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BELIEF IN GOD AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

Job's question, 'If a man die, will he live again?' is of more than academic interest to the theist. As I have already noted, Hick's verification of God's existence is based on the belief that human beings will survive the death of the body.[1] Also an important strand in the justification of suffering is the belief that cases of apparent undeserved and purposeless suffering will be compensated for or will become explicable in a future life.

Belief in an afterlife demands some continuity between the present life and a future existence and therefore would apparently exclude all forms of *monism*, which maintain that human beings are none other than the sum total of physical entities comprising body and brain, both of which are totally destroyed at death. The alternative view is a form of *dualism* which claims that there is a non-physical component (mind, soul, psyche or whatever) that survives the death of body and brain.

An attempt to argue that monism is consistent with survival has been made by Professor D. M. Mackay who writes, "Does our view of the unity of mind and body make this (the doctrine of resurrection to eternal life) more difficult to take seriously today? I think not . . . Take the case of a message chalked on a blackboard. To clear the board, we rub the surface until we are left with a handful of chalk. As far as the board is concerned the message is gone. But of course if tomorrow we, the originators, want to express the same message again, here or elsewhere, we have no difficulty in doing so. It is not necessary for us to use the original chalk, or even to use chalk at all. What matters is the arrangement of the chalk in which the message was embodied; and it is entirely up to us whether its new embodiment uses

the same or different material, or indeed whether it is expressed in some utterly new medium (such as speech, for example) which is recognizably the same only in some essential aspect . . . If it is God's will that, although these bodies of ours have been rubbed off the scene, we shall nevertheless be re-embodied in the world to come, this possibility in no way conflicts with our scientific knowledge".[2]

Much of what MacKay says is valuable for our discussion but I would question whether it establishes the necessary criteria for demonstrating resurrection and re-embodiment. If there is nothing that survives of the original entity then at best we have an exact copy or replica of the former being.

The Materialist Case against Survival after Bodily Death.

If survival after bodily death requires belief in the existence of a non-material mind/soul then a case must be made against monism and in favour of dualism. Two forms of monism have dominated philosophical discussion in recent years, namely logical behaviourism and central state materialism (the mind-brain identity thesis).

The problems of dualism are well known. Minds are said to be composed of a different 'substance' from bodies and brains. Minds are spiritual but bodies are physical. But if there is such a difference how do they interact? Many, including Christians, claim that each body has only one mind. But how can a non-spatial entity be exclusively in just one body without that entity being specifically located? Descartes claimed that the mind was physically located in the pineal gland and more recently Sir John Eccles has spoken of a 'spatial patterning' of the mind, which he locates in the left hemisphere of the brain. There are also problems concerned with the origin of the mind and those involved in the mind's interaction with the brain. As Keith Campbell observes, because ". . . no mechanism connects matter with spirit such causal connections must be primitive, fundamental ones".[3]

1) Ryle's 'Ghost in the Machine'

One of the most vigorous attacks launched on the dualist view was by Professor Gilbert Ryle. He launched his attack on what he called 'Descartes' Myth' which he designated 'the ghost in the machine'. The 'ghost' is the mind and the 'machine' is the body. He believes the Cartesian doctrine was based on a 'category mistake' by which he meant that brain and mind belong to different logical categories, which have been wrongly associated together. An example of such a mistake is the sentence, 'She came home in a flood of tears and a sedan-chair' where 'tears' and 'sedanchair' which belong to different logical categories are illegitimately combined. He writes, ". . . the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine does just this (confuses the two terms). It maintains that there exist both bodies and minds; that there occur physical processes and mental processes; that there are mechanical causes of corporeal movements and mental causes of corporeal movements. I shall argue that these and other analogous conjunctions are absurd; but it must be noticed, the argument will not show that either of the illegitimately conjoined propositions is absurd in itself. I am not, for example, denying that there occur mental processes . . . but I am saying that the phrase 'there occur mental processes' does not mean the same sort of thing as 'there occur physical processes' and, therefore, that it makes no sense to conjoin or disjoin the two".[4]

Ryle's positive task is to bring the 'mind' to the outside and to maintain that what the term 'mind' really means is what we do with our bodies or a disposition to do certain things with them. The enterprise is therefore a form of behaviourism. The term 'mind' functions as a collective noun just as the term 'university' functions as a collective term to describe the complex of colleges, libraries and senate that make up the university. For the thesis to be successful Ryle needs to show that there are no 'internal phenomena' such as images and feelings. In fact he is unable to maintain this 'tough' thesis and frequently admits that internal phenomena may exist but that it does not destroy his account because it is always possible to make such phenomena public. This admission leaves the problem of the status of

such an inner world and its connection with the outer one unresolved.

For Ryle, mental terms either describe behaviour or else a disposition to behave in a certain way. Thus there are bodily feelings which manifest themselves physically, for instance when one comes out in a cold sweat due to fear. There are also dispositions to behave in a certain way; for instance, for Ryle, to be angry is to be disposed to go red in the face and to shout. Similarly when we say a person is intelligent we mean he is disposed to answer questions correctly and when we say someone remembers something we mean that he has learned something and is disposed to give correct answers to questions about the topic remembered. He denies that thinking or remembering involves talking or rehearsing something inside one's head. The weakest part of his thesis is his denial that imagining or dreaming involves seeing something internally. He maintains that there are no private theatres inside but he does not tell us what dreaming is, if it is not internal seeing.

Ryle's view has not been generally accepted. He tries to prove too much. It is certainly true to say that mental activities may be generally identified with hypothetical statements about behaviour, that is dispositions to behave, but they need not be necessarily so identified. For example, while it is contradictory to say 'He is an irritable man but never shows it in his behaviour' it is not contradictory to say, 'He often feels irritable but never shows it'. Ryle claims that there is no such thing as the imagination. There are merely events which people witness and people fancying themselves witnessing them. This is patently false; we can imagine without fancying ourselves witnessing something specific. Ryle is confusing the meaning of the terms he uses with the tests that must be used to verify them. It is perfectly true that we can only know what another person is thinking or feeling by observing what he does or by listening to what he says, but this does not exclude the possibility that he is experiencing 'internally' something which he does not reveal to us and something therefore that we cannot know.[5]

Ryle obviously had difficulty in making sense of imagination and dreaming and Professor Malcolm came to the rescue, so he thought, with his book entitled, 'Dreaming'.[6] Malcolm claims that there are only two criteria for establishing that a person is asleep, namely behaviour and personal testimony. Neither is sufficient by itself. We might judge someone to be asleep if he lies inert with eyes closed and not performing functions associated with waking life, but such behaviour can be feigned. Alternatively we could ask a person whom we judge to have been asleep whether he could remember sounds and other happenings at the time. Malcolm denies that a person can make any form of judgement when asleep. If a person said that he was aware of something when he was asleep he would either be 'talking' in his sleep and hence not conscious of what he was saying or else he would be conscious and not asleep. He denies that a person can knowingly talk intelligibly in his sleep or engage in 'sleepwalking', and makes being 'sound asleep' his paradigm example of sleep. We might reasonably ask if this definition is not too narrow.

Malcolm does not profess to know what dreams are. He says, ". . . I am not trying to say what dreaming *is*; I do not understand what it would mean to do that". Instead he denies that there are internal events going on in the mind while a person sleeps. Even if a person claimed to have perceived an event happening while he slept and his subsequent testimony confirmed it, all we could say is that either he perceived it and was not asleep or else he told of the event on waking and his report just happened to coincide. All we can say about dream images is that they do not occur before sleep but that a person can describe them when he awakes. It would be a mistake to describe dreams as taking place in physical time, because in so doing we are relying on the dreamer's testimony which cannot be correlated with an objective standard like a clock. This conflicts with the physiologist's claim to have studied patients when asleep, whom they say were dreaming, by observing the change in their brain pattern and by observing rapid eye movements. Malcolm claims that, "No physiological phenomena will be of any use as evidence that a man made a judgment while asleep" because this could only be confirmed by the dreamer's testimony and

that, if accepted, such physiological data would give a new definition of dreaming so that a person could be told he is dreaming, although he is not aware of doing so.

The basic problem with Malcolm's thesis is that he seems to draw too rigid a definition of sleep and dreaming. There are, surely, different levels of sleep and wakefulness and it is extremely difficult to draw the strict distinction between sleep and waking that his criterion demands. If there is not such a precise division then presumably Professor H.D. Lewis is justified in speaking of someone ". . . passing from a reverie into a dream" and hence that ". . . there seem to be cases when we are dreaming and also aware that we are dreaming".[7a] Is it true that dreams do not take place in physical time? If so then it ought *not* to make sense to say that if I awoke ten minutes earlier I would not have had the dream.[8] I cannot help thinking that Lewis is right when he says that, ". . . Malcolm has decided to stop, not where the logic of the situation requires him but where it best suits his own argument".[7b] For these and the reasons given above I would argue that philosophical behaviourism as expounded by Ryle and Malcolm has not disproved either dualism or the existence of the mind as an entity.

2) The Brain-Mind Identity Theory.

The identity theory is put forward not simply as a philosophical thesis to explain the residuum of 'mental' events not susceptible to the Rylean type of behaviourism, but according to U. T. Place [9a], as a reasonable scientific hypothesis. Place maintains that there is a contingent identity between mental terms and brain processes. It is an identity similar to that implied when we say that clouds are large transparent masses with a fleecy texture and also water droplets suspended in the air. We cannot verify both descriptions at the same time; they need two different types of verification. One sort of explanation is a scientific one; the other is how the phenomenon is 'seen' by the ordinary person. It is a mistake to think that when a subject describes his experience of how things look, feel or smell he is describing the literal properties on a type of internal cinema screen. In fact we have to learn about things

before we can describe them. When we describe an after-image as green we are saying that we are having the sort of experience 'which we have learned to describe as looking at a green patch of light'.

J.J.C. Smart gives a more radical version. Perception, for him, is acquiring beliefs about the external world as a result of sensory stimulation and introspection of the brain. But if we perceive an after-image which is not in physical space how can it be a result of a brain process which is in physical space? Smart answers this by saying that there is no after-image but merely the *experience* of seeing it.

The most difficult area for the identity theorists to deal with is the sensation of pain. It is generally assumed that we have priveleged direct access to our own pains and therefore there is no sense in trying to prove to a person who sincerely reports that he is ill or in pain that he cannot be because the thermometer registers a normal temperature *or* that the E.E.G. readings indicate he is not in pain. It is true that we can infer that another person is in pain if they behave in a certain way, that is they cry out, seek to soothe the part of the body where the pain seems to be located, or tell us about it. What we cannot know about another person, but can know about ourselves, is the pain-sensation itself.

Smart at first denied that it could happen that the E.E.G. reading and the first-person report could ever be in conflict but then added that if it were to occur then he would have to give up his position because, "I put forward the brain-process thesis as a factual identification, not as a logically necessary one".[9b] Other exponents of the identity theory have claimed that there can be felt pains of which no one is aware. This is very puzzling and difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. If the incorrigibility of first-hand introspective accounts is called into question it is difficult to see how the necessary psycho-physical correlation could be established.

In a sense the identity theory has to be false to be true. Borst uses the statement, 'Shakespeare is Bacon' as

analogous to the examples given by Place and Smart of the relationship between a sensation and a brain-process. If Shakespeare turns out to have been Bacon then Shakespeare did not exist or at least did not write the plays attributed to him. The 'Disappearance Form' of the identity theory argues precisely this. Sensations, including pains, are physical processes and thus we should say not, 'I'm in pain' but 'My C-fibres are firing'. Of course we are not likely to drop 'sensation-language' which is deeply rooted in our linguistic environment, but we would be right to do so.

David Hume once asked, "Can anyone conceive of a passion of a yard in length, a foot in breadth or an inch in thickness?" This raises the problem of spatiality. If sensations are contingently identical with brain processes then presumably we would have to say that they are located in the brain. To use Tyle's term it would seem that a person who made such an identity would be guilty of a 'category-mistake'. Pains can be intense, nagging or throbbing and beliefs dogmatic, profound or false but surely not brain-states. Furthermore, as Coburn and Malcolm following Wittgenstein have pointed out, a necessary condition for many mental concepts is the presence of 'surroundings'. For instance the sudden realization that we have not put out the milk bottles envisages an organised community with the practice of milk distribution. If Smart is correct in claiming that everything is reducible to the laws of physics then so presumably is collecting milk bottles.

Finally and crucially the mind-brain identity theory faces the twin problems of human self-consciousness and human freedom. Sir Cyril Burt agreed that, "Consciousness may perhaps be generated by the physical processes of the Brain" but went on to show that ". . . it is plainly not itself a physical process:. The brain does function . . . like a physico-chemical mechanism and many of its activities can be imitated by an electronic computer. . . But we are left with the notion of a strictly physico-chemical mechanism which, like no other material mechanism, is *aware* of what it is doing".[10a] We are therefore left with a dualism and an inconsistency in the exponent himself, because it is doubtful if any of them honestly believes themselves, their wives and

children to be automata. Further, Burt shows the inconsistency of the identity-theorist who maintains that all changes in the human brain are essentially physical even when accompanied by consciousness and are totally determined with no room left for free choice. If this were so then ". . . it would follow that the speaker could not help saying what he did; and his arguments, as reasoned arguments, could carry no weight. Why then should we take the smallest notice of what he says?"[10b]

As far as survival after bodily death is concerned the failure of monism to give a consistent alternative to dualism with its belief in an immaterial mind opens the door to the possibility of the mind surviving in some way.

The Elusive Mind

The basic problem in saying anything positive about the mind is its elusiveness. If the mind does exist it is by definition not physical and therefore cannot be detected by normal physical means. Unlike the brain it has no apparent location, weight or dimensions. The problem of describing mind is evident in Professor H.D. Lewis' treatment of the subject. The mind for Lewis is essentially what makes a person what he is, namely an irreducible being. He writes, "The consciousness of oneself as a unique and irreducible being, or of self-identity is its most basic sense, is thus given with, is irretrievably involved in, the distinctiveness of having experience of any kind".[7c] This consciousness Lewis believes is more radical than bodily continuity and is not seriously affected by loss of memory or split personality. In a sense someone ". . . knows that his past history could be radically different and he could have a very different body . . . (but he has) the consciousness that in all such variations he remains the being he peculiarly knows himself to be".[7d] The only way of saying anything positive about the mind is if we could identify activities that are direct activities of the mind, which is what the science of parapsychology has sought to do.

1) *The Mind in Parapsychology*

Parapsychology has gone a long way since the pioneering work of J.B. Rhine[11] and S.G. Soal[12] and in spite of criticisms by Hansel[13] and others, some of which were justified, its findings are now widely accepted. Many telepathic subjects scored significantly above chance but only for a limited period with notable exceptions like Pavel Stepanek. Modern experiments in remote viewing are double-blind and the experimenters Puthoff and Targ have been able to train subjects to make more accurate 'guesses' at the target.[14a] Attempts have been made to show that such results are due to meaningful coincidence[15] but others have reversed this idea in order to argue that meaningful coincidences are examples of non-intentional, spontaneous ESP. Thus Dr. Stanford writes, "The most important suggestion to come out of the studies . . . is that persons may use nonintentional ESP to detect and enable them to respond to motivationally important information with which they not only have no sensory contact, but which they do not even know exists:.[14b]

It is often assumed that telepathy and kindred faculties are examples of the mind at work and are extra-sensory, but this is by no means proved. The phenomenon of out-of-the-body experience or astral projection seems to indicate that on occasions the mind can leave the body. The experience can be either spontaneous or controlled. The subject seems to move out of the body and view himself from outside of it. Although this could be a form of hallucination, controlled experiments suggest it is not. The classic experiment was performed by Professor Tart who succeeded in getting a subject accurately to read a random number well outside her visual field while attached to a series of recording instruments in a dream laboratory.[16] If the result was not chance then she either perceived it telepathically from Tart's mind or clairvoyantly in an out-of-the-body experience.

Other indirect evidence for the existence of the mind comes from features manifested in hypnosis. Under hypnosis, a subject can be made to describe a non-existent object suggested by the hypnotist, ascribe heat to a cold object and

have an appropriate visual image when only the auditory area of the brain is stimulated, which presumaly would not happen if there was only a brain. The latter observation, however, may well be clarified with our advancing knowledge of the workings of the brain.

2) *Scientific Models of the Brain and the Mind*

The philosophical study of the mind-brain problem and philosophical speculation about survival can only make progress when there are sufficient data to work with. Fortunately in recent decades brain research has made phenomenal progress. The current view is to see the brain as analogous to a complex computer. In a recent study Professor Donald MacKay has elaborated the evidence for this and has sought to show its relevance to the Christian doctrine of man.[17]

Although it is possible to identify large tracts of the brain responsible for vision, hearing and speech, much of the brain seems to consist of cells that are 'uncommitted' in the sense that they are not tied to any single system. This means that brains can suffer considerable damage and even considerable removal of brain tissue without their functioning being significantly impaired. When Dr. Sperry severed the connection between the two hemispheres of the brain to prevent the spread of epileptic seizures in patients he found, contrary to expectation, that each hemisphere could produce its own perceptions and beliefs.[18a] It is true that some evidence of a 'split-brain' was found with one patient buttoning up a coat with the right hand and at the same time unbuttoning with the left, but such dissociation seemed to disappear outside the experimental situation.

How has computer technology helped us to understand the working of the brain? The computer most like the brain has been called an 'artificial intelligence'. Once the ability to store information is incorporated, a computer can be designed to pursue defined intellectual goals such as winning at chess or recognizing speech. Such a computer can be programmed to experiment with a variety of programmes compiled by itself on the basis of stored information, while at the same time

discovering any faults in the compiled programme. With the advent of the 'micro-chip', miniaturized electronic circuits can be constructed with individual components of the circuits smaller than a single nerve cell. Psychological experiments suggest that the maximum bits of information, some of which will be repetitions, which need to be stored by the brain in a lifetime is something in the order of 200,000 million, which amount to only a few bits per nerve cell. By combining the functions of digital and analogue computers we have a working model, if a grossly simplified one, of the human brain.

Seen from a mechanistic viewpoint the brain is no more than a complex computer which is, of course, totally unaware of its own existence. However a human person is aware of his thinking processes and of himself as an existing person. How are we to account for this self-consciousness? MacKay speculates that it might in principle be possible to programme consciousness in a computer but that there is a practical difficulty of specifying a programme in sufficient logical terms to perform an action which would be regarded as a self-conscious action.[19] This raises the important point that computers need programming. If the brain is a complex computer what does the programming?

A clue to the solution of the problem of the programming of the brain has come through the experimental work of the Canadian neurosurgeon, Dr. Wilder Penfield, from which we can construct a scientific model of the mind. In treating epileptic patients it was necessary to locate the point of irritation by exploring the exposed brain tissue with an electrode. The patient needed to be conscious to help the surgeon to locate the correct point, so experiments were conducted under a local anaesthetic. In this experimental situation he found the patients exhibited a *double consciousness*; they were aware of their immediate surroundings and of vivid re-enacted scenes from their past. The memory was so specific that stimulation of the same area could make the patient relive exactly the same experience. Although the memory was involuntary it was not like a dream. The subject experienced more detailed and vivid experiences than are usually possible in memories and could be elaborated

on and clarified. Penfield had accepted the view that the mind is the brain but his surgical work led him to a different conclusion. He accepted that the brain is a computer, but that a person *has* a computer though *is* not himself a computer. In his surgical operations he observed, "The mind of the patient was as independent of the reflex action as was the mind of the surgeon who listened and strove to understand". He concluded that the brain relies on the mind to direct it purposefully during waking life and that a normal healthy person goes through life constantly depending on his own personal computer which he programmes to fit into his own continually changing objectives and concerns.[20] One question remains. If the brain stores the information, would not the death of the brain mean the end of the person? What could survive to continue to be identified as the same person? To find an answer to this question we must investigate the necessary criteria for saying that a particular surviving entity is the same as a specific ante-mortem person.

The criteria for meaningful survival

When we say of someone that he is the 'same person' as someone who existed previously, we identify him by one or more of the following criteria, namely bodily continuity, memory and psychological continuity (by which we mean the existence of a series of mental dispositions that are sufficient to convince at least the person concerned that he is the same person). Do we need all these criteria or are some dispensable? Would it be possible to identify a disembodied person as being continuous with a previously embodied person? Finally is there any sense in maintaining that a surviving entity that has no bodily similarity with, nor memories of, events and experiences had by a previously existing person could be that person on the grounds that he knows himself to be that person?

1) *Bodily Continuity*

Professor Williams wrote, "The only case in which identity and exact similarity could be distinguished . . . is that of a body; 'same body' and 'exactly similar body' really

do mark a difference. Thus I should claim the omission of the body takes away all content from the idea of personal *identity*".[21] The problem here is what is meant by 'the same body'. Is the body that a person now has at the age of sixty the same as the one he had at the age of three? It certainly does not look the same but physically it is not the same because the cells that make up the present body are not identical to those that made up the body of the child of three. In fact the only grounds we have for saying it is the same is that there is a psychological continuity and that the individual, or other people, or both can remember events that the person now existing performed at the age of three.

Williams in the article already mentioned argued that bodily spatio-temporal continuity is a necessary condition for personal identity. He envisages two individuals who both claim to be Guy Fawkes and remember events in Guy Fawkes' life. If the events happened then we could be justified in claiming they were true memories. However if both Charles and Robert had the same memories then both are Guy Fawkes but this he thinks is absurd because Guy Fawkes could not be in two places at once. If only one is Guy Fawkes we have no way of determining which of the two is Guy Fawkes.

It is possible to think of a situation where a person could disappear and another person exactly similar could appear in the same place although at a moment later. We should presumably want to say this was the same person, although there has been a temporal interval. Williams was prepared to accept this.[22] But what difference would it make if an exactly similar person were to appear a moment later two feet to the left of the place formerly occupied?[23] There seems to be no logical inconsistency in maintaining the possibility of there being more than one space that could be occupied successively by the same person. Anthony Quinton worked such a situation out in an article entitled 'Spaces and Times' where a person occupied two spaces, one in waking life and the other while asleep.[24] We will return to this possibility when we consider the logical implications of believing in resurrection.

Although it might seem absurd to talk about two surviving persons as being continous with one person there is no logical reason why this should not be so. Earlier we spoke of Dr. Sperry's operations which resulted in 'brain bisection'. D. Parfit has worked out the implications for the concept of personal identity.[18b] He imagines a brain being divided and then transplanted into two other individuals both having one hemisphere of the original brain and resulting in two people having the same character and apparent memories of the first person's life. If it is my brain that has been bisected and transplanted it is possible to say one of three things: (1) I have not survived (2) I survive as one of two people (3) I survive as both. Of these the third is the most plausible in the circumstances. Parfit writes, "It seems to follow that I could survive if half my brain was successfully transplanted and the other half was destroyed. But if this is so, how could I *not* survive if the other half was also successfully transplanted? How could a double success be a failure?"[18c]

From Parfit's example it would seem that identity is not a matter of exact spatio-temporal continuity but more a matter of degree. Would the memories be true memories? Parfit prefers to call them quasi (q) - memories which he defines as a belief about a past experience which is like a memory belief that was based on a true personal experience. The only reasons we assume memories are ours is because we do not have q - memories of other people's experiences. But why should we stop here? It is logically possible that a 'person' could be cloned or replicated so that there could be a multitude of persons that are 'identical' to the original, insofar as they have the same bodily characteristics, q - memories and sense of psychological continuity. All we can say about this is, to quote John Hick, that, "Our concept of 'the same person' has not been developed to cope with such a situation... A person is by definition unique. There cannot be two people who are exactly the same in every respect, including their consciousness and memories. That is to say, if there were a situation satisfying this description, our present concept of 'person' would utterly break down under the strain".[25a]

2) *Memory and Personal Survival*

Our knowledge of the past is dependent on memory. We know of a past because time passes and we remember what went before and how it differs from what now exists, but there can be no absolute certainty about memory claims, not even the claim that we were alive last year.[26] Terence Penelhum claims, "The enterprise of attempting to give an intelligent account of the identity of a disembodied person in terms of memory alone is doomed to failure".[27] He does not believe that the concept of disembodied existence is logically absurd, but just that memory is insufficient for identifying that a person has survived death.

Penelhum maintains that for memory beliefs to function as evidence we must be able to distinguish between *thinking* that one remembers, and *knowing* that one remembers. To make such a distinction it is generally necessary to have an independent method of determining whether one had the experience remembered, which ultimately means reference to a body which a third party could identify. This is true but only implies that the disembodied agency needs to have been *previously* embodied. Paul Helm quotes with approval Professor Strawson's statement that, ". . . to retain his idea of himself as an individual, he must always think of *himself as* disembodied, as a *former* person".[28] Thus it is only necessary to maintain that disembodied persons now existing were once embodied for them to be recognized as surviving persons.

Finally, what of the 'consciousness of oneself as a unique and irreducible being' which has featured so prominently in H.D. Lewis' treatment of the problem of survival? In its simplest form it resembles Descartes' 'cogito, ergo sum'. If it is true that we have this subjective certainty of our own existence which could survive the trauma of loss of memory, split personality or a period of coma, it can only be a certainty for the person who experiences it. It would seem that for an objective criterion applicable to any observer we would need to be assured that the person who claims to have survived had true memory claims which could be verified and was, at least, once embodied.

Disembodied Survival

Professor H.H. Price considers what it would be like to have a consciousness without a body and argues that disembodied existence is logically coherent.[29] This type of existence would resemble a dream world. In sleep our image-producing powers are released from the inhibiting power of sensory stimuli and the world is one of images, which may defy the laws of physics, but is no less disconcerting for all that. Perhaps this post-mortem world, analogous to a dream world, seems so 'real' that the subject cannot believe he is dead.

Dreams are private experiences and 'other people' in dreams are appearances and are not, as in waking life, mediated by other centres of consciousness. Although this is generally so, it would be possible for real communication to take place by extra-sensory perception with other people who once lived and possibly also with those still living. Price considers the possibilities of several post-mortem worlds formed by communities of individuals whose minds are telepathically linked and correlated to sustain a shared environment. Memory and desire would determine the sort of images experienced which need not all be pleasant, because certain unpleasant desires repressed during one's life could create a hellish environment. To the objection that dreams are delusory, Price replies that they are only seen to be so on waking. If one did not wake, belief in a dream's reality would continue. Physical relationships in such a world would be different because mental images would have spatical relationships in themselves and to other images but would not occupy physical space.

John Hick has subjected Price's hypothesis to a series of criticisms.[25b] In the first instance he says, "I do not believe that we can in fact imagine a coherent world created by the desires of a multitude of different people out of the material of their several sets of earthly memories. For the different wishes of different individuals left to themselves, produce different features and states of the environment". He gives as an example a minimum conflict between a husband and wife sitting on the sea-shore. One wants a calm sea for

bathing the other tremendous waves for surfing; she might wish to be in a dress shop, he watching a cabaret, and so on. Thus Hick would abandon the notion of the individual's desires as sovereign and substitute instead a common environment made up of the memories and desires of many minds each contributing something to it but none forming it exclusively.

Price's view of the post-mortem disembodied world has been defended by Professor Reichenbach.[30] Hick is right in maintaining that no two individual's desires sufficiently coincide to create the same state of affairs and hence will produce a conflict. However, such a conflict would only be totally incoherent in a *physical* world and not in a *mental* world such as that envisaged by Price. The principle of non-contradiction is only relevant to a physical environment. A discarnate Jane, says Reichenbach, could image a calm sea and a discarnate Joe a rough one and even communicate those images telepathically to each other so that their public world of ideas contain mutually contradictory features. Therefore it seems that there is no philosphical reason why one should not believe in the possibility of the survival of a disembodied person.

If we apply the three criteria for meaningful survival, namely bodily continuity, psychological continuity and memory to the question of reincarnation, we find that in most cases it is only memory that will provide the evidence needed to identify the living with the previous person or persons. The reason for this is that there is no bodily continuity in reincarnation and psychological continuity, which is basically a pattern of mental dispositions, is too general. Memory links are said to be of two types. The first consists of memories in young children, mostly from the East, who believe they are the reincarnation of someone else. The second consists of the dramatisation of previous lives produced by a person under hypnosis.

The most extensive collection of cases suggestive of reincarnation has been assembled by Dr. Ian Stevenson.[31] Although some of the cases come from the USA, Britain, Brazil, Turkey and the Lebanon the vast majority come from

India and Sri Lanka. When one reads the case histories one is at first impressed, but later, serious questions arise. First, there is the wide variation in the interval between the supposed death of the previous occupant of the body and the present occupant, usually a child under the age of six. In some instances the interval is two weeks and sometimes as much as five years. In one instance an Indian subject, Jasbir, was born three and a half years *before* the death of the past life personality. Stevenson is forced to explain this as possession rather than reincarnation. Secondly, there is considerable geographical variation. Some personalities stay in the same village and others migrate hundreds of miles between lives. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the majority of cases come from people who have a firm belief in reincarnation and that Stevenson's collaborators, who helped him collect the data, were both dedicated to the dissemination of reincarnationist beliefs. Another odd fact of the Indian cases is that, although the majority of India's present population live in abject poverty, very few of those remembering a previous life claim that their earlier family was poor. In several cases Stevenson admits that the children, often abetted by the parents, claimed to be related to existing rich families in a previous existence and thereby demanded a share of the family fortune.

Not many of the cases Stevenson quotes can be positively shown to be other than genuine reincarnation subjects, but it has been shown by C.T.K. Chari[14c] that there is an alternative explanation. One family known to him is cited as an example. AVR was born on 16th April 1937, the son of a judge in Delhi, who at the age of eighteen months narrated scenes from an apparent earlier life in the presence of his father. This continued until the age of seven. Although the previous life was apparently set in North India, the names of towns had Telugu stems. (Telugu was the language spoken by his father). The customs were inapproriate for North India and the details mentioned were checked and found to be complete fabrications. The fantasy coincided with the period of the father's intensive interest in reincarnation and especially his particular study of North Indian cases. It receded in 1943 when the father became sceptical.

The mechanism of such 'remembered' lives, where the child is not deliberately trying to mislead the investigator, seems to be in terms of parent-child telepathy. Dr. B. Schwarz kept a systematic record of his own and his wife's telepathic communications with their children from their birth onwards. By 1970 they had recorded 1,520 'apparently telepathic episodes' between themselves and Lisa, aged fourteen, and Eric aged twelve. As Renee Haynes comments,[32a] it is easy for a small child, especially in a pre-literate society, to remember such details in their uncluttered minds and equally natural for them to be interpreted in reincarnationist terms in a culture immersed in such beliefs.

The evidence from hypnotic regression is even more dramatic. Subjects take on a different personality or personalities, speak with different voices and act out scenes from apparent past lives. In some instances the style of writing changes, subjects speak languages they claim never to have studied and even exhibit wounds inflicted in past lives such as bruises, rashes and, in one instance, a livid red rope mark where a subject relived a suicide. Aside from the case of Virginia Tighe who was regressed as 'Bridey Murphy' by Morey Bernstein in 1952 and became the subject of conclicting claims and counter-claims in newspapers, the most notable examples of regression are associated with the psychiatrist, Dr. Arthur Guirdham[33] and the Welsh hypnotherapist, Arnall Bloxham[34] in Britain and the psychologist, Helen Wambach[35] in the United States. Guirdham's experience has more in common with the experiences recounted by Stevenson than have the regressions associated with the other researchers and, as such, deserves separate consideration.

Guirdham's story starts when he treated a young housewife who suffered from continual nightmares in which she experienced apparent memories of life among the Cathars, a Protestant sect who were persecuted in thirteenth century France. She frequently mentioned her lover, Roger, and wrote scraps of Provencal poetry. Certain details she mentioned about the Cathars, such as the monks wearing dark blue and

correct. Later Guirdham came to believe that he had been the 'Roger' of her dreams. Another person whom he believed to have been a Cathar was a 'Miss Mills' whom he happened to meet by chance and who supposedly had a strange birth mark which he believed to be the scars of burns produced in her previous life as she walked to the stake and was struck by a burning torch.

Despite the fact that Dr. Guirdham has an impeccable reputation and obviously believes in what he writes there are reasons for doubting that he has provided direct evidence for reincarnation. First there are inconsistencies in his books and the picture that emerges of the Cathars is unconvincing. They were not the high-minded Protestant sect who were harmless vegetarians and healers, but people who believed that matter was evil and who admired suicide by self-starvation and practised sexual perversions. It was also discovered that his patient, 'Mrs Smith', had a father who had translated Provencal poetry and hence could be the source of her quotations.[33b] Furthermore Guirdham has consistently refused to reveal the identities of 'Mrs Smith' and 'Miss Mills' and has not provided any proof of the birthmarks. As Wilson comments, "This is particularly sad because if Guirdham's material could be verified, and if it could be presented in a rigorous and authoritative manner, his case would surely rank as the most remarkable evidence for reincarnation ever produced. Indeed, they would have the added bonus of being presented by the very type of individual most qualified to carry authority: a professional psychiatrist. As it is, although Guirdham's material may be absolutely genuine (as he assured me it is), he must be said to have thrown away every chance of being taken seriously".[36] There can be little doubt that Guirdham's own deep interest in the Cathars and his unquestioned telepathic powers are largely responsible for the details revealed under hypnosis.

Not all the hypnotists responsible for evoking apparent past lives can be said to reveal the details telepathically, if only because of the vast diversity of periods of history that the subject 'recall'. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that the subjects' regressions follow the pattern of

belief about reincarnation entertained by their respective hypnotists. Also there is no set pattern as to the reliability of the subject's purported memories. Where it is possible to check historicity, the accuracy of the 'memories' range from nil to virtually a hundred percent success. Claims to speak a language that a subject has never learned or to speak accurately or write in the language of an earlier period of history with which the subject has had no acquaintance have not been substantiated. Nonetheless some regressions are so convincing as to require explanation and I believe this is forthcoming by comparing hypnotic regression with the phenomenon of dissociation of personality.

Earlier we mentioned the work of Wilder Penfield and showed how he was able to make a patient relive a previous experience by electrode stimulation. Hypnotic regression appears to work in a similar way. A notable example of this was the subject who under hypnosis wrote a strange script later identified as Oscan, a language spoken in western Italy before it was superceded by Latin. Only a few examples of the language have survived, including the 'Curse of Vibia' which matched what the patient had written. He had apparently glanced at a page in a book in a library where the curse was reproduced and it had become imprinted on his mind.

What is special about the regressions is their dramatic quality. They do not just show the subjects repeating facts that they had 'unconsciously' perceived, but apparently reliving experiences. In this respect they are like the dissociation of a personality. Wilson gives several examples of this, of which the case of Chris Sizemore is one of the most dramatic. Her dissociation started in childhood after a series of grisly traumatic experiences and continued into adulthood when she had an unhappy marriage. At first it was one secondary personality that was virtually the exact opposite of Chris who would temporarily 'take-over' her body, but later a third personality emerged who seemed far more mature than the other two. Her psychiatrist decided to fade out the former two and make the third personality dominant. But all was not well. Chris developed a multitude of minor secondary personalities which strove to take over her body. In all there were an estimated twenty-two personalities.

Eventually she was restored to normality. One interesting facet on Chris' life which is directly relevant to regression is her belief that as 'Jane' she had graduated from University. She had a detailed and apparently accurate memory of her time there and confidently wrote off for a certificate of her grades only to be told that she had never attended the College. This memory had been modelled unconsciously on her cousin who had attended the College.

Where it has been possible to trace the source of apparent memories in regressions it has been found that the subject has absorbed information about a period of the past and created a character to 'live out' a life in the remembered period. Where a lot of information has been absorbed the details are fairly accurate, but where there were only snippets of information the mind weaves a fantasy around them. Dr. Reima Kampman of Finland demonstrated that this was so by rehypnotizing his subjects and asking them whether they could remember when they had first heard of the character they claimed to be. It was then a comparatively easy thing to check the source.

What is left unexplained are the phenomena like rope marks and bruises that appear on some of the subjects as they 'relive' past lives. These are paralleled in psycho-somatic effects like stigmata, that can be made to appear on the skin by auto-suggestion or suggestion by a hypnotist.

Whether a case for reincarnation could still be made is doubtful bearing in mind the problem, acknowledged by most believers in reincarnation, that the dramatic increase of the world's population over the period of human history raises the question of where all the new 'souls' came from. Of course it could be that there were many disembodied souls in the beginning that only gradually become embodied. This would mean that the scheme would incorporate both disembodied and embodied souls or minds. The other problem would be one of identity. Who is the 'person' who undergoes numerous incarnations? How are we to pick him out and in what sense can we talk about psychological, let alone bodily continuity?

Resurrection of the Body

The distinctive contribution of Christianity is to maintain that not only the mind or soul but the body, resurrected and transformed, will continue beyond the grave. That this is a logical possibility has been shown by John Hick who presents his thesis in a series of three scenarios.[25c] The first is of someone suddenly ceasing to exist in a certain place and in the next instant coming into existence in another place in the world. The example he gives is of a man disappearing from a lecture in London and an exactly similar person appearing at a similar lecture in New York. If he had continuity of memory, complete similarity of bodily features, beliefs and mental propensities and was conscious of being the same person and recognized as such by wife, children and colleagues, we should be obliged to say, in spite of the oddness of the case, that he was the same person.

The second example is more bizarre. A person dies and an exactly similar person appears in New York. Once again if all the criteria are satisfied the case for saying he was the same person would far outweigh the factors that would incline us to say he was different. In the third scenario the exactly similar person dies and finds himself as a person (a psycho-physical being) in a 'resurrection world' occuping its own space distinct from that with which we are familiar. Hick points out that we would know this is a post-mortem world because we remember being on our death-bed and that the environment is different and is inhabited by people, some of whom we know to have died.

It is generally assumed that the Christian view of man is of a psycho-physical unity which has more in common with monism than dualism. We have already seen that the Christian brain-scientist, Donald Mackay, sees no difficulty in accepting a monist view of man and a belief in the resurrection of the same person by God's re-creative activity. Such a person would be a replica of the former person. Indeed Hick uses the word 'replica' to describe the exactly similar persons in each of his three scenarios. Anthony Flew, rightly in my opinion, stated that, "To produce

even the most indistinguishably similar object after the first one has been totally destroyed and disappeared is to produce not the same object again, but a replica" and then goes on to point out that to reward or punish such a replica would be ". . . as unfair as it would be to reward or to punish one identical twin for what was in fact done by the other".[37] One way to overcome the difficulty might be to maintain that the individual continues to exist in the mind of God between death and resurrection, but it would be preferable to adopt a dualist position and argue that the mind survives the death of the body and is reunited with a new body.

If there is to be a resurrection of the body what form would this take? Medieval theologians believed that the new bodies of the blessed would be in the full vigour of their age which would be the same age as that of Christ at his death. This is, of course, pure speculation. It is at least the Christian hope that those whose bodies were deformed and crippled in this life would have whole ones in the world to come. I see no reason why the body should closely resemble the ante-mortem body in every respect. Certainly lack of exact correspondence would create problems for identifying the new person.

Christians have often appealed to the resurrection of Jesus as the prototype of the resurrection of the person after death. It could be objected that Christ was unique and that his life, death and resurrection was a concession by God to our limitations. The early Christians did not see it in this light. Paul argued that Christ was the 'first fruits' that guaranteed the coming harvest of the resurrection of the dead and was at pains to convince his readers that the resurrection of Jesus was a fact. (1 Cor.15.3-50) Since his day many have demonstrated that there is good historical evidence for Christ's resurrection and that alternative explanations of the facts are less convincing.[38] What light does Christ's resurrection throw on the problem of identifying the nature of the resurrection body? First, we note that Jesus was not readily recognized in his resurrection body by even those who had known him best, which suggests that the two bodies were not identical. Secondly,

the body possessed powers not possessed by the ante-mortem body such as the ability to pass through matter and to appear and disappear at will. Speculation as to the nature of this body and how it came into being has been made by Dr. Scott Blair and Doctors Jumper and Jackson.[39]

Discarnate Existence or Resurrection of the Body?

Professor Morreall has claimed[40] that there is a contradiction involved in claiming that the blessed in heaven are perfectly happy and that they are given new bodies. He asks what purpose a resurrection would serve. It cannot be to make them more happy because that would imply that they were not happy now nor, for obvious reasons, would the purpose be to make them less happy. If the object of being in heaven is to see God then this could only be achieved in a beatific vision which would be all-embracing and the possession of a resurrection body would make no difference to this but might, in fact, be a positive hindrance. In his reply Professor Creel shows that Morreall is mistaken.[41] The idea of perfect happiness in the sense of unsurpassed happiness is as unreal as the largest prime number. Just because a creature cannot imagine how its life could be better does not mean that it could not be better. If God is infinite it would be possible to enjoy Him exhaustively. While it is possible for the disembodied spirit to enjoy God, the posession of a resurrection body in addition to spirit could add to that enjoyment by extending the range of happiness.

If resurrected bodies do inhabit a resurrection world then this world must occupy real space even if it is on a different plane from the space we now occupy. Also there may be a further difficulty involved in the Christian belief which forms the basis of Hick's 'eschatological verification', namely that in the resurrection world we will see Jesus and enjoy his presence. This has been pointed out by Professor Gooch[42] who claims that if both we and Jesus have bodies then we will occupy only a particular part of space and therefore ". . . we should have to stand in line to see God, wait our turn, have only half an hour with him, or indeed any length of time which ends". The alternative he believes is "the absurd possibility that an identifiable

Jesus located in one resurrection space could be in all resurrection spaces at the same time". Perhaps the notion is not as absurd as it seems. We simply do not have sufficient knowledge of what properties a resurrection body might have. For the purposes of this study it is not important to know which of the two possibilities is the most realistic. It is sufficient to demonstrate that both or at least one of the two alternatives is logically defensible, which I have attempted to do. With our present knowledge it would appear to be impossible to demonstrate that either alternative is factually true.

One further consideration needs to be investigated, which is the claim that people at the point of death have experiences which convince them of an afterlife. This is particularly true, so it is claimed, of those whose hearts have stopped beating, but who have been revived and do not subsequently die. An attempt to test such deathbed observations was undertaken by Doctors Osis and Heraldson.[14d] After a pilot survey, they compared two cross-cultural surveys; one was undertaken in the United States of America and the other in North India and both involved over 400 patients. The majority of the patients were terminally ill and 163 recovered. They found that the nearer to death the patient came the more frequent the characteristics suggestive of an afterlife became. The frequency was three times that recorded for normal waking hallucinations and including visions of 'heavenly' abodes, deceased persons and religious figures. They found that the visions were not apparently associated with mood, stress, drugs administered, wishful thinking or a belief in a life after death. They conclude that ". . . while the frequency of survival-related apparitions is the same in both samples, the characteristcs of these apparitions is strongly moulded by cultural forces", and that ". . . the central tendencies of the data support the after-life hypothesis". Doubtless not everyone would agree with them however.

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