identify our selves. But this is not to say that because of such irreducibility we know all that there is to know about mental events or subjectivity. As Nagel* points out:

Even though the concept of a mental event implies that it is something irreducibly subjective, the possibility remains that it is also something physical, because the concept doesn't tell us everything about it.

Nagel p.46

The following, therefore, is a suggestion of the direction in which the simple view might proceed or be interpreted to allow for the idea of a persistent subject.

* Nagel (3) 1986

11.3 THE NATURE OF SUBJECTIVITY

The arguments above show fairly convincingly that subjectivity can be further understood by reference physical cause. Moreover, there are strong intuitive reasons for linking subjectivity to some form of consciousness. If this can be shown to be so, then it is not the case that subjectivity is the most basic description one can give of the self, for reference to some kind of consciousness, or ability to be conscious, will satisfy the intention of 'subjectivity' or 'subject'. What then is the relationship between the subject and consciousness?

11.3 (i) Subjectivity and Consciousness

To say that the subject is associated or even identifiable in some way with consciousness, is not to take a Lockean-type view of the self as dependent upon, and therefore equivalent to, self-consciousness. For if this were the case, then the simple view would fail at the first hurdle. If it were basically a Lockean account, then it could be straightforwardly denied that the self persists with anything but loose identity, for self-consciousness is

a psychological state and therefore effectively reducible to just another part of the content of the mind or one of its constitutive properties. Hence the simple view subject cannot be the self-consciousness of Locke.

The disassociation from self-awareness is a reflection of the belief that even if the mind is not aware of itself the self may persist. Perhaps, then, the self is equivalent to consciousness. However, the suggestion that the relationship is a simple straightforward equation between subjectivity and consciousness is insufficient as well. For if sub-conscious activity of the mind is to be associated with the self as a subject, then merely equating it with consciousness will not be enough. The definition must therefore be refined, perhaps to psychological states. It might then, be suggested that whatever goes on in the mind or at the level of psychological content must necessarily have a subject, and without psychological states there could be no subjectivity. Thus the property of subjectivity is

associated with, and dependent upon, psychological events. Rather than claiming that consciousness makes no sense without a subject, it is the idea that psychological states make no sense without a subject.

But once again, this must be modified to include potential psychological states. For, in addition to the times when we are not self-aware or sentient, the self is considered to persist through periods of unconsciousness, where no psychological activity can be said to occur at all. For it is not the case that mind always has active states - there are times of complete unconsciousness, for example whilst under anaesthetic, when it is doubtful whether anything more than autonomous brain events are occurring. Nevertheless, it is thought that the subject persists through these times when the mind experiences nothing. If it were not the case that this is so, then the self would be as ephemeral as the self of Locke. Thus, rather than the actual psychological states themselves, subjectivity is associated essentially with the potential for psychological states.

A clearer picture of a possible simple view account of the relationship between the mind and the subject is now emerging, one in which subjectivity is associated with the possessor or unifier of psychological states. The self is that which is aware and conscious of states, though not

dependent upon them. Subjectivity essentially involves the potential for experiencing and owning psychological states. Subjectivity cannot be reduced to simply brain states, for they may occur without the existence of consciousness, for example in coma patients. It seems fair to say, that if all psychological states ceased permanently, then the subject would not persist. Hence, it is the potential for states and consciousness rather than actual psychological activity which is characteristic of the subject.

Under this account, subjectivity can persist through time, for it is the potential and ability to be conscious, rather than the consciousness itself which is the subject. In this way, the self will not fluctuate with different states of the mind, from unconsciousness to self-consciousness, because it is the thing which has those states. Subjectivity persists in the continued potentiality to experience and have psychological states, whatever in practice that entails. It is thus possible to provide a criterion for the persistence of subjectivity, and subsequently for the self, it is not criterion-less, nor is it unanalysable.

Does this evidence of further analysis indicate that the self cannot in fact have real identity? Furthermore, if subjectivity can be equated with some form of psychological

potential or state, does this entail that subject/content dualism is false?

11.3 (ii) Real Identity

The problem is not in the analysability of the self - for although it might be analysable, this does not necessarily entail that it cannot have real identity. Irreducibility has been linked with real identity because of the problems associated with empirically determining real identity, for if a thing has reductive criterion, knowledge of identity becomes difficult. Since we cannot perceive the unity we only infer it through constant conjunction or similarly, thus any identity we note may simply be a fabrication or loose connection. The only things we know to have real identity are those which are not analysable or reducible. For if divisibility or separable parts are not possible, it is certain that if the thing is present then it has persisted with real identity.

The empirical problem is evident in the Lockean account of the self, for his theory is totally dependent upon empirical evidence. His problem of identity does not arise from the analysable nature of the self but because he equates the evidence we have of the subject with the subject itself. Thus the self is equated with something which cannot persist through time, that is, with self-consciousness.

The status and identity of a thing are therefore at issue if it is only known through empirical methods, but if they are considered to be unanalysable, then they can be known even empirically to have identity. Therefore, if the simple view wishes to produce an analysable concept, not only does it have to be more stable than the contents of consciousness, but it should be possible to know it in more than just an empirical or a posteriori way.

From the suggestions so far, it seems that the modified simple view does indeed manage this. For although the self is analysed in terms of potential for psychological states, it is not reduced to the fluctuations of consciousness. The ability to have consciousness remains one essential property through change. This account produces a subject which is both more stable than the Lockean self and which has more chance of real identity. For its existence is not dependent upon our knowledge or evidence of it - it is possible that it persists even when we are not aware.

In this way, the simple view maintains a distinction between the thing and the evidence for it. It is true that the subject is not an unanalysable fact, but this does not entail that it cannot have real identity. For it is claimed that such a self is not dependent upon experience to prove its existence - it can be known through direct acquaintance.

11.3 (iii) Support for Persistence

Is it possible, then, to uphold such a concept of the self? As seen in Part I, once empirical accounts try to give persons an objective and stable existence, the self or subject disappears, for objective empirical evidence is not possible. Can we therefore have evidence for a persisting subject independent of our experience of it? It is a key point of the simple view that it does not rely solely upon empirical evidence, it makes a clear distinction between how we come to be aware of the self and how its existence is proven.

This returns the analysis once again to the evidence of a priori knowledge, as explained in Chapter 8. It was established then that, although we are dependent upon experience for the idea or awareness of some things, their existence and truth conditions do not rest in that experience. Our knowledge of the subject is through this kind of a priori knowledge. The existence of the self or subject is therefore supported logically as well as being subjectively experienced and is, therefore, not dependent upon self-consciousness to exist. Every time we have a psychological state there must be a subject, something we are made aware of when we experience but which is not dependent upon our experience for it to be true. The subject is therefore not just empirically supported, or just

logically defined, our evidence of it is both empirical and rational.

Such a position allows ontology to diverge from empirical epistemology. We know a self exists if psychological states exist, not just when we experience it but because it has to be there for the states to exist.

However, this claim of the logical necessity of the persistence of the self has only the status of definition. Although we can be certain that self-conscious and conscious states must have a subject, we are not justified in inferring that all states have such a subject, unless they are defined in this way. For the empirical evidence we have of subjectivity is limited to direct awareness of the self in experience - any existence it is thought to have in relation to sub-conscious or unconscious states is inferred from effects we attribute to it and the belief in some form of persistence and identity through time.

Yet despite the simplicity of believing in a persistent subject of all brain states, logically speaking it is still possible that the self or subject only exists in those states in which we are directly aware of it. The problem is similar to the choice between a Darwinist account of creation and the description found in the bible. Both theories can be explained adequately by their own evidence,

moreover the objective evidence available means that each theory is under-determined for it it will support both sides of the claim, though neither conclusively. The only reason for choosing one over the other ultimately rests in the appeal of the theories: it may be more attractive to believe in the causal process described by evolution, than to adopt a view which holds that the earth was made with a ready history (unless one is a six-day creationist). Likewise, perhaps the idea of a persistent self with an accurate idea of its history is more attractive than the ephemeral self which arrives in existence with a ready, but misleading, account of its history.

In conclusion, despite their attempts to prove more, the evidence which the simple view produces for its account of the self, can also be used to support a subject of the status described by Locke.

11.3 (iv) Subject/Content Dualism?

Is the suggestion for the modified simple view merely a reduction parallel to that found in Locke, in which the subject is in effect reducible to a content of the mind - a thought of self-consciousness? For although in Locke there is a distinct difference between the thought of consciousness and the other thoughts which the self is conscious of, both types of thought are basically reducible

to states of the mind. Can the potential for consciousness also be reduced to just another state or part of the mind?

It might be tempting to think so - to claim that it cannot be anything but another facet of mind. Yet there is an important difference between Locke and the simple view, for the latter postulates the existence of something which is independent of the content, something which does not rely upon experiences to exist; it is the potential to have experiences rather than the experiences themselves. The potential for psychological states is not a state in itself - it is property but not a content. Thus, in the simple view, it is not possible that the subject be a part of the mind, for its relationship to it is one of ownership.

Yet still a potential problem lingers. For a case can be made to support the claim that the self of the simple view cannot avoid a reduction to certain physical, rather than psychological, properties. The potential for consciousness can be described as dependent upon certain physical and bodily persistence; for example, without certain brain states, indeed without a brain itself, consciousness could not exist, less so, persist. The self is still characterised as essentially consciousness, but that consciousness can be seen to rely on other things.

Unless a substance dualism is involved, then consciousness must be identified with material substance of some sort. Yet dualism, as seen, encounters fatal problems of interaction, and so the self or subject appears to be dependent upon persistence of certain physical states. If this is correct, it might be argued that the criterion of persistence for the subject can be reduced to certain physical properties, and so its identity depends upon the existence of certain parts or content of the self.

Such a problem arises if it is believed that conscious states are only possible in the particular cells found in our brains, but unless consciousness is thus necessarily linked to body or brain states, the connection noted between the self and the body is only contingent, and not therefore a difficulty. In this case, such properties are of practical necessity only: without them the self could not be instantiated in the normal way, but they are not essentially associated with the self. The link between physical properties and the self is not like that between the self and potential for consciousness: in the latter case, the association is one of definition, whereas in the former, it is one of practicality. It is only if the self could not exist unless those physical states were present, that the connection between them would be logically necessary.

In this way, it seems there are crucial differences between Locke and the simple view: that where Locke does not make a subject/content divide, the simple view does, thereby enabling the self to have a persistence through time which is not dependent on evidence for the self. Although the simple view cannot hold property separability, it can consistently support a subject/content distinction, thus making possible the persistence of the self through time.

11.3 (v) Actual Separability

Despite the success of the simple view in its arguments for subject/content dualism, it fails to support this divide as an actual separability. Thus, although we do make a conceptual distinction between the self and its content or properties, this is far from providing proof of such a division in actuality. More argument is needed to establish the subject as able to exist and persist independently from its constitutive properties.

The interdependence of content and subject has been suggested once already with respect to practically necessary properties, and this association might be extended to encompass certain properties such as the memory, ability to experience, ability to be conscious etc; all still general attributes, but properties nevertheless. It was suggested before that the relationship between the self and such properties is one of contingent association rather than

essential definition. Yet the constant conjunction of the self with certain other properties does mean that we cannot know it in isolation from properties of some sort. How then, can we state with any confidence that it is in actual fact independent of those properties?

Even if one wishes to enforce the distinction between essence and practical necessity, it can be shown that it makes no sense to talk of a subject in isolation from all constitutive properties. Thus it is claimed that even if none of them are particularly necessary, that the having of properties itself is a necessity, for it is nonsense to refer to a subject that not subject to something.

To illustrate this, it might help to consider the ideas of a substratum. This modified simple view, still in effect defines the self or subject as a substratum to constitutive properties. In this sense it is propertyless, for it is not identifiable with any particular properties. Yet any substratum, if it is to be more than just an idea, must be a substratum of something. Matter is always found with some kind of property whether it is solid, liquid or gaseous, and even though it may change through all of these states or natures, it is never without a nature or property of some sort. Likewise, although the self can be the subject of many different kinds of changing properties, it always has

properties of some sort. It is therefore not possible to separate the self from properties in actuality.

11.4 CONCLUSIONS

Far from proving separability from all properties, it has been shown that the simple view to be consistent needs certain properties, both mental and physical, to exist. However, this does not necessitate collapse into a Lockean-type theory, for it maintains certain essential distinctions, not found in Locke. The self of the simple view is known both empirically and rationally, thus enabling us to know that it can persist with real identity, even if empirically we cannot judge whether that identity holds or not.

The simple view manages therefore to enforce a subject/content dualism; having to forego any claims to a substance or subject/property dualism. As such, its subject is able to have real identity, rather than just the fluctuating existence of Locke. However, this is far from proving that such a self is necessarily equivalent to the person. In order for this further claim to be sustained, the simple view must be able to explain why the person must have real identity; and moreover, that the self can fulfil the role of person.

CHAPTER 12 REAL IDENTITY

The simple view has successfully shown that the concept of subject/content dualism is viable. However, the analysis and arguments considered so far have been expressly concerned to illustrate that there is more to persons than just the empirically determinable properties which they own. This has brought the discussion to focus entirely on the proofs and justifications of such a thing - in effect a discussion of the isolation of the self.

Despite the effective characterisation of the self, the simple view has still failed to show that it is anything but conceptually separable from its properties. It is still conceivable that Locke was correct, that, in the end, the self and its potentiality for consciousness is only an idea we have when we are self-conscious. In the absence of any other support, the simple view account must now rely upon the necessity of a separable self to epistemology, in arguments which appeal to the centrality of a propertyless and basic self for our concepts of morality, identity and even the external world.

Even then, having established that the person is something more than just a collection of properties, the

simple view must explain why the self is in fact the person: why it is the self which determines personal identity, both at one time and through time. The equivalence relies upon the necessity of real identity, for the self is the only thing which can have real identity and so, must be the person since persons must persist with real identity. Thus, to uphold its view, the simple account must now show that real identity is necessary to persons, and thus why the self is to be identified with the person.

As seen in Chapter 6, this line of argument was used by Butler and Reid: it is inherent in their theory of individuation, which characterises the form of loose identity as ultimately a mere question of words*. This conclusion is based in the recognition that this form of identity, found in successive objects, is really only attributed in virtue of a conceptual persistence and unity. The modern simple view also takes up such a position: Madell⁺ claims that a reductive account of identity is to be objected to on a fundamental level, for it entails that persons will be like objects, whose identities ultimately reduce to matters of convention.

It is true that some objects are considered to have only a loose identity; but the consequence of thorough-going

* Section 6

+ Madell 1981

empiricism is that this is the only form of identity in the world. To remove real identity from the realm of actual possibilities means that nothing, including persons, can have an identity independent of convention. Such insistence of empiricism leaves our morality and epistemology without much fundamental support.

The simple view claims that, if persons are not identical through time, two problems arise: firstly our current foundation of morality will disintegrate; and secondly our whole epistemology will crumble. It is argued that all of our beliefs and ideas in these areas are built upon the concept of a person with fixed and real identity. Thus empiricism strikes at the very heart of our epistemology - its conclusions are contrary to all of our beliefs about ourselves and the world.

12.1 MORAL CENTRALITY OF THE SELF

As already shown* it is not obvious that an identical self is a necessity for our morality. A concept of moral responsibility needs only an idea that we persist - such a concept is often appropriately applied to complex or constructed things. It seems that we can use the notion of responsibility without a concept either of ourselves as a basic or separable self. The fact is, that our notion of responsibility already does work when identity is only a matter of convention.

12.1 (i) The Moral Obscurity of the Self

Added to this problem is the intangibility of the simple view's self. Like Locke, the simple view encounters insurmountable hurdles when faced with the socially forensic role of the person. For the self is essentially subjective, and like Locke's person, it is only subjectively known. This being the only method of personal individuation, it becomes impossible to determine the person from a third-person perspective.

It is not that the person is actually determined by the self, for as has already been explained, the simple view strongly distinguishes between evidence and truth. In this

* Chapter 4

respect then, it differs from Locke's idea of person, for at least this simple self has a fixed and objective history. Once a deed has been done the agent responsible cannot change (unless of course the original attribution of blame is mistaken). Thus, in contrast to the Lockean account, personal identity here can be objectively determined. However, the problem is, how to ascertain that identity either in the first instance of praise or blame; or in the historical activity of linking a present person with the past?

Like Locke, the simple view describes a self whose individuation is only possible from a first person point of view. In fact, the simple view is worse off than Locke, for its person is logically obscure - whereas Locke's is really only practically evasive. For although the self of Locke is created and made by the first person, within the account the criteria for its identity are logically accessible: that is, that it is thought which makes the person what it is, and a thought is an empirical thing. Thus, because Locke's thought of personhood is a property which logically speaking could be empirically located; unless one believes that subjectivity is beyond the explanatory power of all empiricist description, it is possible to individuate a certain person at one time. Although in practice it is impossible to know what is in each person's concerned

consciousness at any moment; the problem in Locke might be considered to be one of practice, not logic.

However, the simple view's self does not even have a logical possibility of being identified from the third-person perspective. The simple theory maintains that subjectivity and objectivity are mutually exclusive, moreover, that subjectivity is beyond the explanatory powers of the empiricist. For their subject, unlike Locke's has no essential empirical properties which identify it - such a role can only be achieved by the constitutive properties, which in the simple account are only contingent. The self does have a property, but it is an intangible one - the potentiality for psychological states - and as suggested, it is not dependent upon empirical evidence for its persistence.

Through the insistence upon this fact (which, if it be remembered, is based in moral argument) the simple view sacrifices any practical moral use it might have had, for its propertyless-ness makes it completely intangible. The person of this view is logically accessible only to itself - it is both actually and logically obscure to any third person, by definition.

12.1 (ii) The Person and Properties

The forensic nature of person as a moral entity entails

that it cannot be obscure to others: the person must be an interactive and social thing. However, if it is impossible to determine whether a person is present or not, or whether the person present is the same as the one who did the action in the past, punishment and reward will become precariously justified things. It will be upon first-person testimony alone that we shall be able to determine the persistence or identity of the person, thus exposing the field of morality to the abuses of liars and cheats, who we will not be able to find out. It might be argued that this is already a problem of morality. However, at present, it is considered to be a practical problem, in the simple view, we are presented with a logical difficulty.

Memory

Worse still is the fact that a person cannot be aware of himself as a moral agent without the use of certain properties, more specifically, a memory. For unless we can think of ourselves as things with a past, and associate ourselves with persons in the past, we cannot have an idea of ourselves as morally responsible. For first-personal or direct knowledge of the past is given to us only through memory, something recognised and noted by the simple view: as Swinburne points out, the memory is our only directly known access to the past and past selves.* Without this

* Swinburne (1) 1984

access to the past, how can we consider or identify ourselves as persons? The person, then, must at least essentially possess the property of having a memory in order to identify itself and know what it is.

Moreover, the correct function of the memory for the simple view will entail the use of further properties. This is necessary because of the phenomenon of mistaken memories. It arises because from a first-person perspective a false memory has the same quality as a true one - there is no way, from pure reference to the memory, that we can identify them as false. As seen in Part I, Locke defined personal concern only in terms of memory present to the consciousness, thus to him, it was not of interest whether particular memories were true or false compared to historical fact.

However, the simple view believes that memory must be compared to fact, hence it is possible to have a false memory leading to an inappropriate identification with a person in the past. It must therefore explain how identity is something more than just memory, in order both for mis-identification and mistaken memory to be possible, and to enable what it feels is correct identification. Yet the sort of identification which is not through direct and therefore fallible access to the past (i.e. memory), involves some kind reference to properties.

Thus, if we are to have appropriate feelings about responsibility, there must be some way of determining the veracity of the memory. We must therefore have something else, independent of the memory, to check remembrances against: some other form by which to individuate past persons. This will necessarily involve some idea of the person couched in terms of properties, for the concept of propertyless self is useless in such a situation. Moreover, these properties must be somehow necessarily linked to us as persons, otherwise they will not be justified as true identifiers.

Without the further use of properties, therefore, it is difficult to see how a person can use memory as an efficient identifier. Without the use of the memory we cannot have direct, non-empirical access to ourselves in the past - and thus cannot have an idea of ourselves as persons.

The moral person of the simple view, in its necessary isolation from objective properties, is obscure and unable to fulfil a moral function. If the meaning of person is to be taken as that of a rational and forensic thing, then the real self of the simple view fails to produce a concept sufficient to the task of being a person.

The argument from morality offered by the simple view clearly does not hold. To support its dualism then, it must

fall back on the wider claim that the real identity of the person is fundamental to epistemology.

The argument of epistemic centrality claims that, if we are to have any knowledge of real identity, or indeed an idea of real identity, we must be able to know that identity, a priori, in something real. This demand finds its roots in the problems encountered by Plato.

Plato's theory is developed in answer to the observation that the fluctuations of the sensory world present a distinct problem of knowledge. The objects of the world are presented through our senses in a way which entails that they cannot be known: since experiences change from one moment to the next we cannot know the true identity of anything they represent. Hence, we can know nothing of the identity of ordinary objects, and cannot subsequently derive our idea of identity from them. The notion of identity must come from somewhere else: Plato* claims that it comes from knowledge of the forms. Thus not only the real identity, but the origin of our concept of identity comes from something detached from the ordinary world.

12.2 (i) A Priori Knowledge of the Self

The simple view responds to this problem by placing the self at the centre of knowledge. Rather than through the Platonic forms, followers of the simple view argue that our

* Eg. The Republic

knowledge of identity is based on knowledge of the identity in the self: that the identity of the persisting self is the only thing known in this way with direct and certain knowledge. Although we are directly acquainted with our experiences as well, it is only the self which is known to persist. It is therefore the self which is the source of our idea of real identity.

This self must have an actual existence or it will be like any other collective term we give real identity - the self, then, must exist in actuality. It is an epistemological basic, relative to which we identify and have knowledge of everything else. The simple view thus presents its objection to empirical accounts as a conceptual difficulty: that without real identity in persons, we could not know the meaning of identity at all.

Chisholm adopts just such a view, stating that the subject or self can be directly known and experienced without recourse to empirical evidence. Its perfect identity can therefore be known with certainty, and as such, it provides the basis of our epistemology of identity:

It would seem that, if we can individuate anything, if we can pick out anything, then it is not the case that the only way we have of individuating things is by relating them uniquely to still other things. And it may well be, in fact, the only way we have, ultimately, of individuating anything is to relate it uniquely to ourselves.

Chisholm (1) p.31

In these arguments there is a use of direct experience as the evidence and truth about persons. Our self knowledge is presented as something as certain as the direct experience of our sensations and memories, and is therefore known indubitably in the way they are. Yet without experience we would not be aware of the subject - we know the self through its experiences and characterise it purely as that which can feel or experience. Does this mean that our knowledge of the self is dependent upon empirical information and therefore that the self must ultimately be reducible to the consciousness described by Locke?

The answer is no, for in the account of the simple view the experiences made use of do not constitute the person, they only give rise to awareness of the existence of the person: the truth about persons is something different, for our knowledge of the self does not rely upon empirical inferences, but is direct and certain. We are made aware of ourselves through experiences, but we do not depend upon such experiences for certainty of that knowledge. Thus it is claimed that knowledge of ourselves is in fact a priori (as defined by Russell):

Thus while admitting that all knowledge is elicited and caused by experience, we shall nevertheless hold that some knowledge is a priori, in the sense that the experience which makes us think of it does not suffice to prove it, but merely so directs our attention that we see its truth without requiring any proof from experience.

Russell p.41

As Russell goes on to state, the value of such knowledge is that it goes beyond the strict phenomenological limits of certainty set by rigorous empirical criteria. Without synthetic a priori knowledge we cannot move beyond immediate experience and tautology, so can say nothing about the world beyond sensation. Thus, the modern view holds that it can advocate the existence of something which cannot be empirically proven. The certainty of the self, though empirically elicited, is not empirically dependent. In effect, the modern simple view claims to have broken the bonds of strict empiricism; providing a priori synthetic knowledge.

Identity Relative to the Self

Our self-knowledge, being a priori, is certain and is therefore a truth - a truth about something with real identity. All other things are experienced through their phenomena or properties, never in themselves. Real identity can therefore be experienced in the subject itself, and this is the only knowledge of real identity we can have.

The direct knowledge of the self, enables us to form a paradigm of identity, for it is the only direct experience that we have of real identity. From the self we measure all else, starting with the very notion of identity itself. If the self were not fixed, persistent and spatio-temporally continuous, it would be impossible to detect things that are

not so continuous, or in fact any motion of any sort, for the self's view point would be constantly changing and altering. We use the self as a fixed reference point. The self is that which we assume is stable, and against which we measure all motion and all else that exists. If things do not change in relation to the self, then we claim that they persist, and if they change then they do not.*

Since only the self can be known in this way, it is upon this knowledge that our knowledge of other identities rest: all things are subsequently known relative to the self. Objects and even experiences over time, are measured against the knowledge of the self, our idea of our own identity providing a yardstick against which all things are judged. In effect, all things are known by a description relative to the self, which forms a base of certain and directly known truths.

12.2 (ii) A Relative Concept of Identity

The simple view therefore places a fundamental importance in the role of personal identity as an epistemological building block. If we can know ourselves a priori, which the simple view claims we can, we can start to talk about the world. Knowledge of the identity of objects and things other than the self is logically dependent upon our knowledge of our own identity. For it is something certain

* See also Shoemaker 1959

and real: once recognised it is instinctively known to be true. Our awareness of the identity of the self also gives us experience of something the identity of which is not mere convention, for its unity, synchronic and diachronic - is not something merely inferred but directly known.

However, such a necessity can be challenged in two ways. The first focuses on the claim that such an epistemological basic is necessary for knowledge. Without these basics we would have an infinite chain of relative descriptions. But why is this impossible? Is it necessary that the chain stops at a determined point, or can things continue to be defined as things in terms relative to each other indefinitely? The concept of relative space is a coherent notion - identity too might be characterised in this way rather than as an absolute description. To assume that this is not possible, is to assume a position of absolutism with regard to the subject of our perception, and knowledge; and this is far from proven.

However, even if one will not accept the view that identity need not be absolute, it can still be doubted whether it is necessary for knowledge of identity that the self be actually separable. Is it not sufficient that we believe the self to be separable with real identity and thus take it as our basic? The self might still fulfil all of

these roles if it is only an agreed stopping point and its position as ultimate reference being mere convention.

It can be shown then, that we need an idea of a persisting self to found the basis of our current epistemology. However, it seems that somewhere along the route the intention of the arguments has been lost; in leaving behind the moral and forensic implications and connotations of the concept of person, the self becomes disassociated from personhood. In effect, somewhere along the way, the person has been discarded, allowing the self to emerge as the object of interest.

Subsequently, the epistemological necessity discovered in the self does not prove that such real identity must be found also in persons. To infer that this is so, it is necessary to produce more arguments, identifying the self with the person.

12.3 CONCLUSIONS

The simple view can claim to have shown that we can have real knowledge of something which can have real persistence. In doing so, it has successfully shown that we can have certain and a priori knowledge of something persisting in the world. It is this self which we use as a base for our conception of moral responsibility, and it is this self which forms the keystone of our epistemology.

However, despite the fact that we do use the idea of the self as something with real identity, such a role can be fulfilled by a self which, although conceptually irreducible, is actually only conventionally determined. It does not appear at all obvious that we need a separable self to have an idea of real identity.

CHAPTER 13 SUMMARY CONCLUSION

13.1 THE SIMPLE VIEW

The simple view is a response to the subjective and transient problems associated with the Lockean theory of personal identity. The result of concentrating on empirical evidence for persons is an insufficient account - objective empiricism loses the subject, and Lockean persons, although having the essential subjectivity, do so at the expense of any form of persistence or objectivity. By linking this to the nature of our beliefs about the future, the simple view shows that our concept of our own future makes little sense unless we include within the account of personal identity the survival and persistence of a propertyless self. Thus the complex view which reduces our identity solely to the persistence of certain properties, does not account sufficiently for our beliefs about ourselves.

Such an outcome is considered to be fundamentally incapable of producing a worthwhile concept of personhood. Both the obscure, privacy of its persons, and their fluctuating identity, undermines the base of morality. For if we cannot individuate or identify others, then punishment and reward on a social scale will be impossible; and if we

have no idea of our own or other's persistence, there is little reason for moral notions of concern and responsibility, either for the past or the future.

Thus the simple view attempts to produce an account which allows the person to have real identity. Taking a rational approach, in the hope of allowing persistence in persons, it searches for a further element over and above their empirical properties. Their rationalism enables them to maintain a distinction between identity and the evidence we have for identity - thus allowing the possibility that the person is more than just empirical properties we have in evidence of them. Hence, the simple view effects a subject/property distinction.

The early simple view, was associated strongly with the Cartesian account of the soul - their motivations, intentions and theories seem to be very similar. Both argue for a persisting and indivisible self which is separable from its body and individual properties. In consequence, the early simple view was judged with Cartesian theories - being rejected for its failure to produce convincing rational argument, its inability to prove the actual existence of this subject, and the nonsensical implications of the theory.

13.1 (i) The Modern Simple View

The modern simple view has emerged with similar characteristics, developing the original simple view, and many of the cartesian arguments, in an effort to support the separable subject. It defines the self as an unanalysable and propertyless subject: however, after considering this idea, it seems that in order to remain consistent, it must be modified to the claim that the self is a single propertied subject - in effect a return to the cartesian idea of a soul which has the property of thinking. This does not in itself license a wholesale adoption of Cartesian dualism, along with the troublesome mental and physical exclusivity, for the persistence and real identity required is satisfiable through some form of substance monism.

It has been shown that this idea of substance/content dualism is supportable and consistent with simple view intentions. Under such an account, the self can have both identity and persistence, for it is not reducible to the empirical properties it owns. Subjectivity is characterised as the potential for psychological states, clearly, not a collapse back into Lockean theory of self as dependent on its content-property of self-consciousness.

Such a self is clearly not unanalysable, for its meaning can be explained by reference to psychological potential. However, this does not seem to be of great importance: what

is necessary, is that despite being a reductive concept, the subject can be known to persist with real identity. Thus, even though direct and empirical knowledge cannot confirm persistence, we can know that such selves do persist through rational and logical knowledge.

13.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE SIMPLE VIEW

The simple view does manage to support the idea of a persisting and existing self that is not merely reducible to its properties.

13.2 (i) Inconclusive Evidence

However, the simple view fails to show that this self is actually separable. The arguments it employs, such as moral necessity and epistemic centrality, do not to show that such a self is necessary to a person - either morally or conceptually. Moreover, it does not seem that the self is necessary to epistemology, other than as an idea; less so why such a self should be a person.

This point, then, is not convincingly argued for. As shown, the simple view nowhere produces arguments to support an actually separable self - all that can be defended is that the self is different from properties. Hence, it fails to support that the dualism as anything more than a conceptual necessity or possibility: the self is real, but the simple view has failed to show that it is actually separable from the properties. It therefore fails to prove that dualism is actual rather than just an idea. It seems that the simple view pushes its dualism no further than idea of the Lockean self.

Yet, it does have a distinct advantage over the Lockean theory, recognising both the empirical evidence of subjectivity, but adding the rational and therefore evidence-independent knowledge. Unlike Locke, the person is not dependent on self-awareness; and thus at least it answers some of our beliefs about persistence and enables moral rationality to have some real and actual basis.

13.2 (ii) Moral Obscurity

However, the moral acceptability is not complete, for a second problem emerges: like Locke, the simple view fails to produce an objective account of persons. The self is obscure to the third-person view point: even though not so capricious identity-wise as Locke's person, it cannot be known to persist either to the self or other people. In effect, the necessarily tangible and public person is equated with an intangible and private self.

This clearly means that it does not provide a sufficient account of persons, for persons need an objective persona to accommodate ideas of responsibility and concern - they are social beings. Thus, if the modern simple view wishes to uphold the forensic role of a person, it will fall victim to the problems faced by Locke - the focus of attention on the self and its experience of persistence, leaves little room for accurate third-person identification or a third-person perspective.

PART III

A NEW VIEW

of

PERSONAL IDENTITY

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as
the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a
man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd
with the stuff that is fine...

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself...

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'

CHAPTER 14 MORAL VALUE

Both simple and complex accounts claim that they have a moral foundation upon which their concept of person is built; both base their claims in how we use and how our morality functions. The complex view looks at the value of the person and gives an account in terms of certain properties recognised as evincing moral behaviour; the simple view argues from intuitions about what we value ultimately, expressing its conclusions in terms of an irreducible self.

In the absence of metaphysical arguments producing a conclusive account (other than by clinging to a certain epistemological approach), before moving further in the formulation of an account, the intuitive arguments or moral reasons must be reassessed. Perhaps an examination of the morality of personhood will help produce a solution to the problem of personal identity. Such a move refers back to the definition of person, which takes it to mean 'that for which we feel concern and which is the unit of responsibility'.

The insufficiencies of both simple and complex theories of personal identity mean that there is little hope of

either side producing an acceptable account. It would seem that the ideal theory would involve elements from both sides - a combination of both the persisting self and some form of objective properties. This formulation of necessary conditions, finds its support in the concept of morality: they are the key aspects entailed by any concept wishing to produce an account of persons which fulfil a moral role.

14.1 SELF AND VALUE

The simple view amounts to the claim that what is of moral value is the propertyless self or subject. This idea of the subject is of central value to us: and the belief in its persistence takes a foundation role in belief of our persistence. For, it claims, it is concern for this which underpins the idea of responsibility for ourselves and our morality over time: it is the self for which we plan, hope or despair.

As suggested earlier*, these arguments which use concern felt for the future make some intuitive good sense: the simple view's concept of self does reflect a concern we feel for the self over and above the concern we feel for our specific properties. This line employs the belief that without the concept of a self, the properties seem to have little value. Indeed properties without a self lose their sense of uniqueness, individuality and the ultimate value in their persistence.

It is true that there is some comfort in knowledge that some of our properties may persist after death; a measure of survival seems to be achieved through such things as our works, children, ideas and even others remembering us. However, it is still generally considered that once

* Chapter 9

dead the individual no longer exists, that he is gone and no longer present in the world. It is of little consolation to me that properties like those I have now will exist somewhere, if it is not I who experience nor own them. Can this claim be supported or understood in any way other than merely the vague demonstration and thought experiment already discussed?*

14.1 (i) The Value of Self as Experiencer

In a purely functional description, this value we place in the self might be explained in terms of centrality: the self is the organising unity, the centre for all input. Moreover it is that which experiences and therefore appears to be where 'I' am.

This consciousness of this unity - and thus awareness of the self - is of the type described by both Kant and Locke. In Kant,⁺ the unity of apperception gives rise to a transcendental knowledge of the self; and as described in Locke,[#] unified experience involves an awareness of the self. In both cases this unity is what the self is: the value we feel for ourselves as individuals is the value of a unified experience.

* See Part II
+ Kant 1781
Locke 1690

In Locke, this awareness of the self is given through its reaction to experience: in effect we become aware that we are not just passive receivers of information but experiencers affected and changed by that sensation. It is through these changes to ourselves wrought by experiences that we come to know the self - we feel them and react in some way with feelings of happiness, sadness, pleasure or pain. Thus it would seem that Lockean self essentially amounts to the emotional responder.

As such it is easy to understand why we should feel concern for, and value such a self: it is that which has the capacity to feel joy or sorrow; it is what makes us something other than merely automata or passive data banks. It is in order to experience a feeling of well-being that most of our actions are performed; and of chief concern in our lives is whether it is pleasure or pain we encounter. Hence it would seem to be that which we value most: the state of such a self has value as an end in itself, most actions are aimed at achieving a certain effect upon the quality of our experience.

If this idea of the self is accepted, these states of emotion are to be contrasted with the properties of things which cause them. Properties have value, but only in respect of affecting the states of the self. A pleasurable sight, sound or taste has far less importance if there is

no one to taste, hear or see it. Indeed it would seem that the simple view is correct when it claims that it is the experience of such sensations which gives them their value: from the first-person perspective it appears to be true that if no experiencer is present, there is little worth in the persistence of the properties at all.

The experience felt by the self is therefore to be distinguished from the feelings - it is not the particular experiences that we value most, it is the having of them. What is of value 'per se' is the subject. It is true that the subject wishes to feel in a certain way and to be in a certain state, but the utility of this state is in our ability as selves to experience it. It is not the pleasure itself we desire: it is the self having the experience of pleasure.

This theory of value is to be distinguished from any sort of utilitarian or consequentialist principle: the end in itself is not the happiness, the ultimate value for persons is not pleasure, what is valued is the subject which experiences happiness or pleasure. Such a distinction avoids the peculiar utilitarian conclusions which are a result of focussing morality or action solely on amounts of happiness or utility: where value is placed in happiness regardless of who or what experiences it, the result is the sacrifice of the individual to general ideas of happiness.

Even in refined versions where pleasure or utility is graded - making the higher pleasures felt by more refined persons most desirable, and animal pleasure one of the least desirable - the focus is not on the subject but the pleasure or utility.

This utilitarian line moves toward the kind of value explained in Parfit* and later complex views where the quality of the individual becomes more important than the individual himself. In the case of any value based on utility, the quality of pleasure or happiness or whatever the individual is capable of feeling, is of more value than the individual. In reality, what is of greatest value to us, is that we or some particular individual experiences the feelings. The ultimate value is surely in the individual, not the feelings.

14.1 (ii) The Moral Self

The self characterised as the subject makes sense as the source of value in persons because it is that which feels and reacts. In moral terms, the self is that for which we have interests, we wish it to be happy and free from pain. It is the centre of value in our own experience and we desire what will cause a feeling of well-being. It is this perspective that is of true non-derivative concern to the self. Particular qualities are only of interest as producers

* Parfit 1984

of good or bad conditions affecting the self. Thus the persistence of the subject is of primary concern and therefore its identity is necessary.

As such, the self might be used to form a base for moral behaviour towards others: a belief that they too are selves with such interests (that is, to be free from pain etc.) which will modify our behaviour towards them. This concept relies upon likening the condition of others to that of the self: an idea of our own existential value and the subsequent rights we accord the self leads to the ascription of similar value to independently-existing others. This idea is extended to belief that other persons not only have but value an individual perspective on the world like that experienced by the self. Non-derivative value is therefore ascribed to others and consequently persons are considered to have a intrinsic value in themselves.

It is this form of value that seems to provide the foundation of equality and treatment in the writings of moral philosophers such as Singer*. In searching for a universal principle in which to base our treatment of others, they find that any appeal to factual considerations such as intelligence, race or creed cannot provide a

* Singer 1979

universal criterion. Interests, however, are common to all humans: everyone has interests and everyone should have the right to pursue them. He states that:

Equality is a basic ethical principle, not an assertion of fact...when I make an ethical judgement I must go beyond a personal or sectional point of view and take into account the interests of all those affected. This means that we weigh up interests, considered simply as interests and not as my interests, or the interests of Australians, or or whites. This provides us with a basic principle of equality: the principle of equal consideration.

The essence of the principle of equal interests is that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like of interests of all those affected by our actions.

Singer p.18-19

In Singer the central idea that the individual is of importance - an individual with concerns and interests is a fundamental premise for the rest of his theory. Unfortunately it is an insight which in his writings becomes subsumed under a utilitarian focus on the quality of life available. However, remembering the suggestions made earlier* as to why such interests are valued, it might be understood why we should give the self a key position in morality, and why we attribute and acknowledge its existence in others, recognising equality of rights in pursuit of their concerns.

Belief in others as subjects with motivation towards their own personal aims prevents us from seeing them in solely derivative or objective terms: that is, rather than

* Section 14.1 (i)

using others as means to our own ends, we treat others as ends in their own right. It is this attitude which Kant approves of as the only basis for moral behaviour: others should always be regarded as having non-derivative value*. The foundation of such altruistic behaviour could be characterised as an empathy with other selves.

14.1(iii) The Self as the Source of Non-Derivative Value

Knowledge of this value and identity of the self is direct⁺ and thus assumes a unique epistemological role, essential to the existence of our idea non-derivative value and identity. Awareness of such values in the self are by direct acquaintance, whereas empirical limitations ensure the impossibility of knowing such value in the other by anything other than indirect acquaintance or description[#]. Unless we have an idea of such value in ourselves based upon something known, how can we defend the idea of the possibility of such value in others?

Epistemological limitations do create difficulties for belief in non-derivative value in others. For if it is empirically imperceptible (that is, one cannot point to any particular experienceable qualities or properties creating the value), from where does an idea of its existence arise?

* Kant 1781

+ See Section 8.2

See Section 8.2

One answer is to arrive at it by argument from analogy: the behaviour of others that we observe is recognisable from qualities and manifestations we experience in ourselves. A move is thus made from knowledge of what is the case for the self, to the inference of the existence of a similar subjectivity in others.

14.2 PROPERTIES AND VALUE

Having agreed this much, it must however be recognised that we do place a necessary though derivative value on the properties we consider to be associated with the person and the self. Having claimed that it makes little logical sense to talk of experiences without an experiencer*, it must also be remembered that neither does it make much sense to talk of experiencers without the experience⁺. Pragmatically and logically it would seem that experiences give rise to the self, but is this the only value that properties have to the person? Do the properties have any other significance to us other than as logically necessary to existence of the self? Is it the case that we value properties for their quality not merely logical efficacy.

14.2 (i) Properties Affecting the Self

It is very difficult to make intellectual or emotional sense of an entirely propertyless self. If asked so to do, it is impossible to envisage without some properties being present. Even if it were a possibility, what real value would a completely propertyless self embody? We value the self for its ability to perceive and respond; but it cannot feel unless it has sensations, and these are caused and tempered by properties.

* Section 14.1 (i)

+ See Section 10.2

Particular properties affect the self: for example, memories produce certain responses in present consciousness, psychological states will affect feelings, a damaged limb will cause pain, and even chemicals in the body have been shown to have profound effects upon emotional states. Thus we will be concerned with which properties are capable of affecting the self and whether they will be of a benevolent or malevolent nature? Value is placed in the particular quality of our presently associated properties.

However, we value our properties not only on this passive level but also upon an active level, for some properties we have react with, or are affected by, other properties of ours and the external world. It seems that certain properties will determine the sort of emotion and response felt: if a person is sensitive to loud noise, a pneumatic drill will cause him pain; a mercenary will not react with deep distress to killing; a person who has a high pain threshold will regard the graze on his finger with equanimity; someone plagued with constant pain may feel a greater sense of relief from a temporary reprieve from sensation than a person with no such illness. Thus the quality of response the self feels is largely determined by properties we class as ours, ranging from intellect, character traits and temper to memories and past events that have formed our psychology.

There are therefore manifold influences on the quality of experience a subject will feel, all of which affect the input quality and the reaction to it. It is difficult to understand how a self can be affected or changed unless it has such properties, unless it is somehow in the objective world. The self is thus affected by certain properties which are relatively constant and which it calls part of itself and, as such, these are of positive value and concern, for they determine not only that life will be experienced, but how life will be felt - how painful or pleasurable it will be. Hence, properties determine the experience of the subject and thus the state of that for which we have interests.

14.2 (ii) Knowledge of our Properties

Our belief that we have certain properties stems from our peculiar and unique perspective on them. If as Locke suggests they are encompassed in our consciousness - that is, that we are conscious through them, rather than solely of them - then we consider them to be ours. We have a special relationship to our objective properties which is not held between us and other objects, for we are aware of them subjectively. We can experience them as objects, but also as part of us and as parts of the subject. In effect, we can feel them to be ours, as well as see them. Thus, I know that a part of me has feet because I experience through them: I can tread on hard objects which cause me pain; I can

sit soaking them in a bowl of warm water, which brings pleasure. I am aware of the world through these properties which seem to be relatively constant - they are part of my reacting, my unified consciousness. They are part of my perspective on the world.

Such properties affect the quality of my experiences, and thus my subsequent feeling of pain or pleasure. But such properties can also be experienced as objects: that is, I can perceive them from an objective viewpoint as well as a subjective one. This gives both me and my properties a link with the objective world: I can experience myself as part of the objective and subjective world.

Furthermore, I observe similar properties in others and believe that they too are properties of a self - I can acknowledge others to be such as myself. Although I cannot experience them subjectively, I can perceive them as objects and also infer their existence as subjects. The use of such properties as evidence is not as random as in the use of evidence presented by the simple view, for here there is an established link between objective properties and the self - one directly experienced by the self. Although it is possible to have only one example of this - that is in the self - it seems that this is enough to infer the existence of other persons with properties and selves.

Although this method of argument from analogy has been widely disputed, there is no other way we can know of others selves. All arguments which try to provide an objective account of selves or consciousness ultimately fail on the point of subjectivity: behaviourism, functionalism and even a mind/brain identity thesis cannot provide the kind of evidence of that which will prove the existence of other selves. However, since we know that the self exists in at least one case, our treatment of others as if they had selves can be explained, if not rigorously justified, through the use of analogy. Since we know that in at least one case there is a self connected to objective properties in a direct way, we believe it may be so of others and treat them accordingly. The connection between properties and selves is not accidental - there is a real connection we know of in ourselves and take to be in others.

14.2 (iii) Value and Memory

The constant properties associated with our selves we call personality. As such it is a profile of what we are in objective terms; the way we can be expected to react; how we behave towards others; what we can and cannot do; how the past has developed us - there is an endless list. It is the properties of our personality which we value, for they determine the quality of our existence. The personality encompasses not only what we are but what we might be: it is how we judge what we are and how others place a value upon

us. Our personalities give us a persona - a public image - and thus provide us with an essential ingredient as persons: that we have external qualities as well as private selves. These properties are not only logically necessary to support the self, they are necessary for us to be persons, for they are what might be termed 'key person-properties'.

Crucial to ourselves as having particular properties is the memory. This functions on both conscious and sub-conscious level: the content of remembrance reminds us of our qualities and properties; and the cumulative learning and knowledge held within the memory forms, creates and causes our personalities to be what they are today. Even if one believes in genetic determination, it cannot be denied that our past has had a unique role in creating our qualitative identity. Personality is a product of an individual, and the affects of circumstance are contained within the memory. Without a memory we would not have characters - we would have no background affecting us now, neither would we know of ourselves as having any particular qualities or traits in the present.

The value of memory in this role is described by Mary Warnock* in her discussion of memory and personal identity. After describing Sartre's+ account she concludes that:

* Warnock 1987

+ Sartre (2) 1943

Perhaps it would be better to say that my past is my life, and my life is continuous, with a future as well as with a past. What my future will be is a matter of choice, but a choice that cannot be made except in the light of the past. The things I have to choose between would not be as they are if my past had been different. My consciousness of myself in the present, as a person with choices to make, is a consciousness inseparable from what has happened to me. My present cannot be divorced from my past, neither can my concept of self be separated from my awareness of what I was in the past. The person and 'his' past are one and the same.

Warnock p.63

Warnock here claims that we are the product of our past in a way that is unavoidable - everything we are is somehow contained within this body of knowledge, events and expectations. Sartre himself goes so far as to claim that the past is what we are: it is through knowledge of the past and reflection upon it that we are created - the memory informs and makes us what we are. Although what has happened to us is fixed, as we progress through life we come to see it differently - we reflect upon it and manipulate it to frame both what we are and what we want to be. Warnock summarises this idea:

In the case of humans...since they reflect on what they are, there is room for them to determine what they will be, in accordance with the interpretation they place upon what has happened to them. The past becomes 'their' past precisely because it is the subject of reflection. Although I cannot change the past, I can change my view of it, and the use I put it to. It is like a tool made in a certain shape, but flexible, and thus able to be adapted to new circumstances. And thus, Sartre, concludes, my past is me.

Warnock p.62

The similarity to Locke in this last notion is striking,

it even acknowledges the fact that we make the past our own by reflecting upon it and using it to frame our beliefs and concerns about ourselves. Moreover, it emphasises the strength in the Lockean claim that we are what we think we are, our memory playing the crucial role in forming this belief. Sartre claims that we are free to decide what we want to be, and to an extent this will involve using our past how we please. Although Sartre's concept of selves maintains that their pasts have a certain historical objectivity (and thus are more fixed than Lockean persons), his person is still free to change his beliefs and descriptions concerning it. In terms of description and interpretation, there is no fixed and absolute past - each person is free to make of it what he will. Hence the past can always be regarded and treated in a different way and there is no predetermined causation from which we can trace what we were in the past to what we shall be in the future.

It must be remembered that memory as used here is a qualitative description - what Locke and Sartre achieve is to isolate our knowledge of the qualitative self. The memory provides us with an idea of what we are, the nature of our personalities and how we shall be in the future. It is the memory which informs us of the properties of which we were aware in the past, of the properties we consider to be ours in the present, and of the kind of properties we might associate with ourselves in the future. This may change

through time whilst we remain quantitatively identical - the subject remains but its qualities alter. The memory is therefore a vital and necessary thing in the conception and formation of ourselves as public and significant creatures.

14.2 (iv) Public Value

It may be tempting to think that self-awareness of properties is the most important of our considerations, indeed that it describes what we truly are. For it isolates what we believe or know ourselves to be independent of the opinion of others. The memory provides us with an idea of what we are and what to value - according to philosophers such as Locke and Sartre, we decide what we are using the memory to guide us. Locke might not characterise personal identity as the conscious decision described by the existentialist creation of the self, but in essence the roles of self-appraisal and self-determination are the same.

However, the memory theory provides an account of persons which is really only one side of the description. As argued earlier* it is difficult to see how such a fluctuating self can be all that there is to a person - for as such it is an unknown quality, insufficient to fulfil a completely public and socially moral role. There is a strong intuitive and moral reason for claiming that the memory, though crucially

* Section 4.3 (iii)

linked to our self conception, is not all that we are. There is something independent of memory which is of value in the identity of the person.

It is not just in the belief that they are selves with properties causing them alternately happiness or pain that we value the properties in others. We also value the quality of their properties to provide responses in our own emotion. We enjoy the particular properties of others in entertainment, knowledge, comfort, and so on, as well as being wary of their ability to cause us harm, hurt, and anguish. Like our own selves, there seems little worth in a purely propertyless other - we cannot gain or lose anything from it: it is entirely useless. We cannot even fear for its pain or pleasure, for it will have none of these things, being unable to experience.

On a public scale, more so than in private assessment, it is believed that persons have a fixed past and degree of objectivity in the present. As argued earlier*, some level of stability and public accessibility is desired and in fact believed to exist in person. It is commonly held that a person's past is of some relevance to what he is now and what can be expected of him in the future: if the above account is correct, then it plays an integral role in the creation of the person. The past then, makes us into our

* Section 4.3

present selves; moreover we have a number of associated properties which affect the way we act and react. Because of the inaccessibility of consciousness of others these properties play a significant role in our assessment of other persons and their values.

We do judge and characterise other persons - it is not solely down to the self to determine its own character. The third-person description of others is of almost equal importance to us as our own perceptions of ourselves for it determines whether we are wanted, liked, loved or needed in society - a position which will affect profoundly the quality of our existence.

However, although what goes into making the person might be considered to be absolute, what is chosen as relevant to the character of that person now is not. The subjective interpretation and selective judgement of personality seen in Locke and Sartre extends also to assessment of others. All empirical qualities are subjectively interpreted, whether they belong to the self or to someone else: when I look at someone else, the properties and personality I ascribe to him will be the result of my personal interpretation. Separate observers might perceive different elements and thus the importance of qualities differs. For example, the character and value ascribed to a Nazi SS Officer by his daughter, will entirely differ from those

ascribed to him by a member of the Jewish race. This variety of description extends even to properties unknown to the self, but observed in him by another. In all cases it seems that although we consider the referent to be the same, the connotation ascribed to any person may well differ from account to account. We all make of others what we will, and their properties are valued in the significance they have for us.

Recognition of this fact may lead to the belief that qualitatively persons are not fixed: that personalities do not have some absolute truth about them, thus concluding that our desire for certain knowledge of others is impossible. Such would be the outcome of any theory that claims with Locke that, what is of importance in persons is the value and concern they have for themselves or others. More so in the existentialist view, for in despair of finding any objective truth, it focuses solely on the relationship of the subject to the beliefs he has about himself and others.

Yet the phenomenon of different descriptions is also consistent with the belief that personalities are in some way absolute - but no one is capable of appreciating every facet and description of a particular person. Thus if it is agreed that the awareness we have of value must be somehow underpinned with a stable and fixed past, then the person

becomes more tangible and hence able to fulfil his forensic role. Any account which does not define the person solely in terms of 'how it seems' should be able to provide the historical stability required for such an approach.

14.2 (v) Stable Personalities

Belief in the historical objectivity of persons rests more easily with beliefs both about ourselves and others. We do come to expect certain stability in people - not that they might regularly alter completely from day to day. Moreover, although each of us might agree that his account of a person may differ from the next man's, where such conflicts of opinion occur we are willing to accept the validity of different descriptions of persons, including ourselves. Moreover, such acceptance is not with a relativistic intention - it is not that we believe each description to be true or valid but incompatible with others; if we accept them, it is because we take the accounts to be additional information, often adding them to our own descriptions, in the belief that we are enriching our knowledge of that person.

Usually only a dramatic revelation causes us to describe a person in completely different terms - in such cases it is usually believed that the former assessment was wrong in the light of new facts, rather than that the person has radically changed. Over a period of time we are ready to

accept gradual development, but such change is causally consistent with the individual's qualities, his past and his present. In cases where there is sudden change or rapid alteration, for example debilitating illness, loss of memory, or psychological disorder, it is true that the personality or properties can radically alter. Often this results in irreconcilably differing descriptions of the same person, either over time or, in the case of split personality, at one time. However in such cases the cause is attributed to an abnormal occurrence - it is not something we expect in healthy persons. The person is still described in absolute and fixed terms and the conflicting descriptions explained by an abnormal state of affairs induced by illness.

This account of value in properties accords with our variable conceptions of ourselves and others - that at times we consider certain qualities to be part of us, and while in others the same properties are totally disregarded. Because such properties are of derivative value they will be more, or less, important in certain situations. It is only with very close friends or family that we develop a deeper understanding of qualities, mutability and variety of appropriate descriptions; and it is often with these people that we desire those things to be more fixed and stable, rather than fluctuating with interests.

14.3 CONCLUSIONS

In the basic attribution of human rights the self is the touchstone; but in terms of people we wish to be in contact with, relate to, avoid, or engage in any other social interaction with, the properties seem to be of greater importance. In close relationships we come to value the self in another person in terms considering more than merely fundamental rights or utility; but even then, unless the tie is very strong, properties will influence our attitude towards that individual. For the majority of people we encounter, the principle value we hold for them is in the the qualities and properties they have.

The qualities we associate with particular people are what we call their personalities - and indication perhaps that they have something to do with the person rather than just the man. These can be consciously known or even unknown to the person but they are nevertheless thought to be the essential him or her. The personality is something to which people do feel strongly connected: it accounts for a large part of the value we attribute to others as social beings.

The personality determines how one is treated, how one is accepted in society and the value placed on an individual by others. The personality is therefore of great and deep

value to us as persons, for it is how we are judged by ourselves and others - what we are taken to be. In effect, personality is a characterisation of the person: it is to be distinguished from mere accidental qualities.

Thus although the non-derivative value seems to be in the act of emotional response, it is difficult to make sense of any value in the potential for such response in isolation from any properties. Nevertheless it is only the propertyless self for which we feel non-derivative value it is the self which we value as an end in itself; the value qualities have is derivative, being in the role of providing experiences for the self.

It seems then, that if value is taken into consideration, the person is not the separable self of the simple view, nor the self-consciousness of Locke, nor indeed the properties of the complex objective empiricists: the person is a combination of all three. The value we place in persons cannot be explained without acknowledgement of the contribution from all three descriptions of persons - the persisting self, the self-aware subject and objective properties.

CHAPTER 15 MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

To make the basic value of interest the fundamental and only criterion of person is not sufficient to account for the morality of persons, for it fails to account for the moral responsibility we feel and impute and entails that those we would wish to excuse from moral action will not be excluded. Thus, a morality of personal rights founded solely upon equality of interest and utility will include amongst its participants not only lunatics and infants, but possibly animals too. These consequences are vividly exemplified in Singers's discussion of ethics*, where he takes the extremes of any interest-based morality to imply that animals and all sentient beings should be included in our personal morality.

There are of course ways in which one can adhere to an interest related ethic yet maintain that animals, infants or lunatics are excluded from the concerns of personal rights. For example, one might introduce the idea of self-conscious interest, thus effectively excluding most animals from the sphere of morality. Or in contrast one might feel that it is right to include animals and non-self-conscious human beings in a morality - they feel pain and pleasure as we do

* Singer 1979

and we afford them the basic rights of freedom from pain (except in the case of factory farming, where it appears animals are not considered to have such interests).

However, I wish to argue that even given these considerations, a morality of personal rights must include more than simply a criterion of self-interested concern. I have already shown how this concern might be considered to be the source of non-derivative moral value in ourselves and others; but more is needed if responsibility is to be part of the moral code, and the subsequent system of punishment and reward regarded as necessary in most personal inter-relationships is to be accounted for.

Thus, although we might explain our source of moral value in basic terms of interest and utility, something more must be added. Awareness of a subject with certain interests does not imply personal responsibility. All that it implies is that we have certain concerns about the way we are affected by certain input - not that we are in any way responsible for the reactions to that experience and any subsequent action in response to it. The existence and awareness of the self does not entail the existence of a responsible self or indeed a self with a notion of responsibility.

15.1 RESPONSIBILITY AND SELVES

In order to feel responsible for our actions or to blame others for theirs, some idea of agency is needed. We must consider that the action was willed or intended by the person, otherwise he is not entirely culpable for the consequences. We may attribute some degree of blame in the form of identifying the individual responsible for the action, but there is a degree of reluctance in holding individuals morally responsible if their actions were performed under duress, diminished control, illness or even simply ignorance. What criterion is necessary to the concept of person to ensure that it will encompass the role of a responsible unit?

15.1 (i) Attribution of Responsibility

Primarily, responsibility is attributed to the individual who caused the event - we talk of a fallen branch being responsible for the hole in the roof. But praise or blame is not always attributed to such involuntary acts: what appear to be rewards or punishments are often enforced as pragmatic solutions, not moral censures. Thus, a particular tree might be encouraged and prized for acting as a wind shield, or by contrast, felled if the branches start to fall on passers-by; but in both cases the treatment is not considered a punishment or reward - it is a practical move intended to encourage or prevent certain events from

recurring. Likewise, although a psychopath may be locked away for violent behaviour, such treatment is essentially to protect the community, rather than as a punishment for intended actions. If an action deserves moral credit or blame, it is attributed on the assumption of voluntary behaviour.

The importance of this distinction is emphasised as early as Aristotle*, who discusses at length the various forms under which behaviour can be classed:

Since moral goodness is concerned with feelings and actions, and those that are voluntary receive praise and blame, whereas those that are involuntary receive pardon and sometimes pity too, students of moral goodness must presumably determine the limits of the voluntary and involuntary. Such a course is useful also for legislators with a view to prescribing honours and punishments.

Aristotle(2) p.111

He classifies actions as voluntary, involuntary (performed under duress) and non-voluntary (ignorant). Only voluntary actions can be considered morally culpable; and only then if they are done out of a considered choice, rather than unthought reaction. He goes on to define moral choice as being distinguishable from desire, temper, wishes and even opinion: the responsible act has to be intended deliberately with consciousness of the choice; moreover it must be something for which we have the power of commanding or denying. The morally responsible act, according to

* Aristotle (2)

Aristotle, effectively excludes all those without ability to consider and reflect upon their actions - such as children, lunatics and animals.

It seems, then, that there is a hierarchy of behaviour involving an increasing responsibility, with moral responsibility placed at the head, and involving voluntary and intended actions. If the agent is to be considered in a moral light, then the acts must have been performed voluntarily - any influence from determined behaviour is often counted as an extenuating circumstance. It is this potential as agents that we value most highly in persons, and it is this agency for which we feel real moral responsibility. If we could not have done otherwise, it is not our fault and therefore, no use feeling guilty about it.

15.1 (ii) Properties and Predetermination

However, the existence of such free behaviour is the bone of great philosophical contention: what characterises a truly voluntary act? Can we really be totally free to will and do as we choose? The problem emerges as a conflict between free will and determinism: the difference between the view that every event is causally determined, and the belief that we have a free will overriding any such determinism and making all our intended actions completely voluntary.

Physical and psychological traits can be entirely explained as the product of outside influences: we are born with certain genetic structure; we do not choose our parents nor formative social background, and we cannot control the events that might affect our psychological or physical character. Thus any product of these will be determined: it is logically possible that a causal explanation of any resulting individual or action can be given. In effect, our character and our actions are no more than the product of uncontrollable circumstances - ultimately we cannot help what we are or do.

It would seem that if a straightforward empiricist approach to persons is taken, then this conclusion is unavoidable. If the person amounts to no more than his or her properties, and the identity of the person can be explained in terms of those properties - their continuity and historical objectivity - then that person will be totally accounted for in any description of those properties. Since properties are causally related and considered to be 'out there' in the world of objects, the person will presumably have both a causally traceable past and future. The person will be causally determined.

If this is so, why should we feel responsible for our actions? We can feel concerned, because the action or event will affect our experiences. Moreover, we might be

identified as the cause of the act in the way that we might blame a branch for wrecking a greenhouse. But unless we can control what we are and do, can we be held morally responsible? It is argued that unless we have a will, somehow disconnected from our properties, we cannot be held responsible for our deeds nor classed as true agents. For in effect we are no more than sophisticated machines or animals.

This requirement, that moral behaviour be completely non-determined, is articulated most forcefully in Kantian ethics*. Kant states that an act can only be virtuous if it is performed completely voluntarily. Moreover, it is not enough that our acts are performed free from duress, for even those who are naturally inclined to be good are not automatically virtuous people. The act cannot be performed merely out of inclination, it must be actively decided upon. The truly moral act must then be totally free from any determination caused by our nature.

Hence, it is claimed that, if we are to be morally culpable, we cannot be made up of solely determined properties. Some part must be free from causation, to enable voluntary behaviour for which we can be held responsible. The concept of a free will tries to solve this problem of volition, providing a part of persons which can

* Kant 1781

override the determination of our properties. It accounts for the belief that at any time we could have done things differently.

If we are to have free will, we must have an idea of a propertyless self: the self, in its propertyless-ness, is free from such constraints to act and feel as it wills. It would seem that a self which is essentially disassociated from properties is a necessary element in our conception of moral responsibility. Perhaps then the simple view was correct in its claim that the separable self is the foundation of morality - but for the wrong reasons.

15.1 (iii) Agency and Causation

The solution of free will, however, engenders a further difficulty concerning responsibility. For it is claimed that responsible acts cannot be totally free from causation: if they were, our behaviour would be random or mere accident. As such, 'free' behaviour is nonsensical and uncontrolled: if an act is totally uncaused it cannot be the product of a volition. In effect, an impasse is reached - we cannot be responsible if determined, yet if our acts are uncaused, we cannot be responsible for them either. Chisholm* describes the difficulty as follows:

The metaphysical problem of human freedom might be summarized in the following way: Human beings are responsible agents, but this fact appears to conflict with

* Chisholm (3) 1964

an indeterminist view of human action (the view that the act or some event that is essential to the act, is not caused at all.

Chisholm (3) p.24

There have been many theories attempting to reconcile free will with determinism - most amounting to a kind of freedom which entails what we call free behaviour, such as volition or choice. They state that although this behaviour is caused by someone or something, it is of a type which we consider to be voluntary, therefore it is free to an extent and we can be held responsible for it.

Yet if we accept such theories - in effect that freedom is a social construction rather than a reality - we still encounter the problem of determinism at a deep level. Can we help what we do? If we cannot, then social punishment cannot realistically be imposed as a penalty, but must remain only as a method of removing anti-social elements. If it were thought of as punishment for deeds we could not help, then social law would not be particularly just. There is a need for a real distinction rather than just a labelling process if we are to feel and act genuinely in a moral light both towards others and in acceptance of responsibility.

As remarked earlier,* our actions cannot be totally

* p. 369

uncaused for that would entail complete disassociation from responsibility for them too. This idea is reflected in our beliefs that blameful or praiseworthy acts should be consistent with a certain personality in ourselves and others. Deeds done out of character or at random are considered to be exceptions or often are blamed upon something other than just the agent, even to the extent of absolving the person of moral responsibility. We do believe that a person has certain qualities or properties that are decisive in the decision-making process and these are considered to be traits or tendencies which can be used to explain the choices made. If the choice conflicts with this anticipation then it is often the case that we make exceptions in the judgement or attribution of responsibility.

Yet the causal process seems to be unlike a straightforward cause and effect - for one trait or event might have any one of a number of effects, both on the development of the person and on his reactions. We can trace a causal line backwards using hindsight to locate the source of any action, but to predict of future behaviour would be either extremely difficult or impossible. If one were aiming to reconcile freedom with determinism, any prediction would prove impossible in practice, for the number of options available to any particular agent would make any calculation beyond the next minute fiendishly

complex, producing an incomprehensible number of possibilities. If however, one wished to remain a free will advocate, one might describe the choice at any one juncture as completely free - the choice of which path is not influenced by anything other than the will: hence it is impossible to predict.

There is, then, a sense in which some determinism is demanded in moral actions - in effect that they be a result of who the person is: that his behaviour is caused by a character or personality. Indeed, some would claim that the choices at this fundamental level determine the character of the self and so are of fundamental value. For example, Charles Taylor* writes of fundamental evaluative choices that:

This radical evaluation is a deep reflection, and a self-reflection in a special sense: it is a reflection about the self, its most fundamental issues, and a reflection which engages the self most wholly and deeply. Because it engages the whole self without a fixed yardstick it can be called a personal reflection..; and what emerges from it is a self-resolution in a strong sense, for in this reflection the self is in question; what is at stake is the definition of those inchoate evaluations which are sensed to be essential to our identity.

Taylor p.126

Thus it is claimed that, such things as personality, belief, background and genetic determination do contribute towards actions; but at a fundamental level we choose what affects or causes our actions: we decide what we do by

* Taylor 1976

assessing and reflecting upon our basic beliefs and personality. Thus sense can be made of the apparent dilemma facing any moralist: by an appeal to something other than normal causation being the creative source of the agent. The character of the person cannot result merely from a natural inclination for that would not be free: it must be made from undetermined choices. These reflections form the bedrock of subsequent action, determining what the person will become. In this way the argument returns once more to a very Sartrean perspective: that we are free to choose what to make of ourselves, and this is the fundamental basis of morality.

15.1 (iv) Experience of Freedom

Whether determinism be true or false, the fact remains that we need a concept of voluntary and intended action to make sense of responsibility. However, this idea of being free agents is not simply a logical concept: it is something experienced within the self. Willing and acting with effect can be experienced subjectively - knowledge of voluntary acts and their effects in the objective world is direct. We experience both as the acting subject and the affected object. For example in lifting my arm I can feel myself doing it subjectively, as well as watch it occurring objectively. It is through the ability to control properties volutarily, and through experience of our own actions and reactions, that we come to an awareness of

ourselves as responsible agents: we experience ourselves as voluntary actors when we can control intent and action.

Like basic value of interests,* our understanding of ourselves as subjects with wills is used as an analogy to form the belief that others too have such wills. Strawson⁺ bases the resentful attitude that comes with moral blame on the belief that others intend to cause their actions. Thus we hold others responsible for behaviour we consider they caused, believing that they too can choose whether or not to cause certain events. It is this belief in an agent with not only feelings but ability to act voluntarily, that is the basis for inter-personal and responsible moral relationships.

* See Section 14.1 (iii)

+ Strawson 1962

15.2 OTHERS AND RESPONSIBILITY

If the suggestions of the previous section are correct, we believe that we have a free will and that we can choose to be what we want; we can choose to act in the way we wish; and we are free to act and react as we please. However, there still remains a difficulty: that is, the self is a public being - it has a public responsibility as well as a privately felt one.

15.2 (i) Public Persons

As mentioned numerous times before the concept of persons and the drama of responsibility is not something enacted solely at an individual or subjective level. Guilt, pride or blame are concepts which do not extend merely to our concern for our own present and future: they involve the effect actions have upon others, and the impact their actions have upon us. Even if we were to insist that every action is ultimately a selfish action and every concern reducible to the effect felt by ourselves, the existence of others must still be recognised, for they affect us and we hold them responsible for that effect.

That the term 'person' does have a social and public meaning we cannot deny even if we wish to argue over the motivation behind it. As such the identity of persons must have some form of third-person objective identification: for

if persons are to be punished, to have rights, to be moral and responsible agents in society, some method of individuation and reliable identification is necessary.

This need for empirical identification can be illustrated by envisaging a situation parallel to the fable of the Ring of Gyges. If persons were intangible like the invisible person with the magic ring, would they continue to be moral? If we thought that we could not be identified, would we continue to use our concept of social responsibility - continue to feel guilt or blame for our actions?

Less cynically, if identification methods were not based in some certainty, it is questionable whether we could bring ourselves to impose a system of punishment. If the connection between the subject or person and his empirical properties is contingent, then we cannot be certain that the properties are indicative of the person. Such contingency may leave open the possibility that innocent men be punished for crimes of others, simply because those punishing base their knowledge of identity on intrinsically fallible evidence.

As with all thought experiments it is not possible to produce certain answers from these suggestions, but they do serve to show that the effect of being unable to identify persons with confidence would involve a change of current

conditions comparable to those imagined in a thought experiment. For to undermine the ability to individuate would be to use the term 'person' outside its normal operating conditions, and thus to subject it to strains under which it does not at present have to function. To avoid taking the concept beyond its normal usages, and thus to provide an accurate account of the concept of person, we must therefore ensure that the criteria provided do enable objective identification of persons - otherwise what is produced will not be an account of our current concept of personhood.

If then, the concept of person is removed from the tangible realm, our existing methods of identification and blame could not persist. It may be that under such changed conditions the notion of social responsibility which lies in ability to determine accurately individual agents, would not continue. If the person is to have inter-personal relationships and personal responsibility is to be extended to others, although the self is a necessary element, more than this is needed for the criteria of persons.

The way we individuate persons other than ourselves is through empirical properties. This point is uncontentious, for it is difficult to imagine any other method apart from some form of psychological information, which in itself must be presented in an empirical way if it is to be effective in

public. Empirical properties are the only access others have to the agent. We must infer the existence of any aspects of others believed to be beyond properties - even a personal testimony from the subject itself must be empirical to a third-person observer. It is our practice to judge and evaluate a person on the strength of these properties and they are all our only source of evidence in this respect concerning others.

This empirical nature of our social dealings leads some philosophers to behaviouristic or functionalistic accounts,* in effect stating that this is all there is to the person. The extent of our use of the properties of persons is indeed almost behaviouristic, and in public the properties including behaviour, past acts and personal statements are considered to be the person. They are this personality, or character, and are taken to be that person - we have nothing more than this to go on. This point is made by Sartre⁺ when he writes that:

In life, a man commits himself, draws his portrait and there is nothing but that portrait...What we mean to say is that a man is no other than a series of undertakings, that he is the sum, the organisation, the set of relations that constitute these undertakings.

Sartre (2) p.42

However, the arguments hitherto, if sound, have shown the individual person must be more than just the sum of his

* For example Ryle 1949 or Dennett 1978

+ Sartre (2) 1946

properties; that the self is necessary to the concept of person. Thus behaviourism or functionalism, though providing an accurate description of part of what it means to be a person, is not sufficient to account wholly for persons.

15.2 (ii) Properties as Evidence of the Self

The simple view recognises the close relationship between the self and its properties and characterises it as one between a thing and its evidence. Thus it claims that properties can be taken as evidence of the self, though they must not be identified with the self, for the self is separable from the properties. Yet if the connection between evidence and object is to be of any real value, we need to know that it has some sure and necessary foundation, rather than some coincidence or constant conjunction. The simple view claims that the memory tells us of our past and provides evidence of our past public selves, but how can this be so if the self is objectively propertyless?

The simple view relies upon the credulity principle for justification, but as argued earlier* this can give us nothing but likelihood based on intuitive responses. The most that the simple view can ensure is that it is likely

* Chapter 7

that we can rely upon our properties to inform us of the person and its identity. Moreover, even if we accept that memory is simply good evidence of personal identity, it is difficult to understand how this might be so, given the nature of the self. It is intangible, not in space or time, and a subject possessing real identity. How then can tangible, temporal and spatial objects without strict identity be signs of the self? The problem seems to reduce to a case similar to the mind/body problem: how can the mental affect the material, and vice versa? How does the connection work?

It has become clear that the concept of person must include properties within its definition of the essence of persons. The self cannot extend to such boundaries and though essential is not sufficient to provide an accurate account. To regard the self as the person would be to place limitations disqualifying it from its proper function. The new concept may attain a certain and absolute identity but it sacrifices the present meaning of the concept.

It has been argued before* that certain properties are necessary to support the self - practically rather than conceptually. What emerged was the idea that the self is not separable in fact from certain properties and therefore if those properties were present, so too might a self be.

* Chapter 11

This might provide a solution to the problems of the intangible self: for it would entail that the self is not intangible - its identity with certain properties means that it has a certain physical and therefore publicly identifiable aspect.

If it is the case that the self is inseparable from its properties, we can explain more coherently why the properties are reliable evidence of the self: it is because the self is necessarily dependent upon those properties in every instance that we know of. We experience the connection in ourselves, and understand a relationship between ourselves and certain properties; a relationship involving our dependence upon them and a direct awareness of them. If this is the case then we are justified in judging and administering justice based in individuation by properties, for the properties are part of the person - a reliable part of them. However, if the use of properties in identification of persons is simply the identification of selves, then such a suggestion has disadvantages. Indeed the objections make it impossible to to be satisfied with the self as the person.

Change and Properties

The first is a problem which is common to all attempts to account for identity in empirical terms: that contingent properties make possible complete changes in empirical

appearance, and if this is so, then we can not rely upon them to indicate persistence of the self. The major thrust of this objection can be dealt with fairly easily with the suggestion that degrees of change are tolerated in properties, but only gradual developments restricted by continuity. There are rules applying to different things defining the identity conditions we set for them, which allow successions of material and eventually wholesale renewal.

Total or rapid change, or even in some cases gradual development, is not tolerated in persons. There is difficulty in cases where the development is dramatic or instantaneous and it can be difficult to judge whether or not the person has indeed survived. For example in the case of the repentant or reformed character, it can be disputed as to whether he is still responsible for his crime; many people would not wish to feel responsible for the actions they performed as children: it is sometimes thought that the senile or insane are no longer the same person as they were before illness struck.

This answer provides a satisfactory reply for the empiricist, who reduces the person to its properties, but it does not help to explain the relationship between the properties and the self. For as noted earlier,* particular

* Chapter 11

properties do not seem to be necessary to the self - the self is considered to be independent of its qualitative identity. Some properties are practically essential to enable instantiation of the self, but a necessary connection to specific properties has not been explained. If this is so, then properties can change 'ad hoc' yet the self persist.

Furthermore, it is possible that whilst certain properties exist, no self is present - such as might be evidenced by a corpse, a machine or even an animal. If it is the case that the properties are present, yet there is no self, then the properties cannot be an exclusive indicator of the self. Such a state of affairs will entail that we cannot be assured that the properties indicate a self at all - the self as described still has no necessary public image, for it can only be identified as a self by itself.

Thus the connection between particular properties and the self can amount to no more than contingent evidence and cannot therefore bear the burden of the concept of person, nor adequately explain our faith in properties as indicative of persons. If the self were the person, the contingent links between the person and its manifestation would allow its identity to persist through complete and radical empirical change, or its cessation despite continuance of properties. This clearly does not reflect

the demands and conditions within which we employ the notion of the person - if it were the case, the concept of person and responsibility could not continue to be used in the way it is.

The insufficiency is not confined to practice, for the contingency of properties with respect to selves entails that it becomes logically impossible to be certain of accurate identification of persons. Such difficulties have already been discussed with respect to Locke*- that even the self is not immune to mis-identification of its past selves. Yet if we cannot feel certain of the logical possibility of identifying the person, we could not employ the form of punishment and reward with regard to personal rights that we do. For the ascription of justice would be subject to a logical rather than just practical difficulty of accurate identification. Certainty would be beyond all possibility.

15.2 (iii) Properties as Necessary to Individuation

In consideration of personal identity, it must be also remembered that the self is not the sole unit of concern in moral responsibility - either to the self or to others. Moral acts are not only valued or noticed because they are initiated by selves, for they are performed by properties and qualities of persons. Such properties are not valued in

* See Chapter 4.

forensic terms simply for their supporting role of the self; they are considered to be the person and just as responsible for the actions as the self. Without the characteristic personality the self could not be a person: it could not act or feel, let alone feel responsible, or be responsible for particular properties.

The value and importance placed in objective properties, and the fact that they are not used merely as evidence of, but considered in some way to be the person, indicates the strength of their significance. It would seem that in addition to being evidence of the self, they also have value and significance in their own right. The properties are not merely of derivative value to identifying other persons - we consider them to be part of other persons. The properties are subsequently used to individuate and locate others, and they are used with confidence in their accuracy.

Moreover, it is clear that this use of properties is not merely from a third-person perspective. As described earlier*, at some levels of self-consciousness our properties are an important part of ourselves, and we feel not only concern but also responsibility for those properties. The value of ourselves is tied up with being an experiencer through certain properties: we identify ourselves as having certain characteristics, and perceive

* Eg. Chapter 14

ourselves to be public objects as well as private subjects. Our qualities and potentials, traits and characteristics provide our public persona.

Properties are thus necessary to our characterisation as individuals in society; moreover, I have also argued that they are necessary to the identification of our selves in the past and in the present*. Without the existence of properties, especially the memory, we could know neither what we are nor who we are; we could not identify with properties now or in the past.

Obviously this is a crucial link to our awareness of responsibility, for if we do not know ourselves, how can we feel responsibility? We might know of certain properties causing certain acts, but will be unable to associate them with ourselves or others; we might be aware of the actions of a past person but be unable to identify him with anyone in the present. Without the memory and the existence of certain and person-properties, the notion of responsibility could not function.

* Eg. Chapter 14

15.3 THE ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS AND PROPERTIES

If properties play an important role in the determination of responsibility, how are the properties associated with the person? It is clear that the qualities and personalities of persons develop, change and modify over time - how can we understand our responsibility for any particular set of properties?

15.3 (i) Self-Determination of Responsibility

If we are to follow the conclusions of the first section of this chapter, the link between the person and its properties is a matter of personal choice. The self decides what it will become - it uses and relates to different particular properties at distinct times, developing and changing not only its personality, but the responsibility felt any of its actions or properties as well. Thus, responsibility is concerned primarily with self-consciousness and concern.

The problem associated with such freedom is similar to that described with respect to the theories of self-determination put forward by Locke and Sartre. Both claim that the self creates its character, it chooses what to count or discount as its properties, and decides what will or will not affect it and its actions. Such ideas result in a strange concept of responsibility. In the Lockean view,

what emerges is an agent responsible only in the present, and solely to himself - the past fluctuates and spins with the phenomenology of the psyche. In Sartre the difficulties are just as bad - he too produces a theory in which persons are not responsible for their pasts, only for their present and future.

Sartre maintains that individuals are not responsible for things done by them in the past - all that concerns them is what they make of themselves in the present, and what they will become in the future. In our self-creation there need be no remonstrance about past selves, for the present self is new and different and cannot be held responsible for some other self now gone. The person can describe the past acts in causal terms, pointing to why and where the present self came from; but the choice over which memories to involve in its personality is entirely free for the self to make. I am free to use the past how I will; I am free to become what I will; as such I am free from the responsibilities of a past for which I no longer feel concern.

What emerges is a reinforcement of the idea that any theory placing identity of persons in 'how it seems to them', rather than something more objective and stable, involves a deviation from our normal belief in historically fixed responsibility. If the person is continually re-created, it cannot be responsible for particular past

actions - only those which he notices and feels concern for. In Locke the concern is an involuntary act - we do not really choose to notice some memories and not others; in Sartre the choice is for us to take - and we must feel responsible only for those things we really associate with our present selves, but in both the self and its responsibility is detached from the past in a way which disregards completely the role of other persons in moral responsibility.

15.3 (ii) Public Concern

The crucial point that both Sartre and Locke forget is that our personalities and qualitative nature are of importance and value to others as well as to ourselves. It is not only the self that is affected by its properties; not only the self feels the subsequent concern. Others are affected by the properties of any person: they feel concern for those they love; they value the persistence of certain properties and they can be hurt by another's actions. Hence the past and the present of a person is known and of importance not only to himself but to others too. The relevance of certain properties and past actions cannot be discarded through the disinterest of the self, for they may well still be of deep and grave concern to others.

For example, if the actions of an individual have brought children into the world or caused the death of someone else,

these deeds make their mark upon the world in ways that cannot be removed by a simple decision by the self. Even if a child is forgotten by its parent, it still exists to mark that past deed, and that deed still remains of concern to someone who will hold the parent responsible for the act. Just because the parent has ceased to feel responsibility it does not make the act, the child or the remaining concern a falsehood. If the mother of a child is killed, even if the murderer ceases to feel guilt, the act remains in the world, and the child may continue to condemn the killer. Other people will remember and associate certain pasts and characters with certain persons, even if those pasts are no longer present in the consciousness or concerns of that person.

It is true that the concern and responsibility felt for others can shift and change as it does in the self: what is of importance in others today, may change by tomorrow or may still be present in ten years time. Moreover, an understanding that persons become removed from the past is reflected in the Statute of Limitations. Yet even so, the fact that we do associate others with concern and responsibility, indicates that the person as a social and forensic thing cannot be solely determined by the self - others have a part in it too. Even if responsibility is limited to the concern or blame felt for voluntary actions, rather than anything more absolute, others must be taken

into consideration. And if moral blame is thought to entail something objectively fixed to past events and acts of individuals, then it will be independent of the concerns of any individual - whether the self or the other.

15.3 (iii) Independence of Person Properties

The claim that properties of persons are independent of concern is made by many, one of whom is Shoemaker*. He links third-personal criteria of persons to the possibility of an objective world. If persons have an identity independent of the way things seem to them, then there is a possibility that others exist in an independent reality.

The immediacy and certainty of first-person memory claims, which plays such a central role in Locke and Sartre, is recognised by Shoemaker. He does not wish to deny the direct knowledge we gain seemingly through the memory - he states that it is a necessary truth that "...if one remembers an event, then one must have direct knowledge of the event at the time of its occurrence". (Shoemaker p.13) Furthermore, if I claim that I remember breaking a window yesterday, it is necessarily entailed that I sincerely remember breaking the window. Such a claim is a first-person memory claim, which is based in no criterial evidence, just upon the direct knowledge of the memory. It cannot be analysed in terms of conclusions drawn from memory claims. Memory statements are

* Shoemaker 1959

therefore either known or they are not, it is senseless to talk of them being true or false:

Normally I can identify a past experience only as one I remember. And when this is so, there cannot arise any question whether I remember the experience or any question as to the ownership of the experience. In such cases, where one's knowledge of a past experience is based solely on one's memory, there is no room for the employment of criteria of personal identity. No question of identity arises, and hence there is none to be settled by reference to criteria of identity.

Shoemaker p.163

Thus, like the direct knowledge we have of our experiences, which are known a priori, we have a direct knowledge of the content of our memory. In experience the certainty lies in the content and consciousness - not in what they may tell us about anything further; likewise we can be certain of the content of memory: what we cannot be so sure about is what it tells us about the past.

Of great importance to Shoemaker's claim is that memory claims are generally true if made sincerely: our belief in the truth of our first-person sentences is attributed to the fact that when employed sincerely, first-person memory statements are usually true. (Shoemaker claims this fact is a necessary feature of this type of statement and of human beings - a type of basic credulity principle as found in Swinburne*) However, they are only considered to be generally true: within such claims is included an essential

* See Chapter 7

element of corrigibility - that there is an objective yardstick against which these claims are measured. It is the existence of this corrigibility which is used as an argument against using the self as a sole criterion of personal identity.

Perceptual and memory statements are corrigible because of their non-personal and objective content. The fallibility of memory thus arises in the non-personal element of the claims - that is, in their correlation with certain objective criteria. That is to say that although it makes no sense for me to make a false claim about that fact that my pain is like that of a dagger in my leg, the claim does not necessarily imply that there is a dagger through my leg. The same is true of first-person memory statements. For although it makes no sense to say that I make a false memory claim about my dropping a brick on my toe yesterday, the claim can be shown to be mistaken when it is found out that I was in bed asleep all day.

Such a contrast can only be provided if we have reliable criteria of identity, other than self-knowledge and memory statements. To give such claims any value at all, we need external criteria that will verify or falsify the fact that I dropped a brick on my toe, or whether there is in fact a dagger through my leg. We need the presence of others to provide an objective assessment of the claims.

This will allow corrigibility of memory claims, but not affect the validity of the personal statement. It is necessary that first-person claims are sometimes falsifiable, in order that we have a non-solipsistic metaphysics. For, if my claims about experiences were always true, then there would be no difference between what I claim seems to me, and what in fact is - exactly the kind of conclusion drawn by Sartre or Locke.

Thus the ability to determine another's identity emerges as a necessary component of the world as we perceive it. The tension created by the two forms of identification working with each other produces an epistemology and structure of reality that neither can support on its own. The self must be a necessary foil for the physical, and the physical a necessary manifestation for the self if we are not to regress into a solipsistic account of existence. If we are to have faith in our structured perception of the world and the possibility of a behaviouristic and idealistic world is to be avoided, then the self linked to the body is necessary. The identity of the person as subjective and objective emerges as necessary feature in our epistemology.

15.4 CONCLUSIONS

It seems that the moral value and responsibility felt by the self is echoed in value felt for other people, and what concerns us in both cases can be perceived subjectively or objectively. We need to be aware of both self and properties to provide us with a coherent notion of value in a person: if we concentrate on one or the other the value of the person is imbalanced and useless. Such a combination is recognised by Strawson* in his discussion of our moral considerations. He states that we enter into inter-personal relationships only if we recognise both aspects: if one is missing, then we no longer have a moral interaction:

What I want to contrast is the attitude (or range of attitudes) of involvement or participation in a human relationship, on the one hand, and what might be called the objective attitude (or range of attitudes) onto another human being, or the other... The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways, but not in all ways: it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships.

Strawson p.66

I would claim that personal relationships involve more than just viewing the person in a subjective light - that to make sense of the self as a person with value and responsibility, objective aspects must be a necessary part of our expectations as well.

* Strawson 1962

CHAPTER 16 A NEW CONCEPT OF PERSONS

It seems from the discussion of the previous chapters, that what must be achieved is a reconciliation of established opposites: the new view must effect a combination of the simple and complex views - the person must be accounted for in terms of both properties and a self. This in turn entails a compromise between the material and the immaterial; the a posteriori with the a priori; and a subject and an object. Ultimately, the new concept demands that something can satisfy the empiricist claims with those of the rationalist. If this proves to be impossible to effect, then the foundation of our concept of morality and the inter-personal rights we associate with it, becomes illusory.

'Person' is the self and the properties, but if 'person' is to be more than just a convention, it must be shown that the concept can work in a real way. It might be suggested at this point that it does not matter if 'person' is a constructed concept - that its use and meaning will remain unchanged even though based only in an idea. However, the implications of real persons go beyond just the issue of morality and value - it will be seen that, if the 'person' is something real and can be known, not only will the

concept provide an explanation of moral foundation, but it will answer some of the fundamental problems of epistemology.

An association between self and properties will affect epistemological considerations. The difficulty envisaged is similar to that used against the simple view's account of the same relationship: that without certain necessary links between the self and the associated properties, such properties may not be taken as evidence of the self. Even in this new view, it is still necessary to account for the relationship between the self and the properties. If the self is to be knowable as a person, some form of empirical evidence is needed, otherwise it will remain logically obscure. If properties are to be used as this evidence, some necessary link between them and the self must be established.

Moreover, in the case of the new view, the potential problem is intensified, for it bears not only on the knowledge of the existence of the self, but upon the existence of the person as well. It is true that the properties are the person and thus pose no difficulty being direct evidence. But how these properties are those of a particular person, or indeed a person at all, also needs to be explained. For the nature of properties is shifting - the particular properties appears to be a contingent matter,

different properties constituting the same person at the same and different times. Thus there is a gap between the evidence of personal properties and the person: at one level particular properties do not entail particular persons; and on a more fundamental level person properties do not necessarily entail the existence of any person.

The following then, is a suggestion as to how the person might be constructed. It has been shown that the self might be practically dependent upon certain properties - not just that of subjectivity, but certain physical and psychological properties relating to the potential for consciousness. If this link can be examined in more detail, not only might it help explain the association between the self and its properties, but also, from such an explanation an understanding of the links between the self and the person may emerge. There are several profound difficulties not removed by the discussion, as it stands it is only a suggestion as to how such an investigation might proceed. To provide a complete account at this stage would require another complete thesis.

16.1 THE PHYSICAL SELF

The connection between the self and certain properties may be more than just one of constant or accidental association. If mental events can be shown to be identical with physical events, then there is a possibility of correlating the self with the brain. If such a mind/brain identity thesis can be found, it might provide an account of the self in terms of identity with some physical aspect of the individual, which in turn will provide the necessary links between the self and the person-properties.

16.1 (i) Mind/Brain Identity

A form of mind/brain identity thesis provides the most convincing theory of mind at present available. For by equating mental events with physical brain events it removes the problem of trying to find causal and interactive relationship between the mental and physical. Rather than the brain causing mental events or affecting them in some way, such a theory holds that they are in fact the same thing.

However, a straightforward reductive type account, such as that offered by Smart* or Feigl⁺, is not sufficient. For it has been conclusively shown by subsequent theorists, that such accounts fail to provide accurate descriptions of

* Smart 1959

+ Feigl 1958

consciousness. Even though they recognise the different meaning or description associated with mental events, their theories do not go far enough. It seems that the peculiar nature of consciousness - that it defies a straightforward reduction to the physical - must be given room.

For example, any attempt to correlate the mental with the physical in terms of type identity proves elusive, indeed philosophers such as Davidson* deny the possibility of providing any form of correlative laws between mind and brain events. All attempts to match the form of consciousness, or even the existence of consciousness, with certain brain events seems impossible. It may be that the difficulty is pragmatic and that the problem will be solved with time, but it has been suggested that the problem lies deeper than this. For the strange nature of subjectivity entails that a scientific description of consciousness will prove impossible+. Nagel# makes such claims for subjectivity, though shows distinct hesitance over trying to provide a solution - except to recognise the gap between subjectivity and objectivity.

It is, however, still possible to maintain an identity thesis despite these difficulties. A form of token identity

* Davidson 1980

+ See also Section 9.2 (ii)

Nagel (1) 1964 & (2) 1979

will allow the continued identification of mental and physical, though denying the possibility of formulating strict inferential laws from a certain physical state to a certain mental state and vice versa. Thus, although it is not possible to predict consciousness, it can be correlated with hindsight. In effect, this line of argument claims that no mental event will occur without some corresponding physical event. In this way, consciousness is given a more flexible association and its fluctuating nature more accurately represented.

16.1 (ii) Mind/Brain Identity and Subjectivity

Although it is a version of a mind/brain identity theory, to link the mind to the brain in this way is not to suggest that the two are the same: the brain is a practical necessity to the existence of consciousness, not an essential criterion of its identity; moreover, the link between them is contingent. Although it is not characterised as ontologically separate, such a mind is not reducible to its content or its physical side. For to reduce one to the other would be to provide some sort of simile, and that is not what is being attempted. The suggested thesis holds that they are aspects of the same thing, not that they are the same property, reducible to one another.

There is a crucial element in the mind, not describable through the physical description - its subjectivity. Although mental events are identifiable with material things, they also have a necessary and different subjective description. Such a description involves the experience of the phenomena: what it is like to feel certain things - what the quality of the experience is. The material description describes the event, and might even one day describe the actual content of the mental event, but only the subject can know what the experience of the event is like.

Thus, in the case of mind it is not possible to reduce the subjective to the objective because the two are different accounts describing alternative aspects of the same thing. A mental event has at least two key descriptions - the objective and the subjective - if one is missing it is not a mental event. Both have the same physical underpinning but the descriptions are not concerned with the same qualities. The self and the physical are conceptually irreducible because they are like two different branches of the something deeper - perhaps the mind.

To make this clearer, consider an analogy with colour. Blue can be described in terms of bare physics or in more phenomenological terms of what it seems like. Despite the completely different accounts that arise, they are both

considered to be valid descriptions of the colour blue. One description cannot be reduced to another, for they carry with them completely different connotations. What it is like to see blueness will not be captured by a functional description of what it takes to cause blueness, yet this does not entail that they are accounts of different underlying things. Moreover, blueness would not exist if either were missing, for both the underlying mechanics and the phenomenon are necessary to the possibility of real blue. The pigment without the light or phenomenon is only potential blue; the phenomenon without the physical properties is a hallucination.

Continuing this consideration of primary and secondary qualities, one might say that the self adds a tertiary quality to mind - what it feels like to experience the secondary qualities. Thus, selves and properties have the same underpinning primary qualities which cause the secondary tangible manifestation available to be seen or sensed publicly and, furthermore, have the tertiary quality of what sensations feel like when experienced.

Thus, even though the descriptions appear to conflict, it is possible to produce a reduction of sorts, although not in terms of meaning*. One might characterise this form of

* See also Section 11.2 (iv)

reduction as a cross-disciplinary equation, linking descriptions from different levels of science or knowledge though allowing that they apply to the same basic thing. Thus although on the surface it would appear that the accounts conflict, in reality they are simply different accounts of the same thing. For example, the description of a chair given in terms of energy may well appear to conflict with a description of it in terms of its being a solid object upon which to sit, but this does not entail that both descriptions do not apply to the same thing.

Such areas of descriptions are proposed in the work of Lowe*, who considers different disciplines of science to be incommensurable and, in terms of meaning, irreducible. Thus the discipline of psychology will give descriptions which appear to conflict with the science of neurophysiology, even though they may describe the same thing. One might compare this to the apparant conflict between physiology and folk psychology.

16.1 (iii) Consciousness and The Brain

What then is this consciousness? How does it connect with brain events? It has been suggested how it might be characterised, but what are the causal mechanisms behind it?

* eg. Lowe (1) 1991

One suggestion is that consciousness is something integral to brain states: that the impulses themselves contain consciousness within them. Under this account there is not a two stage event - the impulse and the awareness of the impulse, but only one thing - the impulse containing awareness in it. This is similar to the straightforward identity thesis, which postulates an exact identity between brain states and mental states.

However, as seen, this does not explain the ephemerality of consciousness or the reason why some states are consciously experienced and others are not. To provide an accurate account, it must be explained when subjectivity actually occurs and, under a basic mind/brain identity thesis, such an explanation would need reference to some other factor over and above the brain states. In effect, it would result in a contradiction to the claim of reduction: for in order to explain consciousness in some brain states, reference to something more than simply the brain state would be needed - clearly not a straightforward reductive identity.

A second suggestion might postulate the existence of special self-conscious and conscious states exhibited in specialised types of brain state. The suggestion is that, consciousness is a particular kind of thought with a particular kind of brain state associated with it. Yet

difficulties arise with this idea too. For it enforces a strict distinction between types of brain states with the result that some states are labelled or defined as unable to be conscious. Yet the brain seems to be more flexible than this would suggest, indeed, the scientific evidence we do have of the brain's capacity would suggest the opposite - that brain states are capable of all kinds of functions, and that the ability to hold particular content is not necessarily confined to certain areas of the brain.

Moreover, such a type-identity account pushes the idea of consciousness close to Locke's thought of self-consciousness, which would entail that consciousness exists only at the time of certain thoughts of consciousness, and does not persist through time. As a theory of mind/brain identity this is acceptable, for it is not trying to define the persisting self, but it does mean that consciousness is as ephemeral as the individual contents of the brain.

Another suggestion holds that consciousness is linked to a unified coalescence of brain states which, in their unity, give rise to consciousness. Thus all brain states might be thought of as having the potential for consciousness despite not being conscious until in a particular system. Once within that system the control is centrally organised and consciousness is possible. This characterises consciousness as analogous to the foam on the wave, but without the

dualistic intentions of epiphenomenalism: for it can still be classed as an identity theory since consciousness is not something other than the unified working of the brain. However, even this account fails to explain why some contents are conscious and others are not. If all brain states are part of this unified system, why are some conscious and others not? The presence of consciousness seems to depend upon more than merely an account of physical states. It seems that perhaps subjectivity is an unanalysable base, for it is impossible to sufficiently describe consciousness without reference to the subject.

However, it is possible to further analyse consciousness if the account is moved from an individual identification of mental events with brain events, to a broader identification of consciousness with the brain as a whole. In this development of the third view above, it is suggested that consciousness is a level of the brain which, as a whole, can control its varying levels of awareness. Thus consciousness might be described as some form of attention to content and information - an ability that can be applied to most states and which can be on differing levels of awareness. Consciousness is simply the functioning brain using and noticing certain information at different levels of cognition.

Neither need the selectivity of consciousness trouble the account, for the identification of consciousness with a level of cognition can be paralleled to any other system developed for efficiency in function. Nature has many cut off points and varying levels of concentration - it is an ability necessary for survival: if it were the case that complete and constant access to all data was possible, the system concerned would be unable to act. For example, the lion would starve through inability to pick out suitable prey from other animals; the bat would not be able to fly for all the obstacles picked out by a comprehensive sonar; and the human would be unable to use objects because it would not be able to isolate them from other data. Cognition enables us to formulate objects and information in ways which are of use to us with a screening process filtering out unnecessary data. Why should this not be so in the case of consciousness as well?*

This suggestion de-mystifies consciousness: it is nothing mystical or strange in the sense that dualists would have us believe; but neither is it something as flat and anonymous as the reductionist would have us believe, for it does add a mystical strangeness to the quality and experience of life. Such a theory draws consciousness down to a level of interpretation of information - consciousness adds more

* See Section 4.3 (i)

depth, understanding and quality to the information. Perhaps, then, consciousness is nothing more than the brain's ability to be conscious and self-conscious with its own varying degrees of subjectivity. It is not necessary to postulate some further persisting subject - the brain and its unified control of itself is ample to the task.

16.1 (iv) Pan-psychism

If it is the case that all brain states have some potential for consciousness, does this mean that all matter has such consciousness? Physical brain states are reducible to cells, atoms and particles and, on the most basic level of description, are the same as other forms of matter. As a consequence of this, everything might be described as conscious: for if these particles can make consciousness whilst they are in the brain, surely they retain that power once they are no longer part of the brain? Does the mind/brain identity thesis suggested entail that everything is conscious?

Firstly, there seems little objection to the belief that consciousness might be a dimension of physical matter, it is only if one effects a mutual exclusivity of consciousness and matter that this is not possible. Consciousness may be an extra dimension of matter - one only known in first-person awareness and, therefore, in humans, only in our own brains.

However, the theory being suggested is not so crude as to hold that everything experiences the consciousness in matter. There is no logical absurdity in the suggestion that basic matter has the potential to be conscious but that this does not entail that everything is conscious. It may be that such consciousness is only caused when the matter is in a certain system, which, as a unit, generates consciousness and even self-consciousness. The more sophisticated the unit, the higher level of conscious awareness achieved.

One might illustrate this claim by analogy with other systems. Hydrogen and oxygen atoms can constitute water with liquid properties; but it is not the case that every hydrogen and oxygen atom is watery, nor even that they have latent water in them. When transferred to other types of things they can take on other properties such as becoming breathable air, causing large explosions, etc. Oxygen and hydrogen are flammable on their own as gases, yet when combined they become a liquid with one of the least flammable natures. Similarly, the particles which go to make up our human cells with a life force, may exist as decaying matter and inert soil. Thus, there seems no reason against the suggestion that all matter has potential for consciousness, but that it is only when in certain forms that it manifests itself as consciousness.

Such a theory of 'pan-psychism' might facilitate explanation of the development of consciousness, for it would no longer be something in addition to the animal or man, but something intrinsically bound up with their physical nature. It would allow consciousness a natural place in the evolutionary scale, linking it with the sophistication and control of the brain. Indeed, it may be possible to induce consciousness and self-consciousness through increased control and ability to manipulate the brain.

For example, it cannot be denied that awareness and intellect can be developed and encouraged in children through stimulation and social interaction; perhaps then, this treatment helps develop consciousness and self-consciousness in our young. The function of consciousness and self-consciousness in isolated and rejected children is notoriously maladjusted - this may be because they have not had the form of coaching and help needed to stimulate consciousness in the way humans use it.

Perhaps then, levels of consciousness or kinds of consciousness might be induced by behaviour and learning: different behaviour and social interaction developing varying forms of consciousness in the individual. Differing cultures might develop distinct kinds of consciousness;

indeed, such variations are strongly evident in widely separated tribes or nations.

Such divides are clearly evident when language is considered: for language is a key social tool, used for communication of culture and learning, and is thought to give access to different concepts and understanding. One can increase and develop areas of one's personality or character by the use of concepts unexpressed by one's own cultural background. If then, this development and change is possible on a level of language, so might it be possible on a level of consciousness: that is, it may be possible to change the nature and level of one's consciousness with training and cross cultural access in other areas.

Moreover, such change in consciousness might be extended to other animals, especially the more sophisticated, such as primates, dolphins, and even cats and dogs. Increased exposure to human behaviour and human attitudes toward domestic animals, does result in change of behaviour and apparent increase in consciousness. It may, of course be that we merely impose human structure and analysis of behaviour on them - a danger of all arguments from analogy; but there is certain behaviour which seems very difficult to explain without reference to some form of increased consciousness. By teaching animals language, do we in effect give them the power to be self-conscious?

A Functional Description

The above suggestions are an attempt to provide an account of consciousness not only in terms of its identity with certain brain states, but in its functional role as a level of cognition. The subjectivity of consciousness is consistent with both of these descriptions, for it simply provides a further level of description of the functional states. As Dennett suggests*, to define consciousness on a physical or functional level is not to deny that it has a further subjective description.

Yet the suggestions above do not simply provide a merely objective functional account, but attempt to define subjectivity itself in a cognitive functional role. Thus, subjectivity provides a crucial description of cognition from a first-person view point, an account which cannot be ignored by any complete theory of cognition. The subject is that which performs the role of interpreter and processor of input and output, no matter upon which level this occurs. The person shares a similar role with the addition of access to self-consciousness and volition. The model I have suggested is consistent with both identity, behavioural and functional accounts of the mind: it is an attempt to extend them by recognising the essential role of subjectivity in any complete description of mind and persons.

* Dennett 1979 ch. 9

16.1 (v) Exclusive Descriptions and Transitivity

It might be objected that the descriptions of consciousness and of physical states cannot be of the same thing, for they each contain reference to properties which cannot be held in the other description. It is suggested that if this is so, then the transitivity of identity entailed by Leibniz's laws, is not upheld - the properties of one cannot be held by the properties of the other. However, such a criticism is mistaken, for the simple reason that it confuses the properties ascribable to the object with properties contained in different descriptions of that object.

Although the accounts are of the same fundamental thing, the perspective of each description excludes certain properties and includes others - it is impossible to include primary qualities in a phenomenological description and, likewise, it is not easy to include secondary qualities in a primary account. Hence, the properties ascribed in each description cannot be included in the alternative - their contents are not transitive between accounts because they describe the object in different kinds of terms. This does not mean that the descriptions are of different objects, simply that they are different aspects of the same object.

Thus, it is not a suggestion that the object bearing one account must automatically be excluded from being described

under the other, for the exclusivity exists between the descriptions only. To agree with the criticism would be to hold that because a description of an individual as an artist does not include the same properties as a description of the same person as a sky-diver, they describe different persons. It is only if the two are inconsistent with one another that they become irreconcilable and thus thought to be of different objects: for example, if one account describes as an Olympic swimmer, and the other has the misfortune of never being able to learn to swim

The physical description of brain events is not sufficient to account for mental events because it excludes subjectivity. Hence, although we can give subjective experience an objective pragmatic description, the real meaning and quality of the experience is lost in doing so. What is essential to the self or mind is that it has a subjective awareness, without this dimension the whole theory will merely be another version of traditional empiricism. Subjectivity is what makes mental events different from all other physical things, for without the subject the brain is not a mind, and without the brain the mind cannot persist. Thus the new theory does not advocate a drift into straightforward materialism, for it maintains the existence of the self as intentionally distinct from properties.

Despite the differences involved in the definition the mind and the brain, it is possible then to link the two: they are the same thing under different descriptions, in much the same way as we might describe the same table under a description referring to atoms and one to the table qualities.

16.1 (vi) Self/Brain Identity

From the above suggestions, there seems no logical reason why the mental should not be identified with the physical. Might then, subjectivity or the self be identified with the brain? Is it possible to hold a self/brain identity thesis. Such an identity thesis is at first sight attractive, for since the self involves potential for consciousness and must be interactive with certain properties both to be conscious and to be a person, practically speaking it must be associated with a normally functioning brain.

Moreover, when the character and function of the brain are considered, the similarity between them and the role of the self becomes more apparent. For the brain is associated with consciousness and experience, conveying the necessary impulses to allow sensation - the brain unifies all of our sensory and conscious activity and can be characterised as having the potential for consciousness. The brain is the possessor of individual thoughts and, like the self, it is

considered persist through time, being irreducible to its content.

The similarity in both function and character and the constant conjunction of the brain and the self, lead to the suggestion that they are in fact the same thing. The brain might be described as the physical embodiment of the self, and the self as dependent upon the brain - that in effect, the self or subject is impossible without a properly unified and functioning brain.

Such an identification is supported when one considers the effects on consciousness and self-consciousness when there is a malfunction of the brain. In split personalities there seems to be a bifurcation in awareness of subject. The unit supporting and creating consciousness is divided, effecting a division in the conscious experience and in the subject. The cause can be cured through physical treatment, which forges a link between the brain and subject - one in which the subject is not associated with something detached and extra to the brain, but something necessarily linked and attached to it.

The self and consciousness might therefore be characterised as identical with the brain and its processes: that there is an identity between them in fact, although their meanings are not reducible to each other. The

existence of the brain does not ensure that consciousness or a subject exists, it is only that it is necessary if consciousness is to exist. However, it is not enough that merely a brain present, it seems that the brain must have the potentiality to be conscious and to function normally. Otherwise, it seems that the self or subject cannot function normally either.

This self/brain identity thesis allows the connection between the self and its physical properties to be understood. For if the self is identical with certain brain activity, which in turn is connected to certain other parts of the body, a chain of real links can be traced. Although the existence of certain properties will not provide a sufficient account of the self, for they do not necessarily entail the self, they can be inferred to exist if the self does, for they are necessary to its instantiation. Certain properties can therefore be taken as indicators of the self - indicators in more than an accidental way.

16.2 SELF PROPERTIES AND PERSON PROPERTIES

Whatever account one gives of the particular properties necessary to the self, it must be remembered that such properties are of derivative value only. Their existence and persistence are desired only as a means to achieving the existence and persistence of the self. As such they are not, strictly speaking, the properties of the person, they are what we might term self-properties. As suggested*, the person has properties which might be classed as person-properties which are valued per se, not for the instantiation of some further thing. What, therefore, is the link between the self and these person-properties which enable the existence of a person?

16.2 (i) Person Properties

Person-properties are those which ensure that the person is a socially interactive thing. They are not necessary as particulars to the person, for they are valued in their effect or for their character, rather than in themselves. It is a qualitative rather than quantitative identity which is required of them: the demand is for type similarity rather than token persistence and, as such, loose identity in such properties will be acceptable for the demands of continuation over time.

* Chapters 14 & 15

The possibility of practical interaction between the self and these properties should not prove difficult. The connections described between the self and the self-properties indicates that some form of actual interaction is possible. If the self is connected to its necessary properties there seems little objection to extending its interaction to other properties that may not be essential to its existence. The exact connections may not at present be known but, as before, the problem is merely one for empirical investigation.

16.2 (ii) The Unified Person

Where explanation of the connection becomes more interesting is in the link which connects the self to certain person-properties to form a person: What it is that makes selves and person-properties into persons? A description referring to more than merely the person is needed if we are to produce a real and non-circular account of personal identity. If it is simply stated that what connects the two is being part of the same person, the status of person is left at issue, for the connection is a nominal one conferred as a classification. Moreover, as an explanation of personal identity such an appeal to definition is clearly circular, for to give such an answer presumes that we know the identity of the person to which they belong.

The obvious and most straightforward suggestion is that the link is one of co-consciousness - that the person-properties are the same person as the self if they are self-consciously experienced by the self. In this way the two are linked in a real way to become a person. This can be used this to explain not only how the self might be joined to the properties but also how certain sets of shifting properties belong to the same person: they are all objects of consciousness of the same self.

However, as already encountered with respect to Locke in numerous instances, the phenomena of self-consciousness is not enough to provide a solid link. If we rely upon how the person seems, what appears to the self to be its parts, what the self chooses to have associated with it and so on; then the person becomes something impossibly ephemeral. Sturdier and more objective links are necessary if we are to produce a functional concept of persons - there must be the necessary link through objective unification.

Further conditions can be provided for personal identity in terms of the practical conditions which will ensure this co-consciousness: that is, if we follow the model being developed, the same brain. If the self can be practically linked to the brain's consciousness of unity of perception, then the unity of the personal properties can be described both in their internal connection and their conjunction to

the self, as being part of the same brain's consciousness. The actual empirical account may well vary and develop with increased knowledge, but the basic connections must be retained. It is these which form the criteria of identity for the person.

Considering the broad range of properties we associate with persons and their fluctuations, it might seem hard to produce a fixed association or criterion of identity which does not dissolve into the choice or convention found, for example, in Lockean concern. However, there do seem to be certain limitations beyond which we cannot choose our field of reference - as was pointed out by Madell*. When talking about our actual person, rather than works, we cannot choose the limits of the field of reference.

Perhaps then, the 'I' in physical and psychological terms is delineated by those things we can be directly aware of? It seems that the self is essentially defined in this direct acquaintance, that anything we directly and subjectively feel as belonging to us is legitimately part of us. Thus our directly experienced bodies and psychological states, and those states that we might potentially be directly aware of even if not so at this time, are parts of us as persons. The potentiality is maintained by the continued persistence of the brain, despite lack of actual consciousness.

* Madell 1981 & Section 9.3

It must, however, be recognised that the psychological and personal unification of properties are not all that are involved in persons, for properties beyond the psyche and brain are valued too. As suggested earlier*, these factors must be accounted for in any effective concept of person: persons and their identity extend way beyond the most intimate psychology - the body, the works, the offspring, even the tribe or nation can play an important role. The necessity of their persistence functions on a sliding scale dependent upon the importance of the situation and the perspective of the identifier. Certain properties become more and less significant, yet keep a basically stable scale of importance, with the fundamental necessity of self remaining fixed and a generally decreasing value as the encompassing consciousness expands further.

Yet these too might be explained in terms of connection to the self and its potential of direct awareness. All of these things are causally related to the self and brain in some way - we can trace lines of causation back to the originator, that is, the subject. Even those properties attributed to a person which may not be directly known by that person are attributed by others on the strength of belief that they are somehow controlled or caused. Thus, once again, although the direct awareness is not actual, the potential is thought to be there through sub-conscious

* Eg. Chapters 14 & 15

action of the brain; and since the brain is identical with the subject the connection is made. Although the subject may not be directly aware, such awareness is possible by a concentration of consciousness - either through drawing attention to the property, by concentration the consciousness on it or, through some deeper method, such as hypnosis.

16.2 (iii) Criterion of Identity?

The person emerges as a self with certain associated properties connected through either causal links or direct awareness to that self. What is a property of the self is that which the self can be directly aware of, or associated with, in terms of causation. Yet the properties can and do fluctuate - there is a sliding scale of importance. How then, can a non-circular criterion of identity for the person, which maintains the persistence of the person, be established?

Because of such fluctuation, it appears difficult to produce a solid list of which criteria must be present. In fact it is impossible, because value is a matter of degree, the qualitative identity of the person can be a matter of degree too. What remains fixed is the unification to the self but the properties unified may fluctuate and change, the derivative value of the person consequently changing by degrees with them. It can become a matter of debate whether

a person persists in such qualitative terms or not, and it is a matter of perspective and importance of situation which will finally determine the qualitative identity and whether it persists or not.

Thus the identity of persons relies in both qualitative and numerical identity: the person persists quantitatively if the self remains and persists qualitatively if certain associated properties remain. Both forms can be objectively discerned and subjectively known: the former maintaining an absolute form of identity, the latter a perspective relative account. Yet both must work in tandem if the identity of persons is to fulfil the function of person, and if the mind/body identity theory is adopted, such an account will prove possible.

This account suggesting the identification between the self and the person might at first seem circular: for the properties of the person are the properties of the self, and the properties of the self are those which can be directly known by the self; however, to know which properties are directly known to the self involves prior knowledge of what the self is.

However, this is not so, for two reasons. Firstly, the knowledge we have of our properties is direct and a priori*.

* See Chapter 9

Ownership need not be inferred in a two-stage identification, involving first knowledge of ourself and then knowledge of ownership - it is only in the case of individuating others that such a process is necessary. Knowledge of ourselves and our properties is direct and without inference. It is not even necessary that we know who we are to be able to attribute properties to ourself, for in the very act of being directly aware we can be sure that they are ours. Unless some form of psychic telepathy is possible, we can be sure that if we experience something, then it is our experience.

Thus, knowledge of our properties is rather like Lockean self-consciousness - if we are aware of them then they are ours. Where Locke's theory stumbles is in the movement beyond present knowledge to knowledge of the past, for such a move involves an inference about what the experience or memory tells us, and such inference can be mistaken. Locke thus claims that only a first-person identification is possible and that objectively the self is nothing. However, in this new theory, objective identification is recognised as possible, and such objective continuity enables the self to be identified independently of its own awareness.

This point touches upon the second reason for non-circularity of the proposed account: for the association between self and properties is not merely one of actual

direct awareness but of potential awareness. The connection between properties and the self is considered to persist even when the self is not aware of it, and this is possible through the identification of the self with the brain. Thus, although properties are defined as those potentially and directly known by the self, they can also be defined as potentially and directly known by the brain. Although the self is known directly to itself and its essential criterion of identity defined in this way, it is also identified practically with the brain - and thus an additional contingent criterion of identity can be provided.

This identification between the self and the brain enables an objective, self-independent criterion of identity for the person. For it means that properties and persistence can be attributed objectively rather than solely subjectively. The properties of the self can therefore have potential for being directly known if they are associated with the brain even when the brain is not aware of them. The association of the subject with unconscious, subconscious, conscious and self-conscious states can therefore persist, even if the self is not directly aware of any such link.

It might be objected at this stage that the association between the brain and the self is not only contingent but also fails to produce a sufficient criterion for persons: for the existence of the brain does not ensure the existence

of the self or subject. The self seems to be something extra to a brain and therefore the self cannot be defined in terms of being simply a particular brain. Is it not more the case that the brain is defined in terms of relationship to the self?

Such an objection, however, comes from an assumed dualist position: it assumes that the self is something over and above the brain, the relationship being characterised as one of ownership or constitution rather than numerical identity. However, I would stress that this is not in keeping with the suggestion of the identity theory which is concerned to identify the brain and self on a numerical basis. The fluctuation of consciousness has been sufficiently explained, and the association between self and brain described through reference to a functional unified brain. Furthermore, it is not the case that the subject is something caused by the brain - it is the brain. It may be that the conscious self is not sufficiently described by reference solely to the brain, but the subject is, if it is identified with a healthy living brain.

It is true that if one ignores subjectivity completely in the description of person then the account will fail. As noted with respect to early identity theories, a failure to incorporate this dual aspect results in insufficiency. Thus a brain on its own is not enough to account for the meaning

of person, and self on its own is insufficient as well. To achieve a satisfactory account and criterion of persons one must include both brain and self, both objective and subjective dimensions, both public and private aspects.

16.3 CONCLUSIONS

The theory emerging as the 'new view' holds that the identity of persons is something objective as well as subjective, that the properties and the self are essential to the person, and the person is determined through a balance between objective and subjective criteria through a recognition of both numerical and qualitative identities. Such a state of affairs can be provided for in a mind/body identity theory of persons - an account which recognises the subjectivity and objectivity of identity in persons.

What emerges is a concept of person which has affinities with Strawson's concept of person: that is, 'person' is concept of which one can predicate both physical and mental descriptions. However, unlike Strawson, the new view provides an attempt at an analysis of person into terms referring to consciousness, potential subjectivity and necessary properties. It is not the case that one can ascribe either mental or physical predicates, it must be possible to ascribe both.

This simple combination of both accounts is an attractive solution - it plugs the gaps which create the greatest difficulties for both the simple and complex views. For the simple view can provide for the insufficiencies of the complex account, introducing the extra element of the

persisting self; and the obscurity of the simple self is lifted by the existence of necessary properties such as those of the complex view.

CHAPTER 17 PROBLEMS OF THE NEW VIEW

The apparent common sense of the combined view has been avoided in the past for definite and very deep set reasons - strong intuitive responses prevent the association of mental and physical, moreover, there are certain hurdles that must be cleared before such a collaboration of accounts can be accepted. All of the difficulties can be reduced to the general problem posed by the depth of potential incommensurability in the simple and complex accounts.

It would be impossible in the space available in this thesis to completely dispel all of the problems associated with the new view - the current research has focussed on the adequacy of the existing theories of personal identity, the main intention being to show the necessity of a new view to replace the existing bifurcated approach to topic. The following, however, are some indications of the problems likely to arise, and some suggestions for an approach towards solving them.

On a functional level problems arise over interaction. The new view retains the simple view's idea of a contentless and single-property subject. However, if it is separable and essentially subjective, how can it be necessarily linked

in a causal relationship, or indeed identified with objective properties? If agency and personal responsibility are to have any real justified basis it must be ontologically possible that the two (objective and subjective) be mutually effective, the self must be the originator of actions performed by properties in a public arena. Moreover, it must be possible to show that despite the proposed identification of the subjective with the objective, some form of real (as opposed to conventional) persistence and identity is available.

The new view must therefore be able to deal with these problems all of which affect the moral notions associated with persons: that is interaction, a reconciliation of the objective with the subjective person, an explanation of how real identity can be retained, and some account of how effective identification can take place.

17.1 THE NEW VIEW AND INTERACTION

Is it therefore possible to combine the self with the properties in a way that forms actual links rather than those of mere classification or social convention? Can an account of persons be produced which gives more than just linguistic explanations of the links we infer between selves and properties? If the new view is to be possible it must be explained how the self is linked in a causally interactive way to properties.

17.1 (i) Interaction and Dualism

The actual source of the difficulty occupying the mind/body problem (as levelled against Descartes*) need no longer create an insurmountable obstacle to the subject/content dualist. The connection between mental and physical can now be regarded as a question for empirical investigation rather than metaphysical debate: there is a causal relationship between the mental and physical, what it actually is we may not know but, the fact remains that the two do interact in some way. Only if it is insisted that mental and physical are mutually exclusive, does interaction pose anything but a practical problem.

This idea is put forward clearly and convincingly by
Lowe:†

* Descartes 1641

† Lowe (1) 1991

I am aware of no good argument, by Descartes or anyone else, in support of his doctrine of unique and exclusive attributes. Accordingly, I am perfectly ready to allow that psychological substances should possess material characteristics (that is, include physical states amongst their modes).

Lowe p.105

The chief stumbling block was...Descartes' doctrine of unique and exclusive attributes. How could something essentially immaterial get to grips, causally, with something essentially material, and vice versa? But psychological substances as I conceive of them are not essentially immaterial, and thus I see no difficulty in principle about their entering into causal transactions with their physical environment.

Lowe p.107

The envisaged difficulty for interaction is not therefore logical but practical: if a theory does not allow the possibility of there being such a link, then there is something wrong with the description or characterisation of mental and material substances. The apparent mutual exclusivity of the Cartesian substantial dualism should not necessarily be perceived as the source of great worry for today's dualist.

17.1 (ii) Simple View Dualism

However, as seen*, problems do arise if the dualism claims complete separability of the mental and physical making them distinct in actuality as well as conceivability. Such are the claims of the simple view of the self, which subsequently does encounter the problems concerning interaction. If the characterisation of the self describes

* Chapter 10

something which is solely a subject, a question arises of how such a subject can be the subject of anything? If it has no properties at all, it is difficult to explain how any form of interaction might take place, for there is no interface for the connection. Hence the simple view, although not essentially Cartesian, places the self in a position similar to that of the ghost in the machine. Indeed the fate of such a self will be worse, for it has no objective qualities or properties other than the potential for subjectivity.

One possible reply to the objection might take a similar position to the defence of Descartes described above: that the mind/body interaction problem is a matter for scientific rather than philosophical investigation. Thus the inconceivability we are faced with now is symptomatic of a conceptual difficulty, not an actual impossibility. As with the suggestions above, the answer lies in the fact that the two do interact.

Such an answer is not, however, so readily available as it was to the Neo-Cartesian, for whereas 'mental' and 'material' are terms given to facets of the person we experience and consider to be real, the concept of the self as an actually separable thing is debatable and its status is consequently less straightforward. Thus an appeal to

factual interaction of 'the way things are' cannot be made with quite such confidence.

In addition to this, whereas Cartesian dualism involves a difficulty which might be solved through subsequent empirical description, the problems associated with simple view dualism cannot be so helped. For the very definition of the separable self prevents all possibility of finding some method of interaction, since it will have no properties to effect the interaction. Logically speaking therefore, the interaction cannot be explained except in terms of accidental or contingent association - it is difficult to foresee what form any other account would take.

17.1 (iii) Interaction in the New View

Inability to provide even a hope of necessary links in the explanation of interaction excludes the simple view's separable self from a role as part of the person. However, the suggested modification of the self claims that both practically and logically it is difficult to drive a wedge between selves and some properties necessary to its very existence. If this is so, then there is a necessary, rather than merely accidental, link facilitating a simple explanation of interaction.

The suggested account of the previous chapter is based in our current scientific knowledge: describing the self as

dependent upon the persistence of the same brain, for it is the brain which physically unifies all experience and seems to form the most basic unit necessary for the persistence of the human self. Thus the self is characterised as no more than consciousness of the brain's work of unification of experience. It may not be possible to list the exact type of properties needed for the instantiation of the self, but this difficulty is empirical not logical. The fact remains that some properties are logically required for self to exist.

Whatever the mechanistic description turns out to be, if it is allowed that the self is dependent upon certain properties, interaction is no longer a problem except in terms of empirical understanding. Given this account, it is clear how it is possible for interaction to occur. If the self somehow arises out of the properties and is dependent upon them for existence then a necessary connection exists between them.

The new view of personal identity can therefore avoid the problems associated with the interaction between mind and body, self and properties, whilst still maintaining a conceptual dualism. It remains to be seen whether this form of mind/brain identity can maintain a concept of person as a moral being.

17.1 (iv) Objectivity and Subjectivity

It might however be objected that the identification of the subjective with the objective involves a logical contradiction. That is, it is impossible for something which is an essentially public and accessible object also to have qualities which are private and accessible only to the subject. This problem arises if one accepts a necessary mutual exclusivity between the objective and the subjective - between physical objects and subjects: such an impossibility would hold if the exclusion of subjects were part of the definition of physical.

There are strong arguments in favour of maintaining such an exclusivity. The nature of our subjective experience points to a seeming independence from all physical properties: our perceptions of space and time vary widely from the corresponding objective world; it is possible to make sense of partial and complete independence from any properties; it is impossible to reduce the meaning of subjectivity to anything remotely physical or objective. The problems are summarized neatly by Nagel:

There are types of problems here, both deriving from the subjectivity of the mental. One has to do with the attribution to mental entities and events of properties not entailed by mental concepts. The other has to do with properties that seem incompatible with mental concepts.

Nagel p.31

However, most of these objections appear to be based upon

what we can and cannot imagine or intuitively accept. As argued in Chapter 7, the use of imagination and intuition is fraught with difficulties and should not be allowed unduly to colour our conclusions. In the case of mental events and subjectivity, it may be that our intuitions are wrong through lack of understanding or knowledge of what really is the case. As Nagel writes:

If something is in fact impossible and yet we seem to be able to conceive of it, this need not mean we are actually conceiving of something else similar to it which **is** possible. We may be conceiving of no real possibility at all, though we fail to realize it because we so not know certain necessary truths about the things we are thinking about.

Nagel p.47

Indeed, there seems no empirical or a priori reason why such exclusivity should obtain. The possibility that psychological states might also have physical modes has been voiced already in connection with the quotation from Lowe* - be it only on a level of substances. Moreover, it is an acceptable idea to some philosophers of mind, for example Searle⁺, who writes of mind and body:

Just as the liquidity of the water is caused by the behaviour of elements at the micro-level, and yet at the same time it is a feature realised in the system of micro-elements, so in exactly that sense of 'caused by' and 'realised in' mental phenomena are caused by processes going on in the brain at the neuronal level or modular level, and at the same time they are realised in the very system that consists of neurons. And just as we need the micro/macro distinction for any physical system, so for the same reasons we need the micro/macro distinction for the brain....

Searle p.22

* See section 17.1 (i)

+ Searle 1984

To summarise: on my view, the mind and the body interact, but they are not two different things, since mental phenomena just are features of the brain. One way to characterise this position is to see it as an assertion of both physicalism and mentalism.

Searle p.26

It seems that an attachment to Cartesian material and mental exclusivity informs a resistance to their combination or association. The difficulty raised against the suggested reconciliation appears to be one of dogma rather than logical impossibility. For if one denies that by definition mental and physical are exclusive of one another, then the way is cleared to allow that objective and subjective descriptions are simply accounts of the same thing from different perspectives. It is true that an objective description cannot also include a subjective one, but such incommensurability does not disqualify the two descriptions from applying to the same thing*.

Moreover, if our current knowledge and beliefs about the brain and consciousness are taken into account, some form of identity thesis seems to be the most acceptable theory. The brain clearly is associated in some way with conscious experiences - all the reliable empirical and scientific evidence available points to the likelihood that it forms a vital role in the production of consciousness. If then, this

* See Section 16.1 (ii)

much is accepted, to identify consciousness with brain events is the simplest explanation of their connection. To assume that brain events are a link in a chain to some further representation, involving more than just the brain, pushes the theory into a dualism or mystical association, entangling it in the difficulties of interaction. An identity theory of the form being proposed, at present produces the simplest and most acceptable account of subjectivity, especially given the rejection of dualism suggested earlier.

To accept such an account is not to deny the unique and strange nature of consciousness, for the identity thesis does not 'explain away' consciousness, but postulates a causal not qualitative description. The quality and character of consciousness retains the private perspective, giving a unique internal representation of our passage through the world, space and time. Such perceptions will differ widely from the physical, more objective input, giving the idea that consciousness is somehow disconnected from physical properties. However, such disparity is consistent with a dual aspect theory - one possible explanation is to see the difference in terms of variation in concentration and attitude toward the information received*.

* See Section 16.1

The theory is similar to a form of epiphenomenalism - it characterises the mind in a causal relationship with the brain. However, unlike early forms of epiphenomenalism the new view sees the mind not as separable or additional, but as being realised by, or identical with, the brain processes themselves*. Consciousness under this description is part of the brain - it is the brain's awareness of itself.

This line provides a new approach to the problems of both mind and persons. It is an empirical account, giving only contingent conditions for minds and persons as found in humanity. Although it may be that the ideas they encompass are applicable on a broader scale - that non-human forms are eligible for personal rights too - I would suggest that it is this human 'person' and 'mind' which forms the ground-pattern for our concepts. An explanation of the causal mechanisms of human persons may therefore help not only to show that they represent more than just created concepts, but also explain why they have a dual subjective and objective nature.

The association of the physical with the mental is by no means proven by these comments, but they do show that it is at least possible, and if the identity thesis is possible, then the new view's 'person' retains the possibility of being a real thing rather than just convention.

* See also quotation from Searle on p.441

17.2 IDENTITY

The first problem facing the new account on a moral level concerns the disparity between properties and the self which depends upon them for existence, and consequently the association between self and the person. For even the necessary self-properties will be, as all properties, essentially ephemeral, whereas the self is considered to persist. Even if the quality of mental events continues, the exact thoughts or material constituents will change over time. How then can the self, which is a thing with real identity, moreover a thing which is valued as a token, be sustained by properties which hold only loose identity over time?

17.2 (i) The Idea and Persistence

This difficulty is really only a pseudo-problem and can be answered directly from Locke. He warns quite clearly of the danger ensuing from incorrect perception of distinct ideas, stressing that we must make clear what it is that we are identifying. The properties which allow the self to exist are not equivalent or reducible to the self - the two are quite separable ideas. The identity of the self is not therefore reducible to the identity of the shifting properties maintaining it, only to the subject unifying them. The ideas are of completely different things and thus the criteria and form of their identity can vary.

Likewise, in the suggested new view, the idea of the propertyless self is separable, even though not detached from properties. Such a self does persist through change because it lacks specific properties. Thus, 'self-reference', 'self-concern', and 'self-unity' all refer to something classed as propertyless because they do not always refer to specific properties. Thus, when we talk of the self we mean 'this locus of experience': there is no intention of signifying any token properties but there is a necessary connotation engaging the type of properties needed to ensure that experience. Selves are not therefore actually propertyless, for they cannot be detached from properties of some type; but neither can they really be said to depend upon any specific properties.

Hence it is reasonable to claim that although the specific properties might come and go, the self continues to persist. For although it is not possible to reduce the self to any sort of account using particular psychological connections, it is still possible to give an account of a persisting self which includes necessary connections to physical/mental properties. The self can be described in terms of certain necessary connections to properties, rather than necessary connections to certain properties.

The Thought of Consciousness

Despite the above solution, a problem still remains

concerning the thought of unified self-consciousness. If the unity of the self relies solely upon the self-conscious thought, then, as explained with regard to Locke, the self will exist for one moment only, then cease to exist with the next thought of self-consciousness.

An attempt to avoid this difficulty by identifying the self with token or type material events, will not help - they too shift and change, for even though thoughts of consciousness is linked to particular material events, matter shifts and changes just as much as subjective experience does. Therefore, even with a material/mental event identity thesis, stability of the self through time cannot be established. If the self is to persist through time it must be established that the subject is more than merely a material or mental thought of unity.

17.2 (ii) Identity and the Brain

If it is to persist in actuality rather than just conceptually, the self must be associated with something more stable than individual thoughts. The property sustaining the self must persist through change in the way that the self does. The brain fulfils this particular role, and if the self is considered to be physically dependent upon a particular brain, then its persistence and experience of unity can be explained. The brain objectively

unifies thought and persists through time - the self is the subjective awareness of such continued unification.

There is however, a fundamental problem associated with the persistence of the self through time. Similarly to the way in which the original simple view cannot disassociate the self from experiences and thereby encounters persistence problems, this new view links the self to brain events which themselves fluctuate and change. Hence, the problem of persistence arises: even though the brain seems to persist as a unit, its identity is only that of a complex form, dependent upon substance and material change. This is a problem which must be faced by any theory demanding real identity though not wishing to espouse a form of ontological dualism. In the rejection of any real separability, is it necessary to sacrifice real identity?

Given that the self must be somehow associated with changing matter, how can it really persist? It is true that such persistence is not unchanging or of a basic thing - the qualitative identity does change. However, there is a way in which the brain can be seen to persist in a manner that is not simply a reduction to complex identity, and which might explain why we believe the self to persist through time.

Persistence of the Idea of the Brain

Returning once again to the Lockean insistence that we identify the idea clearly, it can be claimed that numerically the brain persists. We have a concept which delineates a certain neurological system and given certain conditions that system can be said to persist - even if it is no longer qualitatively identical.

However, as noted before, to place persistence merely in the concept is not enough. It may be that such a concept is merely a construction - that there is in fact nothing real to which it corresponds. Such concepts have identities which are merely conventions and for persons this form of identity is not enough. If the self is being identified with the brain, and the identity of the self depends upon the identity of the brain, then unless the brain really does persist the self will have no real identity through time.

Identity in Substances

It was noted in the first part of this thesis* that some philosophers, for example Quine⁺, claim that all things empirically known have identities reducible to convention. Such objects have identities only in the structures we bestow upon our perception and no more. However, it is equally possible that although screened by our perceptive

* Section 1.1 (iii)
+ Eg. Quine (1) 1960

priorities, there are identities independent of perception. Although we perceive some structures and not others, this does not entail that no persisting objects really exist - the difficulty is that we cannot objectively perceive such persistence.

The postulation of an independent world is of course an idea with many pitfalls but if anything is to be achieved beyond idealism, then some assumption of real objects must be made. Whether a correct reflection of reality or not, we do make distinctions within our experience, discriminating between things with and without independent existence and persistence through time.

For example the contrast between artifacts and organisms. Whilst we delimit the identity and persistence of artifacts, we do not have such control over natural organisms or natural kinds. Such things have an existence independent of our conventions, existing as units and persisting whilst their systems continue to function. For example, an animal persists if it remains a viable system, similarly so for a tree or an amoeba. Likewise, one might claim that the brain is a unit which persists in a manner that artifacts and abstract concepts do not. It is a biological entity - a system which maintains a numerical identity over above the change of its parts.

This idea of independent persistence through change is to be found in the Aristotelian conception of substance - an idea used by Lowe:

I am prepared to defend what I take to be a more or less Aristotelian conception of this notion. That is, I shall follow the Aristotle of the Categories in taking a 'primary' substance to be a concrete individual thing or 'particular', or 'continuant'...Events, though concrete individuals, are not substances by the 'Aristotelian' account because they are not entities capable of persisting through qualitative change...

Lowe (1) p.880

One might therefore treat the brain as something which has such an independent persistence through qualitative change. If one calls it an Aristotelian substance, making it of a kind with a horse or a tree, then like these other substances, the brain can be attributed an identity through change. Under this description then, it can be claimed that the brain does persist: it is something which is not reducible to its parts - the functioning brain exists as something more than just its individual constituents.

17.2 (iii) Reduction to Complex Identity?

It can be criticised that the above account is a game with words and definitions, moreover that it achieves no more than the Lockean 'idea' of persistence. If one remembers the original Butler/Reid demands on real identity, it seems that if the brain is like other 'substances', then its identity is in doubt. For it is not only artifacts which cause Butler and Reid concern, but organisms as well -

indeed, their accounts expressly deny that complex forms such as animals can have real identity.

It is true that we cannot perceive the persistence in forms or 'substances' undergoing changes: if we employ a Humean identity criterion, then we should deny their persistence. However, in the case of ourselves and our brains, we have two different perspectives from which to describe the same thing: an objective, indirect description and a subjective, direct awareness. It might be argued that our subjective view point gives us unique knowledge of our brains, a knowledge which involves a direct experience of persistence. The unity objectively and uncertainly ascribed to the brain is confirmed by an awareness of unity from the first-person perspective. Unlike all other objects - of which we can have no such reinforcement of identity beliefs - we have privileged and direct access to the brain and its continuity. It is this access which gives us the idea that we persist, and this idea, which is not complex, forms our notion of selfhood.

If it is possible to justify a claim of real identity in the dual aspect theory, is it similarly now open to allow the complex view back into the realm of acceptability? For if the above attempt is successful, then it is equally possible that other complex accounts can maintain a real persistence in persons.

I would agree that this is indeed a possibility, but only if the complex account is willing to accept some notion of the self. For the new view is not a straightforward complex account, it combines the necessity of properties with an equal necessity for a self. This is not the straightforward reductionism of most complex accounts, for the self and subjectivity resist complete analysis. Such a recognition is not usually present in complex accounts, which deny the elusiveness of the self, reducing it completely to properties. It is only if the possibility of a subject in addition to the objects is recognised, that one can pursue the above line of defence and fall back on a dual aspect account.

17.2 (iv) Identity Just Imagined?

It is evident that this last suggestion pushes the defence of the new view into areas of explicit speculation. It can also be objected that, whilst modern complex accounts are at least rigorous in their acceptance of loose identity, the new view deludes itself. For there remains an insoluble problem concerning evidence - a problem endemic to any theory postulating subjectivity.

The problem of real persistence is insoluble if certainty is demanded. It involves the wider epistemological problems affecting all but the most ardent idealist theories. Moreover, the attempts above to avoid the problems of the

complex identity entail that the new view heavily relies upon subjective confirmation. This, as mentioned numerous times before, can produce evidence which although directly known, is basically corrigible.

The difficulty is the familiar problem encountered by any attempt to rely upon subjective evidence - it was faced by Locke and the simple view, and now creates problems for the new view. For if all we have as evidence of persistence is our individual experience of it, then all that can be known for certain is that the self exists at the moment it is aware of itself, no more. Our evidence of the persistence of the brain is likewise flawed, for it relies upon the veracity of the subjective testimony - and such a statement can never be certain.

However, whether mistaken or not, the new view has at least one advantage over the simple and complex accounts: where the simple and complex views conflict with the use and function of our concepts, at least the new view attempts to reflect the beliefs underlying our concepts. Even if in reality our persistence is no more than an idea, it is recognised that this idea of identity informs all our subsequent beliefs and attitudes towards others. The perception of our persistence is evident and strong enough for us to use it as a basis for morality. Unlike those theories which claim that this idea should be dismissed or

isolated from properties, the new view allows the idea to form a solid base.

It is clear that the line of argument above is far from perfect. Moreover, it begs the question to a degree - relying on the subject to endorse the notion and advantages of subjectivity. However, what is being attempted is to show that the new view has at least some possibility of producing an internally coherent view - even if, at this stage, rigorous justification and empirical evidence has not been produced.

17.3 IDENTIFICATION

There is, however, a further problem concerning public inference of the existence of the self. If the persistent self is to be identified only loosely with the brain, it will not be possible to infer the presence of the self from the evidence based in properties. For although the existence of a self entails the existence of a brain to support it, the existence of a brain does not necessarily entail the existence of the self. Brains do not ensure self-consciousness or even consciousness.

Thus, it is possible that a brain exist, yet there be no consciousness or self present - as for example, dead bodies or individuals in a brain-dead coma. Moreover, even if consciousness is present, this does not necessarily entail that self-consciousness or any kind of awareness of unity. If then, we are to argue by analogy to the existence of other selves, and consequently treat them as ends in themselves and responsible agents, there must be some form of necessary correlation between certain properties and the self. Knowledge of the content and function of the brain is important for knowledge of the existence of the self: there must be some link with certain thoughts namely those which

ensure self-consciousness. If the self is further identified with token or type brain events then this may become possible.

There is of course a problem caused by the existence of selective consciousness: we are not always directly conscious of all the events occurring in our brains - things pass unnoticed and we don't always remember or even experience dream activity. A vast amount of the brain's activity occurs sub-consciously. How then, can it be assumed that the existence of material events ensures the occurrence of mental subjectivity?

A defense might take the form of denying that a subject need always be conscious - certainly the sub-conscious can have a subjective effect, for even if we do not directly articulate the thoughts of the consciousness, they can have a profound effect on both our actions and our emotions. The sub-conscious does affect our present self-consciousness, for has its share in determining how we subjectively experience life.

At present it is not possible to determine the exact correlation between types of material event and their content so, although we can make the inference that events of consciousness are likely to be occurring, we cannot know their quality - that can only be discerned by the subject.

Yet it may become possible with increased scientific development to isolate the correlations between material and mental events, either on a token or type basis. If this happens it may well be possible to determine what the content of the thought is: whether a person is conscious, self-conscious, remembering, and so on.

This being so, it would be possible to know whether there is a self-conscious person present and even the sort of thoughts he is having; but it would remain logically impossible to know the subjective experience of those thoughts. Nevertheless, the existence of the correlation between material activity and mental activity will provide us with a public mode of inference: for if the material manifestation of thought is occurring, we can be reasonably sure that the subjective side is occurring too.

17.2 (i) Inference by Analogy

There is a further problem in the idea of the new view - that of transferring the correlation from one person to a universal law from results produced on a subjective testimony. However, if enough experiments are done, some attempt at a probable correlation is possible and the likelihood of particular material and mental identity accepted. In the case of animals this will be more difficult, for the differences in physical structure may well intensify the subjective differences to totally alter

the state of consciousness, and the correlation cannot ever be tested - unless animals learn to talk.

Although on a day-to-day basis we cannot perceive the brain events occurring, we do use other methods by which to infer the mental activity from material events. In testimony from the self, observation of behaviour and the recognition of the functional role of mental states inferences are made concerning the existence of other selves. Although such descriptions appear to be purely objective, there is an inference of subjectivity involved, for these judgements too are based ultimately in analogy from the self, though it is a weak mind/body correlation. Through the mind/brain identity theory of the new view the inference from objective to subjective can be strongly supported.

There is, however, still a fundamental problem to be addressed concerning the justification of arguing from analogy. A theory which bases its arguments upon just one verifying instance is precariously supported, and by using analogy, we are doing just this. In such arguments a move is made from the one instance of consciousness and selfhood experienced in ourselves, to the claim that all other persons are likewise conscious. Yet the fact that it occurs once, cannot guarantee that consciousness occurs in all things.

It is in an attempt to avoid this problem that philosophers have produced objective accounts of mind such as those characterising mental states in behaviouristic or functional roles*, and even those identifying mental events with physical events. However, despite reflecting the way we identify other minds, these theories fail to account for the subjectivity which seems to fundamentally characterise mental events. In effect, any solely objective definition necessarily fails to account for the self or its experience. But if this is so, if an element of subjectivity is essential to the existence of a mental states, how can we know that other minds exist? Can the subjective be objectively identified?

Wittgenstein's 'private language argument'+ has been generally invoked in reply to this question: it has been used by both those wanting to answer 'No' to the question, and by those who want to answer 'Yes'. His argument suggests that a private language is an impossibility, for to formulate a language one needs not only ostensive definition of its referent, but some form of objective and public existence too. Objectivity is necessary for corroboration and consistency in the labelling function of the language, and moreover, it is essential if others are to understand our meaning. Thus although one can point to essentially

* Eg. Ryle 1949 & Shoemaker (2) 1984
+ Wittgenstein 1953

private experiences, one can not formulate any general rules or language by which to label concepts, for in their privacy they lack any form of objectivity both to ourselves and to others.

Hence it is concluded that, if we cannot produce a language about essentially private experiences, either such private experiences exist but we cannot talk about them, or when we do talk about them, we are not really referring to essentially subjective things. Physicalists such as Ryle* use Wittgenstein's argument to deny the existence of any states over and above the physical processes. For, they claim, such essentially private states cannot be talked about and therefore, when we do talk of mental states, we do not refer to anything which is essentially private.

However, the argument can also be used to support the existence of subjectivity which is not essentially private⁺. Rather than denying that subjectivity exists, it claims that since private language is impossible, subjectivity must have some kind of recognised public form. To deny that subjectivity exists is plainly wrong, for it can be proven in at least one case - ourselves. Moreover, when we talk about our own mental states we do refer to this subjectivity, using it comprehensibly in a public way.

* Eg. Ryle 1949

+ Eg. Carruthers 1986

This, then, according to the argument, means that subjectivity can be objectively understood.

Far from dispelling the possibility of subjectivity, the private language argument can be used thus to support the existence of the subject and the possibility of knowing about the self in others. Indeed it can be used to support the claims of this thesis - endorsing the suggestion that mental events do have a physical description on a brain-identity level and also in terms of both functional and behaviouristic description. The private language argument helps to explain the meaning of mental states, and the belief that they are inferable from the physical.

It is true that this is still only an argument from analogy, and it seems that even the most sophisticated attempts cannot avoid this problem. However, what is of interest is the meaning we give to mental states, not whether such use of analogy is rigorously justified. According to this argument, mental states have both a subjective and objective meaning: they are both private and public things. For the fact that we can and do speak publicly about mental events, and moreover understand each other in this language, indicates that there is an objective dimension to those events about which we can communicate.

Even if the analogous argument cannot be rigorously justified, it emerges as a form of argument used and classified in a similar to general induction* - although we cannot be philosophically justified in employing analogy, the use of it is nevertheless what we mean by 'rational'. Whether justified or not, the use of analogy forms the base of the way we think and talk about mental events in others. It explains the premises upon which we form our beliefs of other minds, other selves, other persons and consequently morality itself.

The mind/body identity theory can therefore support the inference from properties to selves. If a token or type theory is adopted, linking mental events to material events unified by one persisting brain, then the inference of the existence of a self from the presence of certain properties, is a justified move. Although we cannot be certain that a self exists, we can be reasonably justified in assuming so: for the connection between selves and properties is not contingent but necessary.

* See Ayer 1936 and Section 7.3 (ii)

17.4 CONCLUSIONS

It would appear from the analysis that on its own the self cannot provide a sufficient characterisation of persons. The concept of persons is of more than just that of a self - persons are agents with deeds and behaviour, they are interactive, social beings. Persons, in effect have properties of certain sorts which make them persons, otherwise they are not complete. Persons are essentially public entities and without some necessary element of public tangibility, recognizability, and interaction, the concept of person could not function accurately.

Objective characterisation is therefore not merely to ensure a publicly accessible self. As described by the simple view, selves have no public image as parts of their essential nature. In their propertyless-ness they fail not only because of their obvious lack of essential properties, but also in their intangibility to all but themselves. Even if they were to have some necessary link to properties by way of practical instantiation, properties associated in this way would be merely derivative to ensuring the existence and persistence of the self. It has been suggested that persons are more than just selves, their properties are not just associated with individuation or evidence: they are part of what a person essentially is.

However, the self must not be completely dismissed from any account of persons. If the intimations of the previous chapters are correct, the existence of the self proves to be a necessary element of person-hood. Belief in a property-less self is integral to our notion of morality and personal rights, for without such a concept the notion of responsibility cannot prevail over determinism. If our actions are ultimately determined by factors other than pure agency it is no longer logically possible to feel, nor attribute, responsibility and its attendant responses of praise or blame. Thus the removal of free will would undermine the inter-personal relationships of responsibility and agency in both the public and the private realms.

The person is therefore reducible to two basic elements - the self and properties - and any criterion of personal identity must combine these essential and necessary ingredients. An account of synchronic identity will somehow involve the presence of certain properties in combination with a self; a diachronic description will amount to the persistence conditions necessary for the self with these properties. Any attempt to produce a coherent theory of personal identity must somehow bring together what have so far been firmly separated: it must reconcile the simple and the complex views.

The simple and the complex views contradict each other: the former insisting that only the real persistence of the self can satisfy the needs of personal identity; the latter claiming that the real identity of substances or properties is unimportant to persons. It would seem therefore, that the combination of two theories might involve an internal inconsistency. However, such a threat can be dissipated if the compromise be viewed differently: if the positive claims of each view are accepted, and the negative points rejected. The result will be a theory holding that personal identity involves both the persistence of the self with real identity AND a continuity of shifting properties. The inclusion of parts of both the simple and complex views in the new criterion of personal identity does not, on this level, involve any form of logical contradiction.

It has been suggested in this chapter that the new view might be realised in actuality if some form of mind/identity or dual aspect thesis were true. Although such an account is based in empirical observation and the links are only contingent, the characterisation is enough to explain a functional concept of person as we use it. Consciousness may exist in different forms elsewhere, or even in sophisticated artificial intelligence systems, but the way it is experienced and accounted for in humans can be used to explain and support our notion of morality with respect to persons.

It has been put forward that personal identity consists in a combination of self and property identity. Whilst it seems necessary that we have an idea of the self as persisting with real identity, this can be combined with an idea of fluctuating properties associated with that self to form a person. The self alone cannot constitute the person, for as such it has no public place - nor indeed can it be known. The properties alone cannot be the person, for a self is necessary to satisfy our beliefs concerning persistence, identity and freedom.

The new view therefore does effect a certain compromise between the various accounts of personal identity. A person appears to be a complex object in that it has identifiable parts to which it is reducible. Moreover, it can be translated into these terms and persistence conditions of some sort, not referring to persons, can be provided. However, the complex characterisation is not that of the straightforward empiricist, for whilst part of a person's identity includes the continuation of something with loose identity, within the description is included the actual persistence of a thing with real, irreducible identity - the basic contentless self described by the modified simple view. It seems that the complex person of properties and the simple person without them are both necessary to a fully functional concept of persons.

Despite the attempts to dispel some of the problems of the new view, the project is still largely incomplete. Difficulties remain in the areas discussed - the reconciliation of the subjective and objective, the problems of achieving real identity, and the ability to identify other selves. Moreover, the repercussions concerning freedom and free will under the new view have yet to be sorted out. Most of the suggested solutions have ultimately taken refuge in somewhat lackadaisical arguments - like Nagel, I find that at this stage the compromise theory has "the faintly sickening odor of something put together in the metaphysical laboratory" (Nagel (3) p.49)

However, although the new theory remains largely unsupported, I have given some suggestions or pointers as to how it might avoid its greatest difficulties, and thus have a chance of possibility. The strongest support for the suggestions lies in explanatory power: they help describe the way things appear to be set up and the preconceptions we have about things - whether they be concerned with mind, brains, agency or persons. I cannot claim to have proven anything in my suggestions, but they do provide a fresh approach to an area of argument which seems to have reached a stalemate.

CHAPTER 18 APPARENTLY FUNDAMENTAL IRRECONCILABLES

As was mentioned in chapter 3.1, the new view of personal identity not only encounters particular difficulties associated with 'person', but enforces a re-assessment of broader epistemological classifications. It is not merely the difficulty of combining material with immaterial and the persistent with the transient, the subject with the object: for these are indicators of a more fundamental disharmony - that separating empirical and rational accounts of epistemology and ontology.

If the claims and description of the new view of personal identity are correct, then they will amount to a combination of both the rationalist and empiricist perspectives. As argued, the person is a self plus properties, and both of these aspects can be given a subjective and objective description from the same perspective. The account will fail if either description is not present, for subjectivity is necessary to our moral conception; objectivity for the functioning of person as responsible in society.

18.1 THE TENSION OF PERSPECTIVE

The claims of the new view therefore combine both empiricist and rationalist perspectives: that we can have knowledge of persons both a priori and a posteriori in a way which does not relegate one of the forms of knowledge to second best. Empirical knowledge is not reduced to mere evidence and rational knowledge is not confined to intuition or definition. Thus it is possible to have both rational and empirical knowledge of the object and subject in the same thing.

18.1 (i) Empiricism and Rationalism

The apparent incoherence of such an account stems directly from the traditional divide centring on problems of knowledge and scepticism. Such difficulties arise from the demand for certainty in our knowledge: belief in a world independent of our perceptions cannot have complete certainty, for we are ultimately limited to our individual perspective upon it. This tension arising between the subjective and absolute accounts of the world is explicable if characterised as the difference between a first and a third-person view point.

We experience the world from our own first-person perspective yet try to make judgements upon it which remove that unique view point and incorporate a general third-

person perspective into the account. Our first-person perspective is necessarily subjective: anything experienced is done so from our unique point of view, whether we impose our preconception upon belief or merely our particular spatial perspective, the resulting account of the world will be unique and necessarily one sided. In contrast, the attempt to remove the particular perspective is a push towards objectivity: to try to describe the world from a general rather than particular position. Attempts to produce objectivity are traditionally associated with the removal of all sensible or essentially experienced or secondary properties, carried out in an effort to remove all subjectively determined elements.

The most extreme example of this is found in Plato*. In an effort to achieve objectivity he excludes all phenomenal properties experienced, relying purely upon intellect and conception. As a result, Plato's knowledge is removed entirely from the world of sensory information (and any world thought to cause such experience) to an independent and intellectual realm of forms.

The empirical/rational debate can be understood in terms of this tension between the subjective and objective accounts of reality. The empiricist abandons hope of producing any knowledge of the world in perspectiveless

* Plato

terms. He is convinced of our confinement to subjectivity, producing theories inherently sceptical and usually idealistic about the possibility of an independent world. The only certain knowledge, it is claimed, is that to be had through the perceptions, for they are directly known and incorrigible. The knowable world thus contracts to become no more than a phenomenological thing: talk of anything more is empty or merely convention.

By contrast, the rationalist clings to belief in an objective reality. From Plato to the present, he has attempted to provide accounts of a world apart from the ephemeral of our minds. The hope is that rationality can provide a perspectiveless account of knowledge of the world - one not clouded by preconceptions of subjectivity.

Kant's synthetic a priori knowledge is an attempt to combine subjectivity with some form of necessity*: he imposes a framework of a priori certainty upon an empirically manifested world. In the realm of phenomenal experiences he does manage to introduce an element of certainty; but it remains essentially subjective, even though it is common to all subjectivity. Moreover, to achieve synthetic necessity the objective and real world is forced beyond sensory accessibility - to a strange and

* Kant 1781

remote place never known in itself.

The result of this conflict and the parallel divide between the simple and complex views, is that each account 'cuts off its nose to spite its face'. Both result in world views which are acceptable in some respects though objectionable in others. The theories are fragmented and insufficient with large gaps or problem areas. As Nagel* writes of this problem:

The problem of bringing together subjective and objective views of the world can be approached from either direction. If one starts from the subjective side, the problem is the traditional one of skepticism, idealism or solipsism. How, given my personal experiential perspective, can I form a conception of the world as it is independent of my perception of it? And how can I know that this conception is correct?...if on the other hand one starts from the objective side, the problem is how to accommodate, in a world that simply exists and has no perspectival centre, any of the following things: (a) oneself; (b) one's point of view; (c) the point of view of other selves, similar and dissimilar; and (d) the objects of various types of judgement that seem to emanate from these perspectives.

Nagel (3) p.27

The flaws in each account are endemic to their approach, for each paints only part of the picture of reality obscuring the other parts by their uncompromising stance. The empiricist sacrifices independent and objective reality for the sake of certainty; the rationalist forsakes true comprehension or real understanding for the sake of objectivity.

* Nagel (3) 1986

18.1 (ii) The Complex and Simple Views

This basic problem has been clearly exemplified in the debate over personal identity. Paralleling the subjective/objective conflict their accounts polarise on similar lines. The complex account of persons is clearly the result of recognised subjectivity: all versions are attempts to account for the person in purely subjective terms. They characterise a person as what can be experienced and no more - to suggest the existence of more amounts to mere speculation. Thus the person is neatly reduced an account of its phenomena or properties. The person is essentially these properties, and the criteria of personal identity focus upon the empirically knowable.

The simple view, by contrast, seeks to to provide an objective account of persons. In stripping the person of all phenomena it attempts to achieve maximum objectivity, thereby giving the person a status of a real thing rather than conventional, man-dependent entity. Thus the person is reduced to the propertyless self - the most objective entity we can imagine. This kind of self is described by Nagel:

The picture is this. Essentially I have no particular point of view at all, but apprehend the world as centreless. As it happens, I ordinarily view the world from a certain vantage point, using the eyes, the person, the daily life of TN as a kind of window. But the experiences and the perspective of TN with which I am directly presented are not the point of view of the true self, for the true self has no point of view...

Nagel (3) p.61

Each type of approach in its way succeeds in producing a theory which makes some sense; yet each also makes sacrifices that are fatal to their account..

The complex view fails to explain or encompass any valid notion of subjectivity, where it does, it is not the 'real' self needed for moral foundation. The simple view produces an incoherent or isolated notion - something which fails to interact or do anything. These problems are clearly articulated by Nagel:

The subjective features of conscious mental processes - as opposed to their physical causes and effects - cannot be captured by the purified form of thought suitable for dealing with the physical world that underlies the appearances.

Nagel (3) p.15

If we try to understand experience from an objective viewpoint that is distinct from that of the subject of the experience, then even if we continue to credit its perspectival nature, we will not be able to grasp its most specific qualities unless we can imagine them subjectively.

Nagel (3) p.25

This mutual exclusivity does not only produce insufficient accounts but the subsequent theories produced are self-refuting. Inconsistencies arise when it is realised that the account of person offered by each view ultimately conflicts with the starting place and background epistemology of its approach.

Consider first the complex view. The empirical account of persons results in the rejection of the subject, for

phenomena cannot produce any evidence for persons which includes a subject - it is not empirically accessible. The result is that there is no longer a subject to give a subjectively defined account. Hence, in effect, the very subjectivity of perspective is denied in the consequences of its approach.

The simple view encounters similar problems. In stripping the subject of all its subjectively discerned properties, the self becomes meaningless and unreal. It cannot conceivably be a subject, for its ability to experience and have a subjective experience is denied. Thus the consequence of trying to give an account of the a real self through objectivity, results in an incomprehensible and obscure thing which cannot satisfy the function of a subject, or be comprehended as real. In effect, the chosen approach of each side can only be satisfied by an account produced by its opposite.

18.1 (iii) Resolution in the New View

It seems that there is a need for some form of collaboration. If the two accounts do combine, the resulting theory is consistent and the person becomes a possible concept. The combined view accords with beliefs we have about persons - that they have both a public and private existence. Interaction is not necessarily an impossibility and can be made to make sense: the properties

will be provided with a subject and the subject will be given properties to work through. If a joint approach to the person is accepted, the person can both function in the world and be known with an element of certainty: for the propertyless subject is recognised and knowable through links to both self and person-properties. The person is an object and a subject and is objectively and subjectively known. The complex and the simple accounts are thus shown to be intimately connected, neither making a viable theory upon its own but needing the compliment of its opposite.

The recognition of a subjective and objective account of knowledge and the world as a possibility rather than a potential disaster helps to solve apparently insoluble contradictions. That empirical properties in the world are contingent and ephemeral seems to conflict with the possibility that their objects are real and persistent: yet both accounts seem indispensable. As Nagel writes:

The question is how to combine objective and subjective values in the control of a single life. They cannot simply exist side by side without interference, and it seems impossible to give the authority to either in deciding conflicts between them.

Nagel (3) p.8

If we consider each description as a different perspective on the same thing, it is possible to reconcile the two in a subjective and objective account. The fact is that most things do have ephemeral natures as well as real

identity - the two are different ways of describing the same thing. Unless we recognise the possibility of this dual description, and indeed the necessity of including both an objective and subjective description of our knowledge, we are condemned to a one-sided and partial account of ourselves and the world.

For in such an account we achieve a description of something which is known both subjectively and objectively by the same person. The role of the self is integral to the combination, for it is the self which knows itself as both a subject and an object - the only thing which can be known for certain in this way.

This centrality of the self has long been recognised: since Descartes first articulated the 'cogito' it has had a central role to play. Kant recognised the self as the bridge between the noumenal and phenomenal world, claiming that, the free will necessary to the moral self can only be achieved through the existence of that self in a phenomenal and therefore non-causal state.

The new view takes the centrality farther - it is the self which provides us with certain evidence of an objective and subjective thing. If we did not know the self as both a persisting subject and fluctuating object, we could not know anything to have such identity.

18.2 EXAMPLES OF ANTINOMIES

The existence of irreducible aspects of reality is clearly recognised in Kant*. As explained, he postulates a dual world - the objective noumenal world and the subjective phenomenal domain. The two are irreducible to each other but both are necessary to produce an accurate description of the way things are. The fundamental irreconcilability is further recognised in the antinomies, a set of apparent contradictions: both sides are deducible through reason yet, logically, the two should be contradictory. They could be classed as arising out of the empiricist and rationalist approaches to knowledge, like the problems of the self and body, as differing descriptions of the same thing: an objective fixed and absolute account, and a subjective and fluctuating one. Kant writes:

This antinomy, not arbitrarily invented but founded in the nature of human reason, and hence unavoidable and never ceasing, contains the following four theses together with their antitheses:

1

Thesis: The world has, as to time and space, a beginning (limit).

Antithesis: The world is, as to time and space, infinite.

2

Thesis: Everything in the world consists of [elements that are] simple.

Antithesis: There is nothing simple, but everything is composite.

3

Thesis: There are in the world causes through freedom.

Antithesis: There is no freedom, but all is nature.

* Kant 1781

4

Thesis: In the series of the world-causes there is some necessary being.

Antithesis: There is nothing necessary in the world, but in this series all is contingent.

Here is the most singular phenomenon of human reason, no other instance of which can be shown in any other use of reason. If we, as is commonly done, represent to ourselves the appearances of the sensible world as things in themselves, if we assume the principles of their combination as principles universally valid of things in themselves and not merely of experience, as is usually, nay without our Critique unavoidably, done, there arises an unexpected conflict which never can be removed in the common dogmatic way: because the thesis, as well as the antithesis, can be shown by equally clear, evident, and irresistible proofs...and reason therefore perceives that it is divided against itself, a state at which the skeptic rejoices, but which must make the critical philosopher pause and feel ill at ease.

Kant sc.50

The acceptability of irreconcilability - the idea that this is the way things are, that they both fluctuate and are fixed, that there is an absoluteness and a relativity about the world - extends to many areas of knowledge, not just those of philosophical concern. It underlies many of our basic beliefs about ourselves and the world.

18.2 (i) Perspective in Morality

From what has been discussed, this attitude is evident in a philosophical account of persons but it is also strongly characteristic of our everyday beliefs about ourselves and others. As shown*, we have distinct ideas of ourselves as both fixed and changing. When considering our past we have

* Chapters 14 & 15

a clear notion that it is our past and that we are in connected with it through identity, yet at the same time we are willing to disassociate ourselves from that past, absolving our consciences of responsibility for the deeds done, and believing that it is possible to make a fresh start in a complete break from the past - in effect that we can and do change over time.

This attitude does not extend just to ourselves - we believe it of others as well even though the conviction of its truth may be weakened and less certain. The history of others is important to us, as are their qualities and properties: they make a difference to our appraisal and value of who and what they are and give us an idea of what to expect of them. Yet at the same time it is felt that we can judge a person anew, reappraising them on what they are now by recognising the possibility of change and the difference it can bring about in value and responsibility. In effect we have a conflicting belief about others too - that they are both persistent and changing through time.

The effects of this belief have repercussions within morality and moral behaviour, characterised by the conflict between altruism and utility. Both in ourselves and in others there is a distinct tension between considering the person to be of value to some further end - either happiness or usefulness, and the need to value persons in their own

right - as an end in themselves. Moreover, this attitude can be seen in the attribution of responsibility: that we are unwilling to condemn individuals for behaviour not done voluntarily, yet demand some notion of causality in responsible action.

18.2 (ii) Definition of the Person

We have an idea of the person as something which is fixed and changing and, as suggested, this might be characterised in terms of the self and its properties. Both exist in the person, both are necessary to the person, and the person is thus considered to be a combination of potentially contradictory elements.

These contradictions extend to beliefs in the what we are as persons - there are strong and conflicting concepts of selves as being somehow perfect yet at the same time flawed. For we aspire to some ideal of perfection and purity in our lives and behaviour, in the belief that that is what makes us good (no matter what it is that one aspire to), yet at the same time we are conscious of the fact that we have human frailties and weaknesses essential to being human. Moreover, it is generally recognised that the qualities we ascribe to ourselves and others often aspire to some pureness of form - such as bravery, or humility, yet without the opposing factors of cowardice or pride we would become imbalanced and somehow worse. In effect, we have a belief

that there is a perfect black and white quality we wish to encourage, yet at the same time find that if it is nurtured to the detriment of other traits we can become completely imbalanced.

That we can reconcile ourselves to this contradiction is exemplified through its existence in many religious and moral codes - most exhort the believer to move closer to perfection whilst at the same time recognising the inherent 'weakness' in humanity. For example, in Christianity, the existence of 'sin' is a recognition of our human condition: we were fashioned in perfection but are all born with the original sin of Adam. This tension in us is exemplified by belief that Christ, the Son of God and therefore perfect, was made man, thus becoming also imperfect. Though for some this is difficult to believe, it is a sustainable belief for the religious and accepted as the truth about the way men are. It is perhaps a reflection of the belief that we have a share in the divine and a share in the natural and that the two, though conflicting, exist alongside each other.

18.2 (iii) The Individual and Society

On a wider level of identity there is a tension between ourselves as individuals and as being part of a tribe or social group. There are strong beliefs concerning ourselves as individuals with potential for being and acting independently of our social surroundings and upbringing,

whilst at the same time it is difficult to understand how we come to be characterised, except through our social identity - the individual gains a great deal of character and potentiality through the tribe, even understanding himself in contrast to other social groups. The two seem interdependent: the individual cannot exist unless the society provides a background against which to define himself, but the society cannot thrive without the life-giving individuality - without originality it may become stagnated and dried up.

When this dilemma is extended to action within society the problem emerges with force. There is a real conflict between acting for the society and acting in self-interest - whether to behave with the interests of the social group in mind, doing actions which may harm the self, or whether self preservation must be a deciding factor for behaviour. This tension surfaces in the divisions created in Mill's 'On Liberty'* where individualism is promoted for the good of society but it is also recognised that, if unchecked, such individualism might cause the disintegration of society.

The difficulty creates problems over the imposition of social rules: there is a strong belief that an individual should be free to choose and be responsible for its actions, yet without rules, the individual may find it difficult to

* Mill 1859

act, not knowing how to make or base a decision. What emerges are two conflicting truths - that both individualistic and herd-like behaviour are necessary to the continuance of both the individual and society. If one exists but not the other, chaos ensues.

In case-law yet another recognition of tension can be seen. This is a perfect example of the belief that absolutes exist alongside the undeniable uniqueness of each individual situation. The fundamental absolutes of law are laid down, yet each case is judged and evaluated on its own merits, with all circumstances of its particular background taken into account

18.2 (iv) Absolutes and Relativity

It seems that in our beliefs and laws of society we have a concept of absolutes which co-exists with the recognition that everything seems relative. The concepts we have imply a universal truth, yet when applied to the world it is found that they occur in conjunction with so many influences from other factors, that a unique situation is born. The world does not provide a pure vacuum in which absolutes function, no situation provides a pure case concerning only one concept, so absolutes are corrupted, changed and modified, until they seem to no longer exist. As Plato noted*, nothing in the world seems to match up to the absolute

* Eg. 'The Republic'

concepts we have despite that fact that we do have strong beliefs in their existence.

The problem remains then, whether absolutism is just a habit or belief or whether these things really do exist. Is truth to be found in abstract concepts or changing experiences? If the account of this thesis is correct, the answer is, that it must be a combination of both: without the knowledge of ideals and absolutes we become lost, for there is no starting place or framework to work within; yet without the belief in individual circumstance, we become unbending, idealistic, and naive. Neither forms the whole truth on its own; truth and wisdom is made up of a consideration of both.

18.2 (v) Perspective in Art

Art can be seen as an attempt to achieve the bird's eye view of reality - to combine the absolute with the subjective. The artist has a conflict to re-produce - he is trying to present the world in a universal way, yet needs to do so from his subjective position. The best works combine the two, the product achieving a 'play' between the objectivity of the world and subjectivity of experience: if the work tries to become too objective, it remains just a copy and uninteresting; if it becomes too subjective or abstract, intelligibility is lost to the obscurity of a private perspective.

The difficulty is implicit in certain letters of Cezanne*. For example he writes of painting a seascape in which many of the colours look flat, yet we know that they are not, they are part of a three dimensional extension. It therefore becomes part of the work of the artist to include both the subjective impression of flatness and the knowledge of the objective reality of depth. Schiller[†] too writes of the external and internal world of the artist, claiming that the good work of art is a 'play' between reality imposing upon the artist, and the artist imposing upon reality.

Thus, it might be considered that the greatest works of art are those which balance the relative with the absolute - attempt to show that the truth of the way things are is perspectiveless, whilst maintaining that every approach to the world must have a perspective. The great play will present more than one side of its story - we are shown the different perspectives, with the play attempting to provide the all embracing 'gods eye' viewpoint.

One of the great values in Shakespeare is exactly this: that his depth is produced in the recognition of a conflict of interests. The struggles he portrays can be seen as disparities of perspective, and the truth or understanding of the problem is brought out for the audience by the

* Cezanne 1946
† Schiller 1793

presentation of those different perspectives: the good guys are rarely completely good; the bad usually understandable.

18.2 (vi) The Centrality of the Self

The central role of the self and self knowledge in all these examples has been recognised and seized upon by the existentialists. For example, Merleau-Ponty* discusses relationship between art and the mind, locating the artist at the centre of the interaction between the objective and subjective:

Essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible - a painting mixes up all our categories in laying out its oneiric universe of carnal essences, of effective likenesses, of mute meanings.

Merleau-Ponty p.65

He criticises the scientific approach as one of trying to create a perspectiveless description for inevitably this will lead to an insufficient account. He writes:

Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the 'there is' which underlies it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and opened world which as it is in our life and for our body - not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but that actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts.

Merleau-Ponty p.56

He thus places an emphasis upon the self as having a body as well as a being with thought - its objectivity is crucial to our knowledge of the real world and its subjectivity is

* Merleau-Ponty 1961

crucial to an accurate presentation of the world:

The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognise, in what it sees, the 'other side' of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself. It is not a self through transparency, like thought, which only thinks its object by assimilating it, by constituting it, by transforming it into thought. It is a self through confusion, narcissism, through inherence of the one who sees in that which he sees, and through inherence of sensing in the sensed - a self, therefore, that is caught up in things, that has a front and a back, a past and a future...

Merleau-Ponty p.58

Although the existentialist intention is to deny the possibility of objective truths, focussing instead upon the importance of the subject and its being in the world, the crucial role of the subject links it to the suggestions of this thesis. For to the existentialist the knowledge we have is essentially linked to our experience of subjectivity. The last comment in the quotation above recognises the key role played by the self's knowledge and experience of itself.

It is the intention of this thesis to suggest that such knowledge enables us to move beyond the subjective truth limiting the existentialist, to an understanding of the absolute as well. For it is through awareness of a subjective/objective dualism in ourselves that we are able to comprehend the dualism and contradiction of the world. It is the experience of absolute in combination with the relative in our self which enables us to comprehend and

believe in the same for all reality. If we want to make a fitting description or a wise account of our selves and the world - we must include the subjective and objective view points.

CHAPTER 19 SUMMARY CONCLUSION

19.1 THE SELF AND THE PROPERTIES

From the discussion it appears that the new view's concept of person is not a logical impossibility. It has been shown that a self does not entail the person on its own but needs consciousness of certain person-properties and that the person-properties cannot be a person without the self. Moreover, this account of the connection is reinforced in the powerful understanding of ourselves as both having and being properties. It can also be shown that the connections do in fact exist and provide a sufficient account of personal identity.

It is not enough just to combine the two elements under a joint classification: it must be possible to discern the person as a persisting real thing. For it has been established that it is necessary to produce a concept of personal identity which is both actually real and which is knowable with certainty - not merely for proof of the existence of the person but to enable the concept of responsibility used in morality to function.

It has been shown that the properties and the self are separately discernible in some way, moreover that both exist: as the simple view shows, the self is experienced by the self; as the complex view shows the the person-properties are straightforwardly observable. The new view attempts to show that the combination of both self and properties is not only perceivable through presence of the separate parts, but also as a unified whole. The suggested connection might be characterised by some form of co-consciousness - that the self is joined to the properties by the potentiality of direct awareness of them.

19.1 (i) Knowledge of Properties

The self has direct knowledge of its possession of properties through its knowledge of its own existence. In a way similar to the knowledge of our existence through the 'cogito', existence of the self entails the existence of certain properties, that is, ability to experience, act and so on. Thus the self can make a logical inference from knowledge of its existence to the knowledge that it has certain properties, namely those necessary for the instantiation of the self. The self therefore knows itself as an object as well as subject - an a priori knowledge that selves have certain objective properties.

In addition to the bare logical proof of Descartes, the self can have a different form of direct knowledge of its

properties: for a distinction can be made in the field of our immediate experiences between the type and nature of that experience. We are aware of some things as objects independent of us but we are also aware of certain things as subjects of them - they are part of ourselves. For example, I can experience parts of my body as objects but also as part of me - I can see my leg through my eyes but I can also perceive my leg through my nerves and 'feel' it. Those experiences which I perceive as a subject I consider to be mine. Any property belonging to me in this way is experienced in an incorrigible and direct way, which does not divide the experience from the experiencer, they are the same thing.

It is clear then that there is a definite and empirical link between the self and its properties, and this defines properties of the self in terms of subjective awareness. There seems little logical objection to taking a further step to characterise a connection between the self and its person-properties also in this way. If this is so, self-consciousness of person-properties is the vital link which makes a person known to the self. If we are self-consciously aware of certain person-properties then we are persons.

An objection to this characterisation of person-hood might be that the capriciousness of self-awareness makes an

unsuitable base for personal rights. We are far from constantly aware of all our properties - what happens when we are not self-conscious of vital person properties? Moreover, persons have properties that are continuous even if we do not feel conscious of them, and we attribute properties to others which they may, or may not be, directly aware of. Does this mean that we are not the same person as those properties or that they are not part of a person?

A further moral problem concerns the fluctuation of properties, for the objective history of the self is also necessary to the system of punishment and personal responsibility we have. We could not objectively discern persons in a Lockean or simple view system, for as shown, such accounts entail that the identity of the person would depend upon the self and its particular present consciousness. Although it cannot be certain, it is likely that if this were so, our notion of moral responsibility could not persist as we use it.

Such considerations point the way to a belief that the truth about personal identity must lie in something more: there needs to be some form of co-consciousness which is not merely the subjective phenomenon - one that can link the subject to the properties at times of unconsciousness and lack of awareness. Although the ability to subjectively recognise certain properties is necessary for properties to

belong to a particular self; this does not provide a sufficient account - self-awareness and co-consciousness is only a symptom of some more profound connection.

19.1 (ii) Mind/Brain Identity

The link being looked for can be provided in a mind/brain identity theory. Such an account portrays self-consciousness as a phenomenal aspect of the brain's functional unification. Material brain events and thoughts can be identified in a token or type way, and the persistent self-consciousness through time can be identified with the unified brain. The physical and the mental are different descriptions of the same thing: the objective and subjective are both aspects of mind.

The new view claims that the self has an objective reality, rather than an ephemeral subjective impression; that co-consciousness is upheld independently of phenomenal impressions by the unified brain.

Hence, it may be that the connection between the self and its properties can be reduced or explained in terms not referring explicitly to this self-consciousness. But as before, this question is one of mechanics derivative to exemplifying the desired connection of self-consciousness and no more. The brain is not sufficient to the concept of person-hood, for the brain does not entail the existence of

a person. Thus although the existence of a person will entail that there is a brain, a self and certain other person-properties present, the same is not true of the opposite: none of these factors individually entail that there is a person present - only self-consciousness can do that.

19.2 THE NEW VIEW AND MORALITY

The above characterisation fits well with our beliefs about what persons are.

19.2 (i) The Attribution of Personal Rights

A set of properties without the notion of a connection to a unified self-conscious subject does not have personal status: neither robots nor dead bodies have full personal rights - and even babies and lunatics have such rights only on the presumption of potential full person-hood. Likewise the conflict between maintaining or removing life support from patients can be described under the possibility of there being or not being a self-consciousness (or potential for a subject) still present. Finally, the attribution of punishment or reward is based upon the ideal assumption that actions are controlled by self-consciousness - without this vital link, then actions are not considered to be truly morally reprehensible.

Thus the reduction is only to practical conditions necessary to maintain the relationship of co-consciousness: the essence of the link between properties and the person is purely that of co-consciousness, anything more is subordinate to achieving that link. This is clearly shown by the fact that it takes only the removal of the belief in

self-conscious unity to justify a removal of personal rights.

For example, the uncontrolled acts of the drunk or insane are punished not for their responsibility in acting, but either to punish the wilful act of getting drunk and into an irresponsible position, or to protect the community from further crimes. On an everyday scale even acts done unwittingly or out of character are punished for the agent's inability to exact the proper self-control rather than responsibility for the act itself. In each case, the idea of personal responsibility is weakened, though individual responsibility is not.

It seems that full personal rights are essentially based in the belief that the individual or agent is in full self-conscious control of and is aware of his properties, or at least they are based upon some ideal condition with appropriate modifications and allowances. The apparent problem of non-continuity of this self-consciousness can be easily explained in a way similar to that used by memory theorists: that it is a general connectedness or continuity of self-consciousness and the potential for unity that links the self to properties. Any personal rights attributed to individuals without such self-consciousness is done so in the belief of their potential or past ability to enjoy this state.

19.2 (ii) Others and Selves

We thus have experience of a connection between ourselves and our personal properties. However, such a connection is still not a sufficient criterion of identity for the person. For, although the connection entails that the person can be subjectively known and individuated, and that it can have a fixed history, it does not explain how this person can be objectively or publicly known. Although it is obvious that we can publicly experience both self-properties and person-properties, this is not enough to infer the existence of a person from a third-person perspective. To be a functional criterion of person it must be possible that the self, properties and the link of self-consciousness be identifiable by others.

It has been claimed that self-knowledge of properties is a priori and certain but that such knowledge is logically private. The unity experienced by the self is not something possibly experienced by others - it is something which in itself gives rise to the particular self. Anyone experiencing the subjectivity will be that self.

It is through the links between the self and its necessary self-properties that we can have direct evidence of other selves. Although the properties necessary to the self will not entail with certainty that there is a self present, we have some justification for making the inference

since there is a necessary connection rather than just contingent or accidental coincidence. Given other corroborative evidence, for example that of self-testimony or other person-properties, we are justified in inferring the existence of the self. Thus unlike knowledge of others in the simple view, we can have supported knowledge of other selves - be it only probable and based upon inference. Certain properties may be taken as evidence of their existence, for the links between empirical manifestations and the self are necessary. The self of this new view does have a public manifestation.

19.2 (iii) Others as Persons

However, the above is still not complete evidence of the person, for as seen, the self is just a part of the person. There is also evidence that personal properties are linked to a self in self-consciousness. The form of argument above can additionally be used to give knowledge of the person. Like the existence of the self, the connection of person-properties to the self must be inferred. Although the existence of person-properties does not entail a person, they are part of the person and therefore, if present in conjunction with the self-properties, indicate a high likelihood that a person is present. Once again, the inference is justified, for the criteria being used are necessarily linked to the person. Although third-person identification of persons is not infallible, the evidence of

persons is based upon knowledge that connections that are infallibly known do exist.

It would seem therefore that our evidence of person-hood in others must be inferred from known connections holding within ourselves. Although this is indirect and corrigible evidence, this evidence is based in direct and incorrigible knowledge in our own particular instance. Whether justified or not, this characterisation is evidenced in our use of personal identity and beliefs about others. We do accept that our knowledge of others is fallible, being willing to adjust and modify our judgements on the matter. Identity is notably difficult to be certain of, but such uncertainty indicates a belief that there is a right and wrong answer rather than that the judgement is entirely relative. The seriousness with which we take the making of identity claims is partly due to the belief that there is an objective and real identity to be found. We believe that there is a real and persisting thing that we call the person.

Like the foundation of moral behaviour and personal rights, the knowledge and beliefs about others is inferred from analogy. Although this method has been widely challenged and rejected, it seems that at present there is no other way that we can come by a belief in other minds. It is because we experience ourselves as subjects with objective parts, that we can infer the existence of other

subjects though their objective manifestations. The inference is based in knowledge of something real - the foundation of that knowledge is in the a priori awareness of the self.

19.3 CONCLUSIONS

The knowledge we have of the self and person can be seen to provide a central touchstone for our beliefs and ideas about the rest of our experiences. The awareness or belief in identity through change in the self, serves as a measuring stick for identity in other things: both giving us the original idea of identity, and serving as a base relative to which we determine other identities.

Not only does the experience of the self provide awareness of identity, but it may be the source of our ideas of the absolute and the relative in reality. For we experience ourselves as persons both subjectively and objectively - we know ourselves both as persistent things and as changing things. It may be that it is through this self-awareness, that we come to frame our expectations about other objects of empirical perception - that perhaps they too have some unity and persistence through time not discernible in an objective empirical way.

The main objections against the possibility of a person being a hybrid of the self and properties can be circumnavigated without too much difficulty. It is conceivable that the self and its properties can be connected in a real rather than just conventional way and,

moreover, that such a connection can produce a criterion of identity which will not be question begging.

The foreseen combination of complex and simple accounts does not pose any fundamental barriers for either our conception or our knowledge of person. Although it has not been conclusively proven to be true, it provides a more convincing account of persons than either the complex or simple view in isolation.

CONCLUSION

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not
abase itself to you,
And you must not be abased to the other.

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'



CONCLUSION

In examining the concept of personal identity, this thesis has concentrated upon the central divide between complex and simple accounts. The opposing theories have been evaluated with respect to their ability to produce a concept of persons which will fulfil the role of a forensic being. Thus, the criticisms suggested, are not made solely in consideration of the coherence of supportive arguments, but also on the ability to provide accurate accounts of a person as a moral agent: whether value and responsibility are sufficiently met by the concept, whether the resulting person can be objectively and reliably identified.

1 THE COMPLEX VIEW

The complex view of persons was the first account examined. Within this account the person is portrayed as fundamentally reducible to a set of criteria, all of which are empirically verifiable from a third-person or first-person perspective: whether it is the phenomenal and first-person self or the solid more tangible properties, all are basically reductions of the person to a list of properties. The value and importance of persons is in the way they seem, the qualities and properties they have and the utility they provide.

1 (i) Advantages

The advantage of such a view is that it makes persons ostensive - they can be individuated and understood in a public way. Even the fluctuating Lockean self is comprehensible, for its value can be defined in terms of consciousness. The person is thus defined in a solid way: its nature, value, identity and existence can all be explained and translated into further terms.

In the field of morality this is of great significance, for it fits well with the notion of utilitarian ethics, being consistent with the utility principle we operate with regard to both ourselves and others. As argued, it is practically impossible to separate properties from the

concept of persons - both in straightforward value and in terms of responsibility. Without empirical criteria of identity, the person becomes obscure, even meaningless.

1 (ii) Disadvantages

However, in its restriction to empiricism, the complex account falls down. By concentrating upon properties, the complex accounts characterise persons as objects rather than subjects - a description which loses part of the meaning we associate with ourselves and others. Whether the subjective account of Locke, or the more objective developments of more recent complex view holders, the person cannot have persistence with real identity. As demonstrated, the complex view cannot therefore account for the conception of selves in terms of value, morality or responsibility. Clearly recognisable in its accounts are the sort of conclusions which also arise out of a utility-based ethic. Since a utility ethic results in ridiculous and discordant theories - something more must be added if we are to provide a sufficient account of persons.

Most of these problems have been raised in the simple view's objections to both early accounts and more recent empirical accounts of persons. Hence, in response to the failure of the empirical accounts to overcome these difficulties, the discussion moved on to consider the

alternative suggestions put forward by the simple view.

2 THE SIMPLE VIEW

The simple view recognises the intuitive insufficiency of the complex accounts, and suggests that by defining the person as the subject, the problem is solved. Such simple view theories produce dualist conceptions of persons, the main distinction being between self and properties. The self emerges as the essence of the person, the physical and mental properties are merely contingent accessories. These theories exclude all content-properties from the identity of the person.

2 (i) Advantages

As an account of the self and its identity the simple view is mostly viable but as a theory of persons it provides only half of the necessary facts. For if the self is the sole criterion of person, then persons will become essentially private, obscure and even nonsensical entities.

However, more important is the role the simple view plays in reinstating rationalism as a viable form of knowledge: the awareness we have of the self undoubtedly provides a priori knowledge of an object, and therefore a priori knowledge of the world. The simple view therefore reduces the spectre of scepticism from the horizon of epistemology. By proving that we have knowledge of real identity in the self, the simple view makes possible real knowledge about an

object - real in the sense of non-inferred. Moreover, the self is knowledge of more than just knowledge of fluctuating perceptions - the self persists through time.

2 (ii) Disadvantages

However, this line of reasoning is limited. The knowledge that such an account deems possible is accessible only to the self. Although this brings proof to the claims of previous rationalist accounts, it goes no further than self-knowledge. For the knowledge of the self is essentially subjective and, as such, it is unique and particular. Self-knowledge cannot be generalised to make use of it in further epistemology: the possibility that this knowledge is general and objective cannot be proven by the simple view. Apart from providing us with a solid and real use for our beliefs about identity and the world, the self cannot make the epistemological advances hoped for.

The insufficiencies of the simple account draw attention to even more fundamental problems in philosophy. The limits imposed upon the simple view by its rationalist aspirations clearly parallel the limitations of all rationalist accounts - pointing to the insurmountable problems set for them by their approach. The conflict in the realms of personal identity are the conflicts of the epistemological debate carried through all philosophical enterprise. Until these basic approaches are sorted out, one cannot begin to

understand the force behind, nor the reasoning towards, the solutions offered by various theories.

It has been found, then, that in the end the evidence supporting both sides is underdetermined: neither is supported conclusively by their arguments, their claim to acceptability being ultimately determined by the methodological approach each endorses. The empiricist claims validity because he bases his claims in experience - he is empirically rigorous; the rationalist claims he is right because he satisfies basic beliefs and intuition, basing his arguments in certainty rather than doubtful experience - he is rationally rigorous. How then is it possible to decide between them without necessitating a full-scale investigation into epistemology?

3 THE NEW VIEW

The attempted solution was to undertake a re-examination of morality and the consequent demands placed on anything playing the role of person. It emerged that to fulfil its moral function, the person must have both a content-less self and properties: if either of these is missing then the resulting account will be insufficient. In effect the forensic nature of persons entails that any effective account of them must combine the simple and complex views.

3 (i) Combination of the Complex and Simple Views

In response to the above findings, I have suggested a new view: essentially a combination of the dichotomy at present existent in the conceptions of personal identity. The new view recognises the necessity of both a self and properties to the concept of person, stating that the two are essential criteria if persons are to be both morally valued and responsible for their activities. The self explains a possibility of free will and altruism; the properties provide tangibility, consistency and recognition of utility.

The new view postulates a form of dualism which describes an objective/subjective divide: that material and mental are not necessarily exclusive of one another but are descriptions of the same thing. A mind/body identity theory has emerged as the simplest explanation of mind and body

interaction, with a recognition of the functional and cognitive role of consciousness. The mind is described as a combination of the mental and material; the self is identified with the brain; and the person emerges as the self and its properties. This is not to reduce subjectivity to material; nor objectivity to mental; it is to postulate a new conception recognising the co-existence of both.

The resulting person has real identity and persistence through change, yet also has the ability to change and fluctuate on a qualitative level. The numerical and qualitative identities do overlap to an extent, though not completely. Even if the account is not accurate, it does fulfil the demands on the concept of 'person' more comprehensively than either the complex or simple view in isolation.

3 (ii) Moral and Epistemological Implications

In the new view the position of the self and its body is paramount - it is central to our knowledge of all else. This is the most far-reaching insight of the new view: that the subject has real knowledge of both objective and subjective experience of the same thing. That the self can be known both objectively and subjectively.

As with the arguments from analogy described earlier with respect to morality and identity of others, it has been

suggested that it is from our ideas and knowledge of our selves as objects and subjects that we generate the idea that all things are similarly describable. That is, the intuitive realisation that empirical and rational descriptions can somehow rest together may come from the recognition of this as a truth in the self.

It seems that the existence of antinomies fundamentally pervades the structure that we impose upon our conception of reality and, I would suggest, it is an idea originating in the self. It may be that such analogies are misguided and, in fact, that the self is the only thing for which such descriptions are possible; but nevertheless, the analogy provides an explanation of how we come to have the belief that the truth we are aware of in ourselves, also extends to others and the world.

The concept of 'person' emerges as a pivot for knowledge, the central basis of all epistemology. The direct awareness of the self gives us certain knowledge of something non-trivial, whilst at the same time we can also experience that thing as something with a fluctuating and changing nature. From this pattern known in ourselves we can explain and understand our assessment of other minds, other identities, and indeed the other objects of our perception. The essential tension existing in the self and person provides a

model for the rest of our knowledge: it gives us an idea of both the absolute and the relative existing side by side.

The role of personal identity in philosophy is therefore not confined to being merely a particular example in a broader debate. For the discussion of this thesis indicates the extent to which personal identity affects and effects conclusions of fundamental epistemological concern. Personal identity plays a key role in proofs of possibilities - concerning synthetic a priori knowledge and, more deeply, the reconciliation of the empirical and rational conceptions of reality. The inconsistencies revealed by personal identity are more than just a way to criticise the conflict, they point squarely to the incoherency within isolated views and the necessity of combining opposing accounts.

3 (iii) The Potential for Persons

The new view of personal identity provides an account of persons which enables a justified return to the belief that persons are more than just material things. The purely empirical scientific description has been shown to be insufficient and, with its failure, is opened up the possibility of human value resting in more than just utility, for it allows the possibility of intrinsic value. Thus, we must look not only to science to tell us the truth, we must look to accounts which try to capture and

convey the feeling of living, the experience of subjectivity, the complexity of emotion and the worth of the spiritual: the descriptions of culture and social interaction. In times past this role was played by religion, stories and myths, but in our increasingly secular society there is a need to focus upon these alternative attempts to convey more than just empirical accounts of ourselves as persons: for without some recognition of these accounts of the self, the morality of persons will become distorted.

Yet the failure of the simple view has shown that the intrinsic value of the self cannot be made sense of in isolation from properties - that although there is more to persons than just physical or psychological properties, the 'more' is not all that there is of value. In effect, the new view establishes a balance between the body and the 'soul': both are recognised as viable and worthwhile parts of persons; both are necessary to the concept of person and neither is subordinate to the other. Any knowledge about human life and existence must reflect this balance. It is no longer acceptable to produce an exclusively scientific description but neither is it acceptable to produce a purely spiritual account. A fuller and more mature understanding of persons is to be gained through both.

The new view therefore tries to strike a balance: it recognises the body and the soul to be equal partners.

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase
itself to you,
And you must not be abased to the other.

Walt Whitman
'Song of Myself'

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