Note on David Wiggins’ Mind & Language Reading

Wiggins’ designated reading is pp. 156-76 from his *Sameness and Substance Renewed* (CUP 2001). As background reading he suggests the following further selections from the book, in the following order: 102-6; 139-56; 91-102; and 225-44.
cases where that older ontology still counts as adequate in its own terms. The older ontology may yet be concomitant with the more theoretical conception. Contrasting the actual discrediting of entities of some kind, palpable or impalpable, with the discovering of new entities at the atomic or subatomic level, let us not conceive the latter as determining the level to which everything else must be reduced (in the serious sense of 'reduce'\(^1\)), even if this is the level at which macroscopic events are promised certain sorts of explanation. Let us note too that these promised explanations may or may not be forthcoming and may or may not be completely formulable at that level, and may, even if forthcoming, leave high and dry but perfectly unharmed the familiar macroscopic entities in which we cannot abandon our interest. Indeed there are some practical interests we cannot become blind to, and some entities in which it is impossible for us to lose our interest (most notably perhaps the entities to be treated in Chapter Seven).

(iv) A new conception of the world and its accompanying ontology will not come bare of individuating concepts or of de se necessities of its own. As always, the thing that generates these de se necessities will be the requirement that everything conceivable of the new entities be concomitantly in the new ontology with that which is its most fundamental sortal identification. Principle A of Chapter Four concerned a necessity that is not in the narrow sense logical necessity. But its strength (contrast certainty) is equal to that of logical necessity. For once the theoretically fundamental sortal property \(f\) is fixed upon and its extension comes to light, it is not for thought to renege, even hypothetically: it thought lose its grasp of its object, upon the determination of how a thing falling within that extension has to be in order to be an \(f\) (belong to \(f\)).

\(^1\) For the serious sense of 'reduce' deployed in philosophy, let me comment on the following:

Most people are natural metaphysicians, and it is an easy passage for them from the unassailable methodological doctrine that physics and chemistry are applicable to biological objects, to the metaphysical doctrine that living organisms are 'nothing but' physical systems. This leads to the search for explanatory hypotheses on the biological level, just as a purely behavioristic approach to psychology retains and discourages the search for other hypotheses in that science.

There is one more point to be mentioned in connection with the doctrine of the reducibility of biology to physics and chemistry: people who hold the doctrine do not in fact believe it. If you want to reduce biology to physics and chemistry, you must construct foundations which are in effect definitions of biological functions with the help of those belonging only to physics and chemistry; you must then add these to the postulates of physics and chemistry, and work out their consequences. Then and only then will it be time to go into our laboratories to discover whether these consequences ever held there. From the fact that people do not believe that they can reduce biology to physics and chemistry, with applicability of physics and chemistry to biological objects. (J. H. Woodger, Biology and Language, Cambridge, 1937, pp. 323–8)

Compare also Alfred Tarski's Appendix E for Woodger's earlier work, The Synoptic Method in Biology, Cambridge, 1937.

CHAPTER SIX

Identity: absolute, determinate, and all or nothing, like no other relation but itself

Wherever identity is real, it admits of no degrees. Thomas Reid (1785)

Identity is the vanishing point of resemblance. Wallace Stevens

I. THREE CONTRASTED VIEWS OF SINGLING OUT AN OBJECT

When something is singled out, an object of some sort impinges on a conscious subject, and the subject, in having the de se thought that he has when he is so impinged upon (a thought that might issue in a claim such as ‘That bald man has been standing out there in the snow for four hours’), takes the object for something that it is (a bald man). The subject apprehends the object in at least one way correctly (even if, in all sorts of ways that are neither cognitively nor practically crucial, he misapprehends it). Let us label this claim (i). (ii) is not drafted in order to exclude animals from the role of subject.

We can also say (ii) that, when the subject singles out an object, his thought is answerable for its success to the nature and condition of the object singled out and his thought counts as the kind of thought that it
is by virtue of being answerable in that particular way to that particular object.

At this point, the contentions of Chapter Five will suggest a further claim (i): that, when an object is singled out by a subject in the manner described in (i) and (ii), it will not be determinable without reference to the content of that sort of thought on the subject's part what object it was that impinged upon his mind. For the question of what impinged on his mind is not a simple question of what material something bumped into his sensory-cum-neural apparatus. At any given time, all sorts of things will have done that. (Was his thought of a substance, of a stuff, of an event... and, if of a substance then a substance of what kind, size, or typical life-span?)

Among philosophers favourably disposed to the conjunction of (i) and (ii), there is one who will deprecate any suggestions which the verb 'impinge' may seem to carry of a material- or causal-transaction yet take keen pleasure in the important (however inadequate) concession to his viewpoint that he sees in (ii) as strengthened by (iii). For the sake of having a name, let us call this philosopher, among the various inheritors of R, an idealist. Why an idealist? Compare the however reluctant use Kant makes of the appellation in the Critique of Practical Reason, Preface, ad fin.: 'Names that designate the followers of a sect have always been accompanied with much injustice: just as if one said that N is an idealist. For although N not only admits but even insists that our ideas of external objects have actual objects or external things corresponding to them, yet N holds that the form of the intuition does not depend on them, but on the human mind' (trans. Abbott.)

Another kind of philosopher may be content enough with (i) but reject (ii) and be markedly unwilling to allow that it is only by reference to a de re thought conceived as irreducible de or that it can be determined what object impinged on the consciousness of the subject. Let us call this philosopher, who is among the inheritors of not-R, a materialist.

There is a third stand someone may take. Let us give the name of conceptalist or a conceptalist-realist to anyone who is eager to deny R and accept (i) and (ii) together (as literally understood): happy to say that any full or proper development of (i) and (ii) taken together would issue in (iii); and happy to deny that there is any reductive level (of retinal

1 He is to be numbered among the bare absolutists of Chapter Three, §6. In any case, no one absolutes will want to call themselves materialists. Nor will all absolutists reject only from every determinate claim that is comprised under (ii) or (iii). Here, as in Chapter Three, §6, philosophical stereotypes are useful in exposition, but will not carry any weight in argument.

stimulation or whatever) at which some theory could keep track together of objects singled out and of thoughts of such objects. (He is likely to say that, if such objects and thoughts are to be conceived together in the kind of reciprocity already adumbrated in the conjunction (i) (ii) (iii), then a theory of this kind is impossible.) Such a philosopher is to be numbered among the D-absolutists of Chapter Three, §6. That is my crowd. His position grows out of the claim developed in Chapter Five that our cognitive access to objects in reality is made by this such conceptions where this such conceptions were said to be present in advance of the recognition of any particular object as this or that kind of a thing, but were seen as wide open to correction in the light of empirical discoveries relating to entities of the general kind to which some particular thing belongs.

2. BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE OBJECT AND THE THOUGHT OF THE OBJECT

So much for the three contrasted views we have conventionally labelled idealism, materialism and conceptualism. My hopes rest, of course, with conceptualism, as developed and defended in the preceding chapters yet still held open to further refinement. My belief is that, as we explore further among the logical properties of the sameness relation, this third doctrine will make it intelligible, in a way that no other doctrine can, how a relation of such logical exigency as identity can have actual application to the world of experience.

The thought of the object is the kind of thought that is (we said) by virtue of being answerable to that object and the condition of that object. That is one dependence. But, according to (ii), as poised to assimilate (iii), there is an opposite (though unequal) dependence. The object is what it is, whether or not it is singled out. But the object does not single itself out. Nor need the simple commitment to engage with nature that which is there independently of us require us to single it out. What thing-kind conceptions we have or deploy is not determined under this kind of
compulsion. Nature does not reach down and lodge them in a pigeon hole or letter box for us. But nor yet is the matter determined quite arbitrarily. Rather, our store of thing-kind conceptions comes into being under the influence of our experience, our constitution, our ways of dwelling in the world and in reciprocity with our active concerns, practical and intellectual alike. The thing-kind conceptions that we arrive at in this way play an indispensable role, the conceptualist says, in the business of individuation. As always, however, the claim this imports, namely that "which sortal concepts we apply to experience determines what we shall find there", needs to be understood in the unexciting way in which one understands "the size and shape of the net determines the catch". The size and mesh of a net determine not what fish are in the sea but which ones we shall catch . . . (for the rest, see Chapter Five, §6) even as our expectations of what was there to be caught conditioned our choice of that net and affected at an earlier point some netmaker's design for that net.

Conceptualism thus stated will be drawn inexorably to the idea, already apparent in Chapter Five, that x is only a genuine continuant if, in a sense of 'single out' to be gradually refined, x could in principle be singled out as such-and-such or that so-and-so, where the singling out of x is answerable to multiple constraints that are at once empirical and logical. It is to that idea that I should have recourse if I were called upon to justify the assumption I have made throughout this book that, in a case where it is indeterminate what has been singled out, we should not say that the thing singled out is something indeterminate. (Would that not be the merest fallacy?) Rather (I have said) no substance at all is singled out until something makes it determinate which entity has been singled out; for this to be determinate, there needs to be something in the singling out, something from the sides of the object and the thinker, which would yield a principle of individuation for the entity; so the singling out of a substance at time t must reach backward and forward to any or all of the times, before and after t, at which x exists. What after all is an indeterminate object? What other idea can we have of such a thing than that of an entity that is individuatively indeterminate? And what other idea can that be than the idea of an entity with regard to which it is indeterminate which thing it is - the idea of a thing that is the creature of time t, is "synchronously" perfectly identical with itself, but is "diachronically" possibly less than perfectly identical with all sorts of more or less 'other' things? These notions are so strange in themselves so apparently ludicrous, that I think one's first duty must be to show how readily and easily they can be dispensed with and how unnecessary it ever was to suppose that the relation of identity could suffer from indeterminacy. On the other hand, I know that in philosophy the strangeness of notions such as indeterminate identity may even lend them some positive allure. So there is no alternative but to seek to draw out their logico-implications. For the purpose of showing that these are unfavourable to indeterminate identity, I shall follow a line of argument first pursued in another form by Gareth Evans.1 (See below §4.) Evans's derivation points, I believe, in the direction in which the conceptualist is headed already. Meanwhile though, in advance of the attempt that I shall make to show that the conceptualist notion of an object is inescapable, it is time to lower the level of abstraction and have in front of us two or three would-be examples of an indeterminate object.

3. SOME PUTATIVE EXAMPLES OF INDETERMINATE OBJECTS

(a) Imagine a monstrous birth apparently possessed of two heads but having only one trunk, heart, liver . . . 'It is indeterminate', it may be suggested, 'whether this is one animal or two animals. So, by suitable pointings supported by suitable explanations, it will be possible to have a case where it is indeterminate whether this ostended thing (that which was born, let us say) is the same as that ostended thing (the animal whom head this is, for instance).'

(b) 'Circumstances can arise that make it unclear whether or not a club started at some date is the same as a club that exists at some later date . . . The question of identity has no answer; the facts do not determine one.'

(c) As we saw in Chapter Three, Hobbes adapts Putman and offers us a story in which Theseus's ship is gradually repaired with new spars while the old planks and spars are simultaneously collected and reassembled in a reconstruction of the ship in its original condition. Suppose someone wishes to maintain, as I myself have in partial response to such puzzles,2 that in such cases an entity can persist through some measure

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1 There have been disputes about the interpretation of Evans's article, 'Can there be Vagi Objects?' (1960), p. 201. And there is no reason to suppose that the best way of resolving the moot point against the two suppositions that Evans enters about the relationship between his Δ and his E. Leaving these disputes behind, I follow Williamson (1966) and the line of argument given in no. 2.

2 Michael Ayers suggested that I must consider such examples and furnished this one.


4 For the rest of the response and further discussion, see Chapter Three, §5.
of disassembly, loss of parts, reassembly of these parts elsewhere and replacement of present parts, but that there are further extremes of simultaneous disassembly of the thing, loss of parts to other structures, or reparation with new parts, that are simply too extreme relative to the proper reference point, which is the original condition and matter of the entity—too extreme, that is, for the repaired entity to count as having persisted. If that is right, it may be claimed (though I am not sure that I myself should claim this), then there are bound to be relatively late stages in the story of something's enduring changes of this sort at which it is not yet fully determinate whether the original entity has survived or ceased to be.

4. IF OBJECT a IS THE SAME AS OBJECT b, THEN a IS DETERMINATELY THE SAME AS b

When we are faced with such examples, it may be asked what there is to be said in favour of a theory of individuation that does not hasten to make room for objects that are indeterminate in respect of identity (objects such that it is indefinite which things they are).

Suppose that a is b. Then, given Leibniz's Law, whatever is true of a is true of b. Now a is determinately a. But if so, then b is determinately a. So, by conditional proof and the symmetry of identity, if a is b, a is determinately b. In which case there is no future in the supposition that one could say that a was b but refuse to affirm that it was determinately b.

Putting the matter more formally, and letting 'Δ' mean 'determinately', we have

(i) \( a = b \) (Hypothesis)
(ii) \( Δ (a = b) \) (Truisn)
(iii) \( Δ (a = b) \) (i), (ii), Leibniz's Law
(iv) \( (a = b) \rightarrow Δ (a = b) \) (conditional proof)

* Note that this is not Evans’s use of  Δ . The resemblances between Evans’s argument and the one now to be presented would need to be taken point by point, and on their merits. Note also that, if the signs Δ were introduced here, it would mean ‘not determinately not’. And being dual, Δ and \( \neg \neg \) should be consistent. The relation of the two signs would be similar to that of \( \neg \) and \( \neg \neg \).

Never mind that there is no one-word translation of \( \neg \neg \) into English.

* There may be also doubt about the use of conditional proof in the derivations of \( a \neq b \rightarrow Δ a \neq b \) and \( a \neq b \rightarrow Δ a \neq b \). For recent discussion, see Richard G. Heck, Jr., That There Might Be Vague Objects (So Far as Concerns Logic), Analysis, 37 (1977), pp. 274–19. See especially pp. 276f. Following Heck, I offer a popular commentary on Evans’s argument with \( \neg \neg \) understood not as here (see note 8). But Heck’s general conclusion, not less relevant to this discussion, is this: a framework that is adequate for the structure and form of the examples given in this chapter.

* Evans, in his footnote, notes that his definition of ‘determinately’ is ‘looser’ than the one given here. This is precisely the result.

* See Williamson (1996) in Loebhard and Williams (1996). In ‘Replies’ in Loebhard and Williams (1996), where Williamson seeks to persuade me of the necessity of identity, I abandon previous reservations and accept the proof that he offers. See also Chapter Four, footnote 13.
original judgment, and once we identify the candidates to satisfy this description and that description, we shall find that, if \( a \) is \( b \) at all, then \( a \) is determinately \( b \). That matter is open or shut. 11

At this point, and allowing (they will say) for the explanation just given, opponents of (iv) may yet argue that, if \( a \) is a vague or indeterminate object, then we cannot claim that \( a \) is determinately \( a \). It is here they will say (that is, at (ii)) that all derivations of principles like (iv) are bound to fail. But to this I should reply that, even if identity were a matter of degree and \( a \) were an indeterminate object, we still ought to be able to obtain \( a \) (so to speak) perfect case of identity, provided we were careful to mate \( a \) with exactly the right object. And surely \( a \) is exactly the right object to mate with \( a \). Their indeterminacy or vagueness matches exactly. 12 (Here I aim to speak in terms these opponents will find it more difficult to reject as unimaginable than I need to find it.)

A more sophisticated philosopher will intervene here with a different reservation: I believe that the world leaves many things vague or indeterminate, even about substances. But that does not mean that I shall be ready to reject the principle (iv); that you claim to have proved. The thing I say is that the world can leave it vague or indeterminate whether \( a \) is the same as \( b \). I do not say that \( a \) can be the same as \( b \) but indeterminately so. Who on earth would want to say that? Rather I say the world may have it indeterminate whether \( a \) is the same as \( b \) at all. This is just one of the many consequences of the claim to which I really do subscribe, namely that we live in a world of real and considerable vagueness and indeterminacy.

Such a protest may seem to invite cross-examination under the triple auspices of the principle (iv), of the principle of contraposition transforming (iv) into the thesis that, if \( a \) isn't determinately \( b \), then \( a \) isn't \( b \) at all, and the principle (as secured by Williamson) of the determinate difference of things that are not identical, \( a \neq b \rightarrow \Delta (a \neq b) \). Even without the benefit of the principle of classical logic \((a) \lor (a \neq b) \lor \Delta (a \neq b) \), the issue is not in doubt. Indeed, if the contestants simply committed themselves to (iv) and the weak form of contraposition that is permitted in intuitionist logic, the issue still would not be in doubt. Surely then the space that the sophisticated philosopher tries to point to does not exist. Or so says one in my theoretical position. But the thing that has become apparent in the years since the publication of Evans's article is that, given the endless possibilities for variant logics of indeterminacy, the cross-examination just described may not be the right way for a conceptivist to create conviction. In order to undo the present deadlock, it may be better to focus upon three other questions.

The first question relates to the status of the presumption that the vagueness whose existence nobody doubts entails indeterminacy. There should be no such presumption. 13

Second comes the question of what account the sophisticated philosopher is assuming of what 'the world' is. Of itself, in the absence of a

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11 We may say, if we wish, that the determinate in If \( a \) is \( b \) then \( a \) is determinately \( b \) has a smaller scope than any description that stands in the places marked by \( a' \) or \( b' \). Thus the central question about the determinacy of the relation of identity will evade the approach of, for example, Richmond Thomason. "Identity and Vagueness," Philosophical Studies 37 (1980), pp. 319 ff. In making this proposal about scope, I follow Artur E. Sandis (1980).

12 I am going along with the thought (which is the sceptic's and not mine) that a vague object need not be an indeterminate object. As a whole, I am not enthusiastic for that, either as a thought about a vague object or as a thought about an indeterminate object. See text below and note 13.

A related idea, which I may express some adverse influence in this dispute and may take (to seem more dubious than it ought to seem), is that determinate cannot be preceived at all, without destroying full truth, to a sentence in which vague expressions occur. But consider familiar cases innocent of all suggestion of indeterminate objects and well outside the disputed area, where indeterminacy manifests itself.

13 For the discussion, see Williamson (1996 and 1998). For Williamson, the question of vagueness and identity is one battle in a larger and longer campaign against the use of semantic proposals that engage with vagueness and borderline cases by modifying the scheme of valuations that classical logic furnishes for reference, predication, and judgment. Questioning the coherence of these alternatives, Williamson has defended the determinacy of the classical scheme and interpreted vagueness as a phenomenon not calling for new kinds of valuation but as a product of the predictable undecidability within certain subject matters of cut-off points. An expression will be vague, according to Williamson, if it generates borderline cases where such ignorance is to be expected.

On this kind of basis, one might want to say that things such as to generate borderline cases of this or that kind was one feature among others of the sort of certain sorts of predicate, that from this feature, a sense nothing automatically follows about these predicates'REference or semantic value, or about the valuation of sentences involving them. One might also be tempted to think that, once this sense/reference distinction is enforced, there is nothing in the phenomenon of vagueness to support a presumption to the effect that reference or truth themselves might have graduated or non-classical valuations.

Since the question, chiefly at issue in this book is not the sustainability in general of Williamson's position but the specific question of identity and the interaction between identity and vagueness, there is no need to enter into Williamson's general thesis. The thing I shall aim to supply for this special case, however, is that what others may ask Williamson to supply more generally, namely an account of what will ensure determinacy or supply determinacy positively to a subject matter that underlies in considerations involving vagueness.
significant question with a point and a clarifiable sense, the world determines nothing. In the presence of such a question, however, and such a sense—and that is a part of the point of introducing the contribution of the individuating subject—there is no predetermined limit to what might be objectively determined.

Third there is a more specific question, which is the chief question here. If one of the main points of the objector's intervention is to defend the picture of a world of indeterminate objects, what sort of things will such a world contain?

It may be said that one candidate is some mountain the ordinary individuation of which leaves over numerous questions of the form 'Is this foothill a part of x? Is that foothill a part of x? But this is a strikingly poor illustration of what would be needed. For it can be _perfectly determinate_ which mountain x is without x's extent's being determinate. A mountain is not, after all, something essentially demarcated by its extent or boundary. If it is not as if there were just as many mountains to be found with x's peak as there were rival determinations of x's boundary. An idea like that could not even occur to one with the good fortune to be innocent of classical extensional mereology.

If a mountain of indeterminate extent is a bad model for an indeterminate object, then how is the idea of an indeterminate object to be lent significance? We are thrown back on the bare and abstract specification which says that an indeterminate object is an object that is such that it is indeterminate which object it is. But if the objector's plea is that, in this sense, there are indeterminate objects, then my response is as follows: let x be such an object. Surely it is not indeterminate that x is the same object as y. Whatever else may be indeterminate about x, y is determinately x. Suppose then the question arises whether a certain object y is identical with x. The candidate y can only be x if y has every property x has. One of the object y's properties is that of being determinately the same as x. Unless y has that property, y isn't x. So it seems that, whatever candidate is presented for identity with x, it can in principle be resolved whether the candidate is identical with x. But now what can remain of the idea of an object such that it is indeterminate (rather than merely unknown) which object it is? And what remains of the idea of a world of indeterminate objects? In the end, I think we must set more store by questions such as these than on the question whether, in strict canonical logic as such, the principles of the determinacy of identity and determinacy of difference can or cannot be vindicated as theorems in a manner that no party to these disputes will have any right at all to regard as question-begging. (By this time, there are too many such parties.) How then are these inquiries to be pushed forward?

I could scarcely prove that there is only one way forward. But now is surely the moment for the conceptualist to offer an alternative conception. The world is not an object that is determinate or indeterminate. Nor is it an assemblage of indeterminate objects. If something simply has to be said in the form 'the world is . . . ' (and how could it be shown that that is a legitimate demand?), it may be better to say 'the world is simply the possibility of singling out and referring to actual things which have properties and relations'. Furthermore, if that will do for the present, then this is the moment for the conceptualist to deploy the plausible idea that every judgment can be filled out _ad libitum_ from the context of its cognitive formation; then to explain positively and constructively (quasi-constructivistically perhaps) _how it can be_ that every well-made singular term with a reference has a determinate reference; then to explain how it can be that every question that is genuinely an identity question is determinate for an answer known or unknown; and how it can be that (understood in the manner described in the first part of this section) every identity that holds at all holds fully determinately and indeed absolutely.

6. Treatment of Examples (a) (b) (c) of §3

Before any such explanation is attempted, there is illumination to be had from the consideration of the three examples (a), (b), (c) already provided. I hope that examination of each example will lend plausibility to the claim that the contextual supplementation spoken of in §5, paragraph one, is already one part of our standard practice. That practice

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13 Contrast perhaps a sea, and all the special difficulties that flow from the plausible idea that a sea is simply some roughly designated area of water. How seems it though (one is moved to ask) is our existential commitment to seas as such? Contrast our unqualified commitment to quantities or expanses of sea water. These do admit of a bluntly determinate existence. Yet, also the idea of _Dios_, explained in Chapter Five, §7. On these matters, see also R. M. Sainsbury, _Concepts without Boundaries_ (Kings College London, Dept. of Philosophy, ISBN 0 957 379 4 06).


15 Among other points, surely this was Evans's point, or one of them. See also the discussion by Nathan Salmon in _Reference and Evidence_ (Princeton University Press, 1983) at pp. 219, 29.

16 A question may be more the worse for not being in my exogen sense an identity question. The continuous question has the appearance of an identity question. But the appearance is insubstantial. Ask instead whether a totality with a larger cardinality than the totality of natural numbers can have a cardinality smaller than the totality of the real numbers.
deserves an emphasis independent of the theorem status I would claim for our determinacy principles.

Example (a) is the birth comprising two heads, one trunk, one heart, one liver. . . . In a case such as this, further inquiry may suggest that the right thing to say is that we have here one non-viable animal and it has two heads. Or it may suggest that there are here two animals, each as capable as unseparated Siamese twins can be of separate life and independent cognition. In that case the totality of that which was born comprises two animals. So far, there is no relevant sense in which we have an indeterminate object. All we have is an event of giving birth that either issued in one animal or else issued in two animals. To say that much is not yet to say that we have a thing singled out and it is indefinite which thing it is. But now someone may ask this: what if there is simply no point in insisting that one of these options is the better one? And what will one in my theoretical position say if someone exploits the supposed equal acceptability of those options to declare that it is indefinite whether that which was born is or is not the same as that object (that two-headed animal) and indefinite again whether that which was born is the same as the animal to whom that [indicated] head belongs? My reply is that, if my opponent says this sort of thing, then the time has come to protest that, even if (ex hypothesi) you can take each of two options, that does not entail you can take both at once. If there is a two-headed animal in the offspring, then what was born is or was a two-headed animal. Relative to that decision the identity is definite. Or if that seems wrong because the associated identity is not definite (e.g., because a mere decision is not enough to make it definite), then there is no identity. But that entails that, so far from the options being equally good, the other specified option is better. If so, we have established that that which was born comprises two animals. (Compare again the case of inseparable Siamese twins that survive into maturity.) More generally, it is just an illusion that there is a this we can avail ourselves of here which will make as good a reference as you like, as well-backed as you like, and make this reference regardless of whether the identity question still remains indeterminate.

Example (b) was the club. Suppose it is alleged that the association of persons meeting in 1985 is indeed the same as a club that appeared to its members to be lapsing (or to have lapsed) in 1963. The first question is whether there is any good reason to allege this identity. It cannot be made to hold by a simple decision on the part of those meeting in 1985 (even if decisions on the part of the founders are relevant to the question). On what terms, if any, was the club dissolved in 1963? What had been the articles of association? The thing that really needs to be made out is the point of the claim of identity, and the case for the identity. If the case is not good enough, then the thing that we are prompted by (iv) to say is that the clubs are not the same. Why object to that?

Example (c), Thesecus’ ship, is a more complex matter (as we have seen already in Chapter Three, §9). But what does the question of identity turn on here? Without using the idea of identity, one cannot say. But using it freely and imagining a set-up where we are not unduly hampered by problems of unknowability, perhaps one can contrive to say something at least. First, we have a reference to Thesecus’ ship; and then (let us suppose) we have a reference to the ship whose late return in 399 BC delayed Socrates’ drinking of the hemlock. Behind each reference stands the singling out of the object of that reference. What exactly did each of these singlings out catch hold of? To determine that, we have to find some common way of further amplifying, developing and specifying each singling out, reaching backwards and forwards along the life span of each object, working towards a more and more complete answer to this question. (Advice: it will save work and serve clarity to do what we normally do without thinking, namely begin work on the object that is specified by reference to the earlier time.) In the end, either we shall find that we have rendered it completely manifest that, as fully spelt out, these are the singlings out of one and the same ship, or else we shall find that we have collected an x and y such that, for some genuine predicatable φ that is true of one or other of x and y, it holds that φx and it does not hold that φy.

On what principle, then, must we determine the temporal extent of the life span of Thesecus’ working ship? Well, it depends in the first instance on what ships are and what that ship was. We have said that one can allow for the occasional disassembly of the ship; that one can allow for a measure of replacement of parts; that one can allow for modifications of the ritual or religious functions of the ship, with or without structural alteration. The thing one cannot allow (or so it was

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Perhaps then we have an "earth" that comprises two animals. This is simply a case of homeony, not of indeterminate objecthood. For individualization and number concepts, see Chapter Two, ad \[\text{10}\].

For more general issues that arise here about extension, see Chapter One, especially §6 and \[\text{99}\].
and an original condition that cannot be read off it at a glance, the decision will appear reasonable and inevitable.

7. Sense and Point; and Sense as the Work of the Mind

Evidently, as one engages with putative examples of objects that are indeterminate and one presses certain questions about them, the position one finds oneself moving toward is this: If that which presents itself as a simple identity question has a true point and this point is the point attaching to a verifiable identity question that is open and in good standing, then the question must relate to objects each of which could be identified in its own way. In that case, the sense of each of the terms that figure in the question will allow of some sufficient completion for the term to engage with some conception of an object that is singled out and marked off from all other things. My caricatural idealist is wrong if he supposes that a conception of this sort is in any sense the free creation of the thinker. It is empirically conditioned and a posteriori at every point. But the idealist is not wrong to call the conception of each object as opposed to the object that answers to the conception the work of the mind. Moreover, that mind-work is not only empirically constrained. It is constrained by the determinable idea of an object, by Leibniz’s Law, and by anything else at all that Leibniz’s Law can deliver to us.

According to this picture, the sophisticated philosopher who said he was prepared to accept (iv) but went on to declare that it was still open to him to maintain that the world might leave it indeterminate whether object a was object b, invokes an idea of objecthood which is as difficult as it is dispensable. If it does not make sense to speak of such objects, if every putative example disappears on examination, then one ought not to allude, even indirectly, to the possibility of such objects. Not only that. According to the conceptualist, the kinds of entity invoked by the sophisticated philosopher are entirely superfluous. In describing how a thinker who singles out objects finds these things in the world, we do not need to say that he conceives or fashions them out of preconceptual objects. As theorists, we do not need to speak of indeterminate things at all in order to do justice to the thinker’s conceptual activity. Nor yet do we need to abandon realism. For even if, pace the materialist, individuation

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21 Contrast the question about the wiper and best ruler when it is reconstituted as a question about the relation of subsumption or whatever between certain virtues and excellences. See also note 17.
is (as the idealist says) mind's work, this work, in so far as it is constructive, lies entirely at the level of sense. It is work of construal, of making sense of our experience, of seeking things and finding them or of making oneself ready to happen upon objects and recognize them for what they are.

No doubt, as we have said already, different practical or cognitive purposes will make different sorts of construal necessary, and these may be expected to issue in different 'versions of reality'. But (pace the Nelson Goodman of \textit{Ways of Worldmaking}, to whom, however, not everything in the present chapter ought to be alien or unwelcome), these cannot be allowed to be \textit{conflicting} versions. Emancipation from the correspondent model of truth is one thing. Emancipation from truth or logic is another. If two versions conflict, not both are right. But in order to conflict, they must have the same subject matter. In so far as I am allowing for different versions with different \textit{a posteriori} conceptions applied for different practical or cognitive purposes, it is sensible for me to expect that different things will be singled out and different subject matters will be proposed. Finally, I point out that, if there are different versions of reality, that does not mean that anything and everything is a correct version (or a version correct by its own lights).\footnote{None of this would be worth saying at such length if so many would be modern persons had not got excited at the prospect of coming to conclusions I am warning against or they did not take the conclusion they thereby resist for a liberation or a triumph. As things are, I shall go on remorselessly, for two more whole paragraphs.}

Every significant sentence, by being the sentence it is and having the contextually completable sense it has, sets itself a goal that it either attains or fails to attain. But, in doing this, it does not itself make the verdict on whether that goal has been attained. In the same way, every singling out of a thing, being the singling out of this \textit{f} or that \textit{g}, construes reality in a certain way. But it does not construct the \textit{f} or the \textit{g} from its own \textit{a priori} materials, as if to validate itself. It no more validates itself than the focusing of a camera fixed deliberately at a certain spot creates that which the camera records when set there at that focus. A \textit{de re} thought that is a singling out thought uses tested \textit{a posteriori} materials to set a standard for itself that the world can disappoint or gratify, in accordance with whether there is or is not to be discovered the very object the thought purports to be a thought of. Even if it takes a particular sort of empirically and logically constrained search to light up the object, the object is not posited into being. The mind \textit{recognizes} by the exercise of conceptions the object that is there to be recognized, even as the object \textit{inflinges} upon the mind that has the right sort of thought to single out that object.\footnote{Even in the case where the thing singled out simply contains the thinker, rather than being the object of his sight, there has to be some however incomplete conception of the kind that is instantiated by the object. There needs to be some sort of readiness. In the absence of that, think how easily one can look directly at something without seeing it. Of course, one can also see a thing without knowing what it is. For the sort of account I should offer of that, see \textit{Reply to Fei Xa} (1967).} (See Chapter Three, at the end.) Finally, then, the world can disappoint or gratify the claim that object \textit{a}, singled out under one mind-originated conception, is the same as object \textit{b}, an object singled out under another mind-originated conception.

In sum, once we differentiate that which a judgment contrives by mind's work to say from reality's verdict on what is said, once we distinguish sense from reference or truth-value, sober conceptualism is indistinguishable from a sensible version of realism. (Compare the conclusions of Chapter Five.) Indeed, once we distinguish sense from reference, individuative constructivism emerges as the one form of realism that explains how reference can be determinate, explains how veritable identity questions can be determinate for an answer, and explains how whatever identities actually hold can hold both absolutely and determinately.

8. \textit{On the level of reference, things cannot be simply conceived into being or postulated into existence. Not even material things with matter putatively ready at hand.} \footnote{Professor Geach communicated the puzzle to me in 1966 or 1967, and no doubt to other philosophers. For my then response, see \textit{On Being in the Same Place} (1968), p. 94. Geach traced the idea for the puzzle to something he had found in William of Sherwood. For earlier versions of}
The fat cat sat on the mat. There was just one cat on the mat. The cat's name was 'Tiddles'. 'Tiddles' is moreover a name for a cat. This simple story leads us into difficulties if we assume that Tiddles is a normal cat. For a normal cat has at least 1,000 hairs. Like many empirical concepts, the concept 'single hair' is fuzzy at the edges; but it is reasonable to assume that we can identify in Tiddles at least 1,000 of his parts each of which definitely is a single hair. I shall refer to these hairs as $h_1, h_2, h_3, \ldots$ up to $h_{1,000}$.

Now let $c$ be the largest continuous mass of feline tissue on the mat. Then for any of our 1,000 cat-hairs, say $h_i$, there is a proper part $c_s$ of $c$ which contains precisely all of $c$ except the hair $h_i$ and every such part $c_s$ differs in a describable way both from any other such part, say $c_t$, and from $c$ as a whole. Moreover, fuzzy as the concept cat may be, it is clear that not only is $c$ a cat, but also any proper part $c_s$ of $c$ is a cat; $c_s$ would clearly be a cat were the hair $h_i$ plucked out, and we cannot reasonably suppose that plucking out a hair generates a cat, so $c_s$ must already have been a cat.

So, contrary to our story, there was not just one cat called 'Tiddles' sitting on the mat; there were at least 1,000 sitting there! Of course this would involve a great deal of overlap and sharing of organs among these 1,000 cats, but logic has nothing to say against that; after all, it happens on a small scale between Siamese twins.

All the same, this result is absurd. We simply do not speak of cats, or use names of cats, in this way; nor is our ordinary practice open to logical censure.

The verdict of absurdity is if anything understated. By this account of matters, Tiddles, who is an ordinary cat, must have among his proper parts at least 1,000 cats. By similar arguments, will not just any Tib that 'Tiddles contains prove to contain cats among its proper parts?

Geach's response to the questions raised by Tiddles is as follows:

Everything falls into place if we realize that the number of cats on the mat is the number of different cats on the mat, and $c_1$, $c_2$, $c_3$, and $c$ are not different cats, they are one and the same cat. Though none of these 1,000 lumps of feline tissue is the same lump of feline tissue as another, each is the same cat as any other; each of them, then, is a cat, but there is only one cat on the mat, and our original story stands.

Endnote 23 (cont.)

the puzzle that have become visible as a result of Geach's discussion, see Nussbaum: Human Fragments, p. 307, and the commentary therein given by David Sedley at pp. 299-300 of "The Stoic Criterion of Identity," Phronesis (1964).

Geach's explanation of this usage may be reproduced as follows: a name for an A can be explained as a name associated with the criterion of identity. Namely, whereas a name of an A names something which is an A, but need not be associated with the criterion of identity. Thus, for example, a name of an A is a name of something which is an A, even though the name of an A does not name the same thing, since the name of an A may be associated with the criterion of identity. Therefore, if the name of an A is associated with the criterion of identity, then the name of an A is a name of an A, even though the name of an A does not name the same thing. Therefore, if the name of an A is not associated with the criterion of identity, then the name of an A is not a name of an A.

Thus each one of the names $c_1$, $c_2 \ldots$, or again the name $c$, is a name of a cat; but none of these 1,000 names is a name for a cat, as 'Tiddles' is. By virtue of its sense 'Tiddles' is a name, not for one and the same thing (in fact, to say that would really be to say nothing at all), but for one and the same cat. This name for a cat has reference, and it names the one and only cat on the mat; but just on that account 'Tiddles' names, as a shared name, both $c$ itself and any of the smaller masses of feline tissue like $c_{1001}$ and $c_{1002}$. For all of these are one and the same cat, though not one and the same mass of feline tissue; 'Tiddles' is not a name for a mass of feline tissue.

So we recover the truth of the simple story we began with. The price to pay is that we must regard '---... is the same cat as ---...' as expressing only a certain equivalence relation, not an absolute identity restricted to cats; but this price, I have elsewhere argued, must be paid anyhow, for there is no such absolute identity as logicians have assumed.

That, no doubt, is one way to answer. But for those who reject R and affirm Leibniz's Law, there must be another response. I think the best response would be one that adds nothing to the description of the puzzle situation, but shows instead how something needs to be taken away. My suggestion is that one should scrutinize carefully the purported definition of $c_s$. Our freedom to single out this rather than that was not the freedom either to remake the concept cat or to reconfigure its instantiations. Suppose you take the concept cat as you find it, you look for its instantiation in object $c_{1001}$ and you count $c_{1001}$ as a cat. Then you are committed to track down all of $c_{1001}$. But that (if it is anything at all) is nothing lesser than Tiddles. If Tiddles has such a hair as $h_{1001}$ (or has a tail), then you cannot define $c_{1001}$ into existence as the cat that lacks the hair (or lacks that tail). For there is no such cat.

At this point, the reader will remember the analogous claim that was advanced in Chapter One, §3, namely that, if John Doe was a boy and later a man, there is no possibility of picking out or fixing upon an object, a boy, John Doe as a boy, that is distinct from the substance John Doe, who grew old and was by 1958 an old man. (This is not to say that one could not in 1910 have picked out John Doe as a boy. But here the
9. ONCE AGAIN (ONE LAST TIME) THE THINGS TO WHICH SIMPLE IDENTITY SENTENCES MAKE A REFERENCE

At this point, at least one sceptical response is to be expected against the claims entered in the course of the preceding sections: 'In this chapter you purport to be showing, against the current of much present day opinion, that identity is determinate, all or nothing, and much else besides. You also purport, by constrained redeployment of an idealist insight, to explain how identity and difference can be all these things. But your whole effort depends upon something you will scarcely permit to be scrutinized - the assumption that the items to be singled out in association with the terms of an identity sentence must themselves be continuants to whose earliest and latest moments all true reference must reach out. You pay no attention to the conflicting opinion that the real purport of an ordinary judgment of identity over time is to say that the references of the two terms (thing-moments, phases or whatever one chooses to call them) stand in a "unity" relation, the relation of making up some given whole. This option has been described many times in the literature of identity in a manner that you will say is alien to your concerns. But it can also be described in terms congenial to your sortal approach.'

The sortal [predicate] helps identify the referents of a statement by giving the relation that holds between occurrences - parts, instances, stages, phases, etc. - of the appropriate sort when they are occurrences of a single object of the indicated kind: specifying this relation and designating an occurrence identifies the referent. When an occurrence is identified but no sortal provided, indefiniteness occurs because an occurrence can be an occurrence of different kinds.20

Here, as elsewhere, I would refer to Chapter 8 of Patrick Suppes, Introduction to Logic (Princeton NJ, 1957).


In the light of this thought (the objector continues) why should it not be suggested that a statement of diachronic identity such as "a is the same horse as b" qualifies as true if and only if the stage or occurrence a and the stage or occurrence b make up not just any old concatenation but a suitable concatenation of horse-stages? Understanding the substantive "horse" involves understanding what sort of a concatenation this has to be. Can you not recognize here a point that you yourself want to urge - albeit in different words? (Indeed I would refer you here to your own (1968).)'

Anyone who makes such an objection will probably go on to point out how cannily such an approach evades the claim, of which so much has been made in this chapter and elsewhere, to the effect that reference and singling out must stretch all the way back to the first moments of a thing and arbitrarily far forward, however preceptually, towards its last.

My response is this: the view cited by the objector seems to be all of a piece with the widespread idea that first, and supposedly unproblematically (however singular terms are to be construed), there is synchronic identity, as in '3 + 3 = 6', 'The Dome of the Rock is the Dome of the Rock' or (falsely) 'Paris is Rome'; and then, differently and/or more problematically, there is diachronic identity, as in 'the man in front of me is the same person as the boy I shared a locker with at school' or (?) 'Hesperus is Phosphorus'. It would be good, though, to know the rationale for this differentiation. Is it founded in the claim that, insofar as we refer and refer deictically at all, nothing can be involved in the deixis that is not actually there and present at t. If that is the idea, then (rather than object, as in fact I do, by protesting that this is an untenable doctrine of reference, that bare words at a time cannot of themselves fix their intended interpretation, that the formulation itself of the doctrine is radically unstable, etc.), I shall say it leads into three doubts or difficulties.

'My criticism for the analysis of personal identity... is the unity relation for persons, that relation which obtains between two stages if and only if there is a person of which both are stages' (p. 75).

I note for the record that this is not the account of these matters given nowadays by the opponents of the substantalist position that I occupy. For, for this, see David Lewis, et al. below at note 32. In Lewis's view, it is far from clear that the position now called perdurantism would be at all required to deny my claim that singling out reaches all the way back to the first moments of a thing or arbitrarily far forward towards its last. For that is what a sort of stages precisely does. As regards Lewis, however, I do question the reason that Lewis gives for supporting talk of stages (see note 32 above cited). Moreover, the second part of the third objection against Perry raises serious questions about the coherence of the very idea that horse-stages could play the role Lewis supposes that they play in predicating or individuating.

The Doctrine (Species) of the Dictate Indispensability of the Deictically Present?
be repaired, altered and (without our realizing it very well) replaced. But could there not be artefact concepts that were less permissive in their definition (as required by D(x) and D(y)), were more like natural kind terms in the specificity of what they required of their instances, and did not raise the problems that are raised by artefacts that are subject to disassembly, part-replacement and discontinuance of function? The answer to this question is that there surely could be. True, I have not been able to find any normal artefact concepts which require of their exemplifications anything remotely analogous to unrestricting obedience to some specialized principle of identity that conditions the sense of the artefactual substantive itself. There is, however, one very special kind of artefact whose survival—requirement is extremely detailed and specific. This is the work of art. We shall postpone the special features of this and cognate concepts until the last section of Chapter Four, where we shall maintain that the conceptual need which a natural law will supply for the identity of a natural thing but not for an ordinary artefact kind, the artist's conception of his activity and its eventual product can supply for the work of art. But works of art and their like are in a special class of their own among artefacts, and most especially perhaps for purposes of the theory of individuation.

Rather than explore this or other analogies with the principle of activity of a natural substance (e.g. the analogy furnished by such social artefacts as an administration, or a governing body recruited and replenished by a formal procedure) or seek to extend further the discussions begun in this chapter, it is time to provide an outline of what is supposed to have been achieved in the first three chapters.

5. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS TO DATE AND A METHODOLOGICAL REMARK

(i) The formal properties of identity, both '="' and '="_f', and 'the same something as', are transitivity, reflexivity, symmetry, and the congruence defined by Leibniz's Law, although the dyadic relational predicates 'is the same as' and 'is, for some f, the same as' have a content that amounts to more than could be explained, to one who lacked the

concept of identity altogether, by a bare rehearsal of these principles. A fortiori, the principles themselves are not dispensable.

(ii) If (i) is true, then R is false.

(iii) There are two distinct standpoints from which D as stated at the beginning of Chapter Two can be maintained. It may be held that a could be the same f as b without being the same g. That is the philosophical contention R. Or it may be held that to say that a is to be related to a is a predicate which either gives a's principle of continuity and individuation — its principle of activity or its mode of functioning — or else restricts some other predicate that gives this principle. This principle furnishes the wherewith to vindicate the absoluteness of identity.

See Chapter Two, §1, and Chapter Six, §6. Neither there nor in the sentence to which this footnote is affixed do I seek to controvert Quine's claim that, for a given language, we can set out objectively and absolutely what predicate to count as the identity predicate, if any, once we have settled what notations to count as quantifiers, variables and the truth functions . . . . The requirements on treating an open sentence "φ as = γ are strong felicity and substitutivity. If φ and φ both meet [these] requirements, . . . then they are coextensional." See A Reply to Professor Marcus in Way of Paradox (New York, 1966), p. 178. Quine's claim is not to be gainsaid. But the two words I have italicized, namely 'if any', are not dispensable. They need to be there, as Quine points out, because it may be that in a given language an open sentence in x' and γ is strongly felicitous and substitutive. There is also another reason why they have to be there. This too can be put Quine's words: If the universe is taken as that of persons, and the predicates are interpreted in ways depending on nothing but people's incomes then the proposed manner of defining "x = γ" will equate any persons who have equal incomes; so here indeed is an unanswerable case where "x = γ" (defined in the manner indicated here and in 'A Reply to Professor Marcus') does not come out with the sense of genuine identity. (W.V. Quine 1966, §1. p. 178.)

The first conclusion that I draw from the difficulty that Quine acknowledges is that one cannot say perfectly generally that the sense of "=" in a given language L is exhausted by the fact that it is a reflexive relation and a congruence relation with respect to the predicate. (Compare Chapter Six, §5.) The second thing I think I see here is support for something I have already contended: namely that questions about identity and questions about kind of thing are not clearly extricable from one another. The indefinable primitive forms "x = γ" and "x is an F" need one another. Each must be present for the other to operate. See Preamble and Let.

Whatever Quine might say about these conclusions, they are oblique to Quine's interests in the passage I have cited. He goes on to consider there the suggestion that matters might be straightened out by constraining the members of the universe as whole income groups. (Cf. 1953a, p. 289.) He says that, whether or not we do that, "no discrepancies between [the surrogate for identity] and genuine identity can be registered in terms of the theory itself." I don't think this last would burnish everything he needed to one who wanted to undertake the identity relation into relativity and congruence. But in the background is something else that is well worth questioning: namely whether absolutely everything that grounds interpretation for a given language must be such as to register in the explicit predication repertoire of the language itself. It would not suffice for these purposes to say, splendidly enough, and in line with everything we have said in Chapters Two and Three, that there is a process by which an interpreter's implicit or practical understanding of the role of language in the life and conduct of its speakers can be made more and more explicit. For, first, the process may not terminate. Second, in so far as the process does not terminate and the predication resources and repertoire of the language are constantly extended towards semantic saturation, the intended definition of surrogate identity given by means of exhaustion of predicates will never quite be available. See Further Chapter Six, §10.
(iv) The absoluteness just spoken of is vindicated as follows. A substance-predicate’s standing by virtue of its sense for a kind f, as in (iii) ensures this: that a’s coincidence with b under the concept f will imply the community of all of a’s and b’s predicates. In so far as this requirement on the sense of substance predicates is satisfied, it will follow that f-coincidence is not only an equivalence relation, but also a congruence relation. Indeed, nothing less will suffice for a theory of individuation of the continuants of our accepted ontology.

(v) The absoluteness requirement stated in (iv) is satisfied by concepts introduced by sortal predicates whose definition is extension-involving and deictic-nomological in the manner described by Leibniz, Putnam, Kripke and others. These are natural kind terms. The requirement is not so straightforwardly satisfied by ordinary artefact concepts, which are not extension-involving or nomologically founded. Artefact kinds confront us with serious problems. Here some revision of what might appear to be our current individuative practices or intuitions may seem to be required. But one suspects that tacitly these practices respect already some corresponding restriction. It may be that the most that is required is some revision of distorted or ill-considered conceptions that accord too little significance to the original matter of an artefact.

(vi) All this has been explained by talk of the coinciding of entries under a concept. The locution ‘coincides’, rare though it is by comparison with the other words and forms we are using it to elucidate, and technical though my use of it may be, is not an invented one. Whenever we have written ‘x coincides with y under the concept f’, our sentence could be rewritten (without loss of anything but the strictest synonymy and occasional convenience) in the form ‘x coincides with y as an f’ in the manner, that is, of an f’. The most this new version can do perhaps is to prompt a reader who thinks he needs something more to remind himself of what is there already, latent in his own irreducible practical understanding of ‘the same f’. For all I know, ‘coincides’ could drop out of the object language altogether if a better observed and more complete account were achieved of what it is to say what a thing is. But, pending that’s being achieved, it is by talk of coinciding that one may hold substance, identity and individuation far enough apart to give a view of the many strands by which they are connected. Note especially here the relative perspicuity of the right-hand side of the schema by which ‘coincides’ is explicated in §1 of Chapter Two. (See especially there paragraph four.)

(vii) Neither in D as further elaborated nor in any other place has it been supposed that, in the normal business of making identity judgments, we deduce the judgment in question from other claims about other properties and relations. Judgments of identity are sui generis judgments. (They are reliable, no doubt, by reference to other properties and relations but they are not deductively based on them.) In their own way, they represent the prolongation and diversification of our powers of carrying out the practical business of singling out and keeping track of a thing. With this prolongation and diversification comes into being a dialectic of same and other. It is the regulation of this dialectic of same and other by D principles, which themselves arise from the formal properties of identity, that qualifies the dialectic as centrally concerned at the levels of action and thought with the strict relations of identity and difference. D principles give partial expression to practical and logical norms for judging matters of persistence and non-persistence, identity and difference. These norms articulate the Leibnizian conception of identity that is stated in (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) and developed further in Chapter Six. Not least among the D principles (and central to that which marks identity off from other notions) is D(x), the Only a and b rule.

6. Transition to Chapters Four and Five

It will be instructive to try to apply all this to persons, to works of art and to other special cases of natural and artificial things. But, in advance of all that, the view of individuation that has begun to emerge must be brought into some relation with the larger questions of Realism, Idealism and Conceptualism to which a theory of individuation is finally answerable.

Call the philosopher who denies R and denies D the Bare Absolutist.

Call the philosopher who accepts R the Relativist or R-theorist. Call an upholder of my position a D-Absolutist. Chapter Four draws out certain of the individuative and essentialist consequences of D-Absolutism. Chapter Five seeks to communicate my conviction that it is typical of the R-theorist to exaggerate the autonomy of thought in the singling out of objects of reference. In Chapter Five and then in Chapter Six, I try to create the conviction that, by contrast with the R-theorists, the Bare Absolutists, if they genuinely believe in continuants at all, are disposed by their denial of D to take too lightly the conceptual preconditions of singling out. I think of it as the role of the D-Absolutist to see the articulation of reality in a way that corrects both faults at once. The mind (you may feel moved to say) conceptualizes objects. Yet objects impinge upon
the mind. On the basis of this double claim, a new response will be
mustered to the problems of identity and vagueness. When that has been
done, the ground will have been cleared for an application of all these
thoughts to the case of persons and their identity.

* One who defends such a thesis can scarcely fend off too soon certain misreadings of what he
means to be committed to. Perhaps 'the mind conceptualizes objects' will appear to carry the
suggestion that the very same objects could have been conceptualized in different ways, had the mind
been differently constituted. But, if so, then the suggestion that appears to be raised is hereby
cancelled. That is not what the sentence in the text means or implies. On these matters see
further Chapters Five and Six.

If the sentence to which this footnote is appended still seems to conflict with the sentence preceding, it is worth reflecting that for the mind to 'conceptualize an object' is not for it to construct it, or even for it to construe it (whatever that would mean). Rather (the person with the
mind, making sense, as far as possible) of divers looking and exploring and perceiving, being
ready to deploy clear indistinct ideas of sorts or kinds of thing (see note 6), here is which it is not
yet to say that it was the only thing there to be found. Almost always there will be other things
there to be found.

106  Sortal concepts

CHAPTER FOUR

Individuality essentialism

Nature loves to hide.  (Heraclitus, Diels fragment 123.)

We despise obvious things, but unobvious things often follow from
obvious things.  (Leibniz to de Volder, Gerhardt 11, 184.)

1. INDEPENDENCE FROM THE EXPLICITLY MODAL OF THE
FOREGOING THEORY OF INDIVIDUATION

Little or no use has been made up to this point of the notion of necessity. We have resisted the idea that a theory of individuation must be
a set of judgments about all possible worlds, or occupy itself with problems that are special to the making of statements of explicit necessity
de dicto or de re. In the case of the things that belong to natural kinds, we went to some lengths to show that, for all the purposes of identity and individuation that have concerned us so far, it is enough to have regard for the lawlike propensities of members of the kind. It is
easy enough to look for true generalizations, open and counterfactual-sustaining, about the past, present and future entities of this world.
(Enough and more than enough. Our practical understanding of identity and individuation makes do with less.) It is true that, in connexion with artefacts and at the point when the argument for the Only
a and b Rule was introduced, something modal appeared to be involved. But so far as modality obstructed itself there, it was consequential upon the pretheoretical perception of an absurdity that would be marked as such by almost anyone who reflected on the implications of the business of individuation.

Marking the end of modal abstinence, I now follow matters through
to the 'essentialist' consequences of the theory of individuation
being that very work. The hypothesis I advance for consideration is that this at least can generate very particular de re necessities.

The work of art has necessarily - is such as to be de re inconceivable or unenvisageable as definitely lacking - any sufficiently rich complex of features that has essential occurrence in the artist's own implicit or explicit practically realized account (placed where it is in whatever context of artistic understanding) of this very piece of his work. This is the claim. It entails that there was an important residue of truth in certain idealist accounts of works of art. At the same time, I submit that this way of conceiving these special things is precisely not the way in which to conceive of an ordinary substance or of an ordinary artefact. The contrast that this brings to light serves well to mark something noteworthy in the understanding we have so far accumulated of ordinary substances.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conceputalism and realism

Quand nous ferons naître la pensée, elle naîtra ainsi dans un univers déjà range.

When we come to exhibit the birth of thought we shall find that it is born into a universe that is already ordered.


The relation between my consciousness and a world is not a mere matter of contingency imposed on me by a God who happened to decide the matter this way rather than that, or imposed on me by a world accidentally preexisting and a mere causal regularity belonging to it. It is the a priori of the judging subject which has precedence over the being of God and the world and each and everything in the world. Even God is for me what he is in consequence of my own productivity of consciousness. Fear of blasphemy must not distract us here from the problem. [But] here too, as we found in the case of other minds, the productivity of consciousness does not itself signify that I invent or fabricate this transcendency, let alone this highest of transcendencies.

Edmund Husserl, Formalle und Transzendentale Logik (Halle (Saale), 1929), pp. 221-2.

I. ANTI-REALIST CONCEPTUALISM AND ANTI-CONCEPTUALIST REALISM

Chapter Four was an exploration of the conceptual limits of our thinking about the things that belong to this or that particular ultimate individuative kind. It pointed to the riches that will lie hidden within any individuative kind which is a natural or real kind. In the examination of how we are constrained in our thought about individuals belonging to kinds that need to be deictically-cum-nomologically specified, we were
Suppose that the place marked by the $z$-variable in "it is possible to envisage $z$'s being $\phi$" is, as you claim, an extensional position and somehow confers extensionality upon "$z$" in "$z$ can be $\phi$". We shall not object. We are also ready to suppose that, when Quine claimed that to be necessarily greater than seven was not a trait of a number but depended only on the manner of referring to the number, he overlooked the kind of necessity that you have found outside the range of Quine's three grades of modal involvement and claimed to find traces of in Quine's and Goodman's own writings. We shall not even demur when you claim that, if a thinker genuinely conceives of $z$ as $\phi$, there must, for purposes of the kind of possibility you were concerned with, be some sortal concept $f$ such that $z$ can be identified as this or that instance of $f$, and $\phi$ being conceivable of $z$. This last requirement may perhaps justify you in adopting, for purposes of your brand of possibility, what Quine called an "invidious attitude towards certain ways of specifying a thing and favouring [some other] other ways of specifying $x$ as somehow revealing the essence of the object". But these concessions, in the particular form in which you are trying to extract them, are perfectly unimportant. For the most you can ever obtain by these means is a conceptualism that is shaped and conditioned by human powers of envisaging. These powers are the product, both time-bound and culture-bound, of a conceptual scheme which is determined by interests that are very special. However deep seated they may seem to us, such interests in the world that surround us are scarcely implanted in us by nature in order that our beliefs or theories should mirror nature itself. You are deceiving yourself if you think you have found some philosophical engine by which to invest with real essences the concrete entities of the world. For us, there is no doubt a certain apparent indispensability in the everyday conceptual scheme that are, from our limited and cosmically insignificant point of view, bring to bear upon the world. But the real entities of the real world are whatever they are, independently of whether human beings exist or not. They are perfectly indifferent, so to speak, in this matter of how human beings conceive of them. That is not our only complaint. A further charge that we should urge against you is that the conceptual scheme for which you are working to get this privilege is scarcely very different, even now, from the scheme that systematically delayed the progress of natural science beyond the jejune approximations of Aristotle."

1 See Quine (1953), pp. 141 and 143.

1 See Barry (1977, 3).

The moral that the anti-realist conceptualist seeks to draw from all this is that the aspiration to contemplate, however distant, the real essences of concrete things is best forgotten about. For in nature itself, he will say, there are no modalities.

The moral drawn by the anti-conceptualist realist, on the other hand, is that essentialism as such is mistaken. The conclusion he will come to is that the realist aspiration is inimical to any position like the conceptualism that I have been arguing for. He will persist in the idea that the realist ideal is to be valued above any supposed conceptualist insight. But he will hold fast to his conviction that, in the long run, there must be some better approach than that which is supposed to lead through (A) - (H) of Chapter Four to the real essences of concrete things.

In answer to these critics, I shall be content for the most part to clarify the claims of the particular conceptualism defended here to be one form of realism. For the objection I have just rehearsed comprehends in each of its two forms a number of misapprehensions whose removal will be far more instructive and far more liberating of thought than exhaustive responses to the divers accusations and counter-suggestions that each critic could muster on his side. Once conceptualist realism is recognized for what it is, its metaphysical plainness will be manifest.

2. Four clarifications

(a) The objection given in the previous section depends partly on a misunderstanding of one point that Chapter Four will have made familiar. The conditions that have been characterized as peculiarly central to the articulation of this or that particular thing and its division from the rest of reality concerned, not the world's need to contain Caesar, but only the kind of thing Caesar had to be if there was to be any such thing as Caesar, namely (say) a human being. The necessity in question is at once crucial with respect to the question of the individual's being there to articulate, and peculiarly innocuous. The necessity is categorical with respect to Caesar, but from another point of view it is a conditioned necessity. The singular thing about this necessity resides in the character of its condition. The condition comprehends all states of affairs in which there exists ... well, the very entity in question.1

(b) To put a sentence forward as a true statement of de re necessity (or as a de dicto necessity for that matter, if the de dicto were in question) is not to put the sentence forward as in some special way proof from revision, correction, or the boredom of our descendants. Those who object in such terms to essentialism as an expression of the stick-in-the-mud mentality or of ill-considered reaction have insufficiently distinguished these several statuses.

(c) It is necessary to reiterate the sincerity of the essentialist adherence to principle Θ of §6 of Chapter Four. Essences of natural things, as we have them here, are not fanciful vacuities parading themselves in the shadow of familiar things as the ultimate explanation of everything that happens in the world.2 They are natures whose possession by their owners is the precondition of their owners being divided from the rest of the reality as anything at all. These natures are delimited by reference to causal or explanatory principles and purposes that are low level perhaps; but they are fully demanding enough for something to count as their being disappointed or frustrated. (Witness the longish list of would-be sortal concepts that have definitely failed.) It is true that, whatever these principles may once have seemed to be, the principles we have called the laws of development of individual natural substances (that is the laws associated with individuating kinds of natural things) are not themselves the scientifically basic laws of the physical world. (Or rather, they need not be.) Nor in general are they reducible (in the strict and proper sense) to such basic laws. Nevertheless, the kind-bound laws of coming to be, of distinctive activity, and of passing away are nomologically grounded. They are supervenient upon, or better (as Leibniz might put it) consubstantial with, the more basic laws that are immanent in all things.5

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1 For the reasons for putting the matter in this way, see §8 of my article "The Kant - Frege - Russell View of Existence: A rehabilitation of the second level view", in Mindful, Mind and Belief, ed. S. Simon, Armstrong, Raffman and Sober - Cambridge, 1994.

2 Of Leibniz, Gerhardt II, §60 sq. at head of Chapter Three. Not only are these ideas separable from the teleological view of nature (see Chapter Three, Section 1). They are separable also from the teleological conceptions of certain theorists of Natural Law about the levels of excellence that natural things may realize or attain to. For an amusing and summary account of these ideas see H. L. A. Hart, The Concept of Law (Oxford, 1961), p. 195.
(d) The realist conceptualist may cheerfully admit that the sortal concept of which we are possessed, and which he argues to be presupposed to our articulation of reality, are (in a certain fashion and sense, see §7 below) the creatures of our interests (provided that these interests are generously enough conceived to include our curiosity). He may also allow that (often at least) there may be no one way in which we must articulate reality, nor any one level at which we must. The thing that does not follow from any of this, he will say, is that, relative to some determinate epistemological-cum-practical interest, there is arbitrariness in the discriminations we make, or in the existence conditions that we ascribe to the entities of the natural and artefactual kinds under which our interests (as properly and generously conceived) oblige us to make sense of experience. For the supposed arbitrariness of whether or not this or that concept is brought or not brought to bear upon reality - better (see Preamble §5) the supposed arbitrariness of whether we deploy the conception corresponding to this concept and look for is in reality, or deploy the conception corresponding to that concept and look for its in reality - cannot be translated into any corresponding arbitrariness in the articulation of the things themselves that fall under the concept. Arbitrariness or vagueness that attaches to the determination of the extension of the sortal concept has a different source (see Chapter Four, §8).

Nobody will find any of these confusions or misapprehensions very inviting - at least when they are anatomized in this way. But that does not mean that they are dead or inert or have no indirect influence. Moreover, confusion apart, it must also be allowed that the thinking the anti-essentialist opposes to the essentialist conception is sustained by the enchantment of an image that is vivid in the extreme.

A CONCEPTUALIST ANTI-REALIST VIEW OF ESSENCE

At bottom, everything that can be said about the world, can be said in purely general statements, without modalities. There is no thinness beyond suchness, but every actual individual is individuated already by the properties it has in this world; hence can be denoted in principle by a definite description in which the quantifiers range over actual existents alone. At this bottom level the only necessity we can countenance is purely logical or verbal necessity which, like God, is no respecter of persons. In this modality whatever Peter can do Paul can do also. A semantic representation of this will use a conventional identification of individuals in different worlds, but since every individual plays each possible role in some possible world, every choice of conventional identifications which does not violate the identity principle that no two existents in world y have all the same properties in y yields the same result.

To make sense of our world in a convenient fashion, however, we raise certain regularities to the status of laws and (not independently) certain attributes to the status of natures. In the formal mode, this means that some statements assume the office of assumptions which may be tacitly used in all reasoning, and certain predicates are chosen to form a classificatory scheme. Once this is done, we produce relative or tacitly conditional modal qualifiers... A proposition P is peculiarly about individual .e if we can change the truth value of P by permuting .e with another individual .e' (while leaving all other individuals fixed), but cannot change that truth value by any permutation which leaves .e fixed... In a full model, no proposition peculiarly about a particular entity can be necessary; for in a full model the necessary proposition is closed under all permutations.8

What Van Fraassen describes here is a sort of reconstruction in two stages of how it is possible for us to have our present ideas of substance and de re modality. The reconstruction is meant to tell us what we should make of these ideas and of the fact that we have them. Not too much, he suggests. The reconstruction is not put forward by Van Fraassen as an ordinary historical hypothesis or even as a piece of psychogenic theory. Taking it rather as it is intended, we shall find that one thing is crucial to the reconstruction, as to the attitude that it recommends towards substance and modality: the two stages of which it speaks must be intelligible to us and describable by us, the theorists, in just the relationship that the account postulates. How otherwise can we credit Van Fraassen's own words with even the semblance of intelligibility?

The difficulty in this respect attaches to the first stage. Here, whatever Peter can do Paul can do also (Van Fraassen says) - indeed any individual whatever can do. For anything, it seems, can do or be anything at this level, the only constraints being those imposed by logical necessity in the


The nominalist's first and basic move in this game is to say that all natural necessities are elliptic for conditional verbal necessities. This sort on which I write must burn if heated, because it was so. But the only necessity that really there is that all paper must burn when heated. This is so, but means only that we would not call something paper if it behaved differently... When sufficiently refined, the position that all non-verbal necessities are elliptic for conditional necessities in description can be held.

Cf. also the same author's 'The Only Necessity is Verbal Necessity', *Journal of Philosophy* (Feb. 1977).
narrowest sense which, whatever does it pay to 'indiscernibility at a world', is 'no respecter' of identity in the proper sense. The question then is: can we really understand this first stage of the reconstruction? Only, I submit, if we can make sense of an entity that is nothing in particular. (Cf. the justification and refinement of ∆ of Chapter Four, section 2, undertaken in §5 and §9.)

Van Fraassen's adherence to the Identity of Indiscernibles is important here. Contrast with his explicit reliance upon the principle everything that we have claimed in Chapter Two against the Identity of Indiscernibles and have elsewhere implied (in an agreement with P. F. Strawson, Individuals, the chapter on monads and passion) about the indispensability and irreducibility of the demonstrative function. To turn this into this ness and, having found no way to understand this ness as a sort of such-ness, to seek then to patch matters up by espousing the Identity of Indiscernibles - this is a counsel of confusion, confusion that is needless. But there is scarcely anything unconfused that can be said or denied by the use of the words haecceitas and this ness. What these words purport to help one to say or deny is no less mixed up than the noises that they make are unlovely. (Cf. Chapter Four, §7.)

Finally, I would claim that the whole charm of Van Fraassen's picture depends on one's allowing that one can first have an ontology of particulars conceived as bare, and then at a second stage introduce, as an instrument of understanding, explanation and discovery, what Quine and Geach have called an ideology. But is it not a mysterious suggestion that a whole range of attributions, including sortal attributions which say what various everyday things are, could be determined at this second stage (in radical dependence, Van Fraassen suggests, on some human viewpoint), by being superimposed upon a completed first stage ontology which is at once bare yet existentially determinative? For anyone versed in the notion that an ontology is by no means an empty or unwrittmtal thing, this is as strange as being asked to believe that one could distinguish between (first) a neutral or concern-uncontaminated ontology of jokes 'what it is for x to be a joke, or for x and y to be the same joke, or for there to be such a joke as z, and (second), a quite separate and interest-contaminated range of predicative attributions to jokes ('funny', 'comic', 'witty', 'off-colour', 'whimsical') or things in jokes ('incongruous', 'ludicrous', 'absurd'). Is it compatible with a good theory of existence to suppose that the first stage (ontology) could have been provided for while leaving absolutely everything else to be determined at the second (ideology)? Let anyone still charmed by Van Fraassen's picture rehearse these questions again, mutatis mutandis, for natural numbers, quantities, shades, . . .

Obviously, if ontology were completely insensitive to all changes in theory, in ideology or in how things are conceived, and if one and the same fixed set of entities could be described by conceptions of the world that were different to just any degree that you like, then that would subvert not only Chapter Four but also the account offered in Chapter Two, §5, of the relationship between existence and belonging to a sort. I should hope that the positive account of existence offered there had the attraction of simplicity. There is a range of basic sortal attributions that we apply to various everyday things - 'this is a horse', 'this is a tree', 'that is a man'. These belong to the level of ontology and, at least to this extent, ontology and ideology must contaminate one another immediately. What is strange is that the anti-essentialists whom I am attacking accept all these attributions in their unmodalized form, and then (one stage too late, in my opinion, for they have already consented to pick out the thing and to involve themselves, however minimally, in some proto-theoretical conception of entities of the relevant kind) adduce as a reason to deprecate the suggestion that any of these things had to be a horse, or a tree or a man, the anthropocentricity of the viewpoint that underlies conditions the attributions. But here as everywhere the question is: of what could one ever be speaking if one allowed that it might equally well have been a prime number or a fire shovel, though it was in fact neither?  

4. A HYPOTHESIS CONCERNING THE SOURCES OF ANTI-ESSENTIALISM

I advance for the reader's consideration a hypothesis: the anti-realistic case against essential properties has rested on a sequence of three ideas. (1) It is conceivable that, in the absence of creatures capable of thought as we know it, the particular kinds of individual substance that we ourselves recognize in this world would never have been discovered. (Indeed nothing forces anyone to discover in a place even that which is there to be discerned in terms of his own conceptions.) In that place, in the room of what we ourselves find there, or (so to say) out of its matter, another race of creatures might have articulated and

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1 Russell was an opponent of essentialism. But these paragraphs are not directed at his position. For he pursued the logic of his position (and the logic of my paragraphs here) to the point of rejecting the ontology which is presupposed to saying 'this is a man.' See § 8 of note 7.
individuated quite other kinds of things with very different principles of individuation.

From this questionable if not altogether implausible premiss the conceptualist anti-essentialist goes on to conclude:

(2) It is perfectly possible for what is there to be discovered in a given place, e.g. for a substance which is there, to be conceptualized in at least two quite different ways. The progress of science would precisely consist in conceptualizing it in better, and radically different, ways. So, he argues:

(3) The constraints arising from the conceptualization and individuation of the particulars that we recognize in the world, and can draw spatio-temporal boundaries around, must not be represented as necessities on what is actually there independently of mind or thought. The most objectionable feature of all the objectionable features of essential attributions is that they purport to record such necessities.

It is at stage (2) that everything goes wrong here. What is this substance out there that can be conceptualized in radically different ways, which can be seized upon in thought by the anti-essentialist, but can have radically different principles of existence and persistence ascribed to it? This is surely an entity with inconsistent properties. If the charge of having a ridiculous conception of substance sticks anywhere, it sticks on anyone who argues via (2) from (1) to (3). But it is only by means of some such conception that an anti-realist philosopher could crowd out altogether the possibility, which is important but always neglected, that, even if a conceptual scheme capable of exploring and understanding the physical world might dispense altogether with the articulation and isolation of \( x \) from its environment (because it could afford to ignore \( x \) altogether), still the essential attributions upon \( x \) record or reflect conditions at once fundamental and invariant upon \( x \) in particular’s existing and being singled out in reality.

5. AN EXAGGERATION OF CONCEPTUALISM, DEPRECATED AND CORRECTED IN THE LIGHT OF CERTAIN TRUISMS; AND THE REPLY TO THE ANTI-CONCEPTUALIST REALIST BEGIN

If the preceding section succeeded to any significant extent, it will have gained favour for some sort of conceptualist view of individuation. But conceptualism may seem to have strange consequences.

Leszek Kolakowski writes:

'The picture of reality sketched by everyday perception and by scientific thinking is a kind of human creation (not imitation) since both the linguistic and the scientific division of the world into particular objects arise from man’s practical needs. In this sense the world’s products must be considered artificial. If this world the sun and stars exist because man is able to make them his objects, differentiated in material and conceived as ‘corporeal individuals’. In abstract, nothing prevents us from dissecting surrounding material into fragments constructed in a manner completely different from what we are used to. Thus speaking more simply, we could build a world where there would be no such objects as ‘horse’, ‘leaf’, ‘star’, and others allegedly devised by nature. Instead, there might be, for example, such objects as ‘half a horse and a piece of river’, ‘my ear and the moon’, and other similar products of a surrealistic imagination."

I am bound to agree with any anti-conceptualist realist who argues that what Kolakowski says here is impossible to believe. I should hold that any conceptualism which is bent on picking its way past the confusions that have sustained for so long the conflict between realism and idealism must indeed strive to do justice to the insight for which Kolakowski is seeking expression. But it will see the whole interest of these problems as residing in the problem of finding the elusive, correct and unexciting formulation of that insight. A conceptualism that aspires to the title of a modest and sober realism must keep at arm’s length any such ‘sense’ as the sense in which horses, leaves, sun and stars could be supposed to be artefacts. It must hold on to the distinctions so laboriously worked out in Chapter Three, §2. It must leave itself room to express all the proper reservations (concerning the lack of appropriate causal or explanatory principles, etc.) about the prospects of finding a genuinely sortal notion with the same extension as half a horse plus a piece of river. And it must hold a nice balance, adjusted to what is in fact a subtly reciprocal relation, between (1) the extent to which the conceptions that we bring to bear in order to distinguish, articulate and individuate things in nature are our inventions and (2) the extent to which these conceptions make reference to concepts that we find or permit nature itself to discover to us, thereby informing and regulating our conceptions of them. (For the distinction of conceptions and concepts, see Preamble §5.) Conceptualism properly conceived must not entail that, before we grasped these concepts, their extensions did not exist autonomously. It must insist that natural things and their concepts existed independently of whether our conceptions of them were destined to be fashioned or the things themselves were destined to be dis-
covered falling under these concepts. 11 Its most distinctive contention is that, even though horses, leaves, sun and stars are not inventions or artefacts, still, if such things as horses, leaves, sun and stars were to be singled out in experience at all so as to become the objects of thought, then some scheme had to be fashioned or formed, in the back and forth process between recurrent traits in nature and would-be cognitive conceptions of these traits, that made it possible for them to be picked out.

For someone to single out a leaf or a horse or a sun or a star, or whatever it is, that which he singles out must have the right principle of individuation for a leaf or a horse or a sun or a star . . . To single out one of these things he must single it out. Such truisms would scarcely be worth writing down if philosophy were not driven from side to side here of the almost unerringly strait that divides the realist myth of the self-differentiating object (the object which announces itself as the very object it is to any mind, however passive or of whatever orientation) from the substratum myth that is the recurrent temptation of bad conceptualism. 12 It is easy to scoff at substratum. It is less easy to escape the insidious idea that there can be the singling out in a place of a merely determinable space-occupier awaiting incongruent or discordant substantial determinations (individuatively inconsistent answers to the question of what it is). 13 But no substance has been singled out at all until something makes it deter-

11 Cf. Hobbes's definition: 'a body is that, which having independence upon our thought, is coincident or coextensive with some part of space.' De Corporis, in Molesworth, p. 196.
12 Rebounding from all this, there is a temptation to add measure to opinion and say that a thing is nothing but a sum (in some inexplicable sense of 'sum') of properties and/or appearances on a set of universals each sitting in the next one's lap. This is in fact the notion of thing favored by some anti-representations and sometimes also attributed to Leibniz (entirely wrongly, see my [1995]). How it is to be combined with the idea that objects so conceived have no essences finally passes comprehension. Consider, for a start, the negation of the conception of these properties. And if the reply to that is that these conceptions of properties have shifting membership, then require after the principle determining membership. The answer to this will smugly back the notion of a subsidence or a continuant.
13 There will exist no indefinitely many items with too many distinct principles of identity and persistence which one might find in that place — the thing, the part of stuff that makes up the thing, and the mereologism of all the components of that part, to name but three. See also here A. M. Quinton, The Nature of Things, p. 167. For the claim that the same portion of space can be co-occupied by different things, see my (1995).

Against all such arguments, Michael Ayers has written (1974, p. 192; and compare M. C. Brough's critique at Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 47 (1969) concerning the principles of tracing that have been defended in Chapter Two).

It might be thought that in unswerving the sweater we remove or destroy one principle of unity, and [that] by cutting the [woollen] thread [of the ball of thread from which the sweater was knitted] we remove a second. Each operation is possible without the other, and so each principle of unity seems independent of the other [giving in one and the same place two different things of different kinds]. The latter and more realistic view, however, is that, if a sweater consists of a single thread, then that means only that the different parts of the wool

6. THE PERFECT CONSONANCE OF SOBER REALISM AND SOBER CONCEPTUALISM

An anti-conceptualist realist who takes exception to the essentialism arrived at by means of principle A of Chapter Four will view with suspicion any suggestion that truisms are available from which, in the presence of a strict notion of identity, anything like this will follow: that the individuative scheme we bring to bear upon experience or the fashion in which (as a race, or as a culture, or as a culture at a time) we articulate reality can determine the kinds of thing we shall single out (fs, gs or whatever). 14 Such claims may seem to the realist to be tantamount to saying that the active inquiring mind does not merely construe reality but constructs it as if under certain conditions the mind could fashion not only concepts or conceptions but truth itself. Is this not a particularly unpelling form of idealism, he will ask?

The literal purport of the conceptualist claim which the realist has put under discussion is not that mind constructs reality. If it comes close to seeming to say that, this is only because the truth has here to rub shoulders with two opposing doctrines that are so similar in their pretensions

14 If this says that in some cases (composition from one thread) unravelling a sweater is not a way of destroying it, but that in other cases (composition from several threads of wool) things are so different that unravelling is enough for destruction, then I am happy to let the reader assess the price of Ayers's 'realist principle. I hope it will be clear why I believe that the principle is dispensable to realism, to objectivity, and to the homogeneously grounded conception of substance. (Compare here certain difficulties that I claim to see in a similar principle of Eli Hirsch's: see footnote 3 of my (1974)). Singing out that sweater is not singling out that wool.
and underlying absurdity as to leave only a small space between for truth to stand. Our claim was only that what sortal concepts we bring to bear upon experience determines what we can find there – just as the size and mesh of a net determines, not what fish are in the sea, but which ones we shall catch. It is true that the individuated conceptions that are brought to bear at any point will come with notions about the ways in which things of a given kind behave. These notions will bear on persistence conditions. But this does not imply that, once things of a given kind, $fs$ or $gs$, are lighted upon, the individuated scheme we bring to bear will itself determine something further – a principle of activity or a persistence condition. What that principle is for $fs$ or $gs$ depends only on $fs$ or $gs$. We discover it in tandem with grasping the concept of an $f$ or a $g$ and applying our conception of it to the $fs$ and $gs$ we light upon. Moreover, our conception of the things that answer to the concept is given to us in a reciprocal process of the kind that Chapter Three was meant to illustrate, a process comprising not only deixis, not only allusion to the nature whatever it may be of that which is demonstrated, but practical and probative interaction with the things themselves that are in question.

Much hangs here on identifying correctly the point, if any, where there is choice or freedom in the articulation of reality. The near certainty of incomprehension of the tenets of conceptualist realism by a different kind of realist is so great that even the reader who has seized what I would say here may forgive me for attempting one more statement of the point at issue (and for returning to the matter once again in the course of Chapter Six). As soon as a set of individuative concerns is determinate, and an interest and a set of sortal concepts is fixed upon, nothing that can be done by one who grasps the concept will determine whether or not there is anything at a given place and time that actually satisfies the given concept. Any freedom we enjoy must come at an earlier point. Whatever may be the truth to be found in the idea that what concepts (better, what conceptions of what concepts) a thinker applies to the world depends on his inventiveness in the fashioning of conceptions and the devising of hypotheses, whatever the truth of the idea that the accident or caprice of his interests and/or the thinker’s conceptual daring and enterprise will carry him at his pleasure to places that nothing else would have carried him to – this exhausts his freedom. For, once arrived at a place, what he finds there is not at his pleasure. Whether or not there exist things that answer to the concept $f$, and what they are like, cannot depend on his invention or his concerns.

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7. The Realist Requirement Restated, Refurbished and Satisfied

It is not enough to remove confusions. The anti-conceptualist realist is not necessarily someone confused by anything at all, except the difference between good and bad conceptualism. And he is most unlikely to think it relevant to what he has to say that one can count as objectively as you like, and answer the question what is it? as accurately as you like under sortal concepts of utterly provincial or frivolous provenance. His real preoccupation is surely not with objectivity, for it presupposes that. He will probably allow that we have well-tried canons for recognizing the correctness or incorrectness of subsuming this or that object under such and such a concept. Nor is he bent on denying that the truth with which such predications are concerned can transcend our means of recognizing truth. Evidently, the thing that chiefly concerns the anti-conceptualist realist is to preserve our thought’s prospects of passing beyond the narrowly anthropocentric. But here it seems to me that an essentialist of my persuasion can make common cause with him. For, as we have conceived it, an individuative scheme for the articulation of reality and the singling out of natural things can be wide open to reality. There is nothing to prevent the scheme from being regulated and corrected constantly by the things in reality themselves and/or our evolving conceptions of things in reality. Here I would hark back, of course, to the distinction proposed in Chapter Three and Preamble §6 between nominal or stipulative definitions, e.g. those founded in the function of artefacts (whose nature depends on us, or has depended on us, collectively), and the real or causal definitions (strictly not “definitions”) that we hunt after in nature, identifying their targets by “tacit reference to the real essence of this or that species of body” (Locke, Essay III.10.19), first annexing these essences by marks that can stand proxy for them (marks that “ciument lieu”, Leibniz, Nouveaux Essais, 3:6.14). With the second kind of definition, deictically directed and provisional in content, we cannot of course avoid the risk in which our explanatory aspirations inevitably involve us, namely that, where we are unlucky, we may have been searching for something that was not there to be found. But here

9. For the distinctness of these concerns, and for the Peircean conception of the advance of science beyond and away from the anthropocentric, see “Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life”, in my North, Value, Truth (1877, 1904: 1907), pp. 120-3

10. I find that my conception of realism here is in some respect anticipated, albeit in terms more optimistic than I should think necessary or desirable, by Milton Fisk in The World Regained, Journal of Philosophy (1977), see especially pp. 167-8.
too, when all goes well, things themselves can shape our conception of things.

You assert that the notion of substance is formed from concepts, and not from things. But are not concepts themselves formed from things? (Nunc ipsa conceptus formantur ex rebus?) You say that the notion of substance is a concept of the mind, or an entity of reason as they say. But the same can be said of any concept. ([Leibniz to de Volder].)

In so far as Leibniz is making a completely general claim in this passage, it is no doubt falsified in part by the case that he always ignores (or, where he does not ignore it, underestimates), viz., artefact kinds and cultural objects where things are fashioned to answer to a conception and there is no question of shaping the conception of the concept to the things that prove to fall under the concept. But in the other case, there need be nothing to prevent human understanding from coming ever closer to finding features of the world whose articulation is not sensitive to the more narrowly practical or provincial explanatory interests that first moved us to inquire into the nature of things. It may be true that the normal thing-kind concept (even where the understanding seeks that not as the creature of our understanding but as something in nature that the understanding has prepared itself to be able to discover or light upon) is rarely an absolutely basic concept conceived as basic by physical science still less a concept so fundamental that no real understanding of nature could ever look past the extension of this concept. It may also be true that, however deep we go, an intelligence of a superior kind might latch on to a more fundamental and explanatoryly more basic class of things whose identifying attributes pulled their weight in a far better and more universal theory than do any of the kinds that we, in our currently convoluted state, shall ever discriminate. Let us not argue here about that. To whatever extent this is true, the causal-cum-explanatory interests that give us the most sophisticated and scientific sortal conceptions we possess may indeed be somewhat provincial. But if that is so, then a proper answer to the realist critic ought not to insist that the concepts these conceptions are conceptions of are never provincial to any degree. One part of the better answer is that the critic has not shown that all genuinely explanatory insights must be framed at the deepest level of fundamental theory. Moreover, even for purposes of the purest theory of science, the critic may be in error. His doctrine would certainly be unmanageable in the daily practice of giving expositions of the relatively fundamental theo-

ries we do possess. The less exigent condition of acceptance that is imposed on the sortal notions that we continue in practice to employ is not in any case an empty one. And equipped as it is with such notions, our present schema of ideas surely does represent a respectable, however unimpressive, stage in some however gradual process of the revelation of reality. Only succumbing to the all-too-factual thought or speech as such, or a gloating dissatisfaction with it as any sort of a record of reality (and these are not the vices of the anti-conceptualist realist), could prompt someone to deny this.

8. CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

By way of partial summary of this and the previous chapter, I shall close with some suggestions or speculations concerning the relation of the scientific world view and the less theoretical view of reality which lags behind the scientific world view but is practically indispensable to the sustaining of any meaning that might be attributed to our thoughts.

(i) Many of the scientifically significant shifts in our conceptions of the world represent not shifts in our conceptions of a settled ontology, or shifts in the individuative conceptions proper to one and the same set of entities, but the abandonment for certain explanatory purposes of the old set of entities and the old ontology. The "ingredients" that composed the things of the old ontology may then be inventoried, if that needs to be the question at issue, in other counts of the stuff of the world. In so far as questions about the old set of entities are answered rather than simply abandoned, the answer may be given under the new order by bridge principles (whose ad hoc character it will do no harm to acknowledge) or even by recourse to considerations (again ad hoc) of a mereological kind.

(ii) Where a shift in conception is a genuine revision of the old conception of the old entities and the same entities are recognizable, i.e. where the shift is an improvement or development of the individuative conceptions which were constitutive of the old ontology, the old ontology can happily take over the improvement. (Cf. the G property of §6 of Chapter Four.) If the deictic-cum-Leibnizian account of concept-formation is correct, then conceptual schemes are designed from the outset to allow for this kind of improvement.

(iii) Scientific progress towards an explanatorily more fruitful conception of the world that abandons an old ontology for certain explanatory purposes may or may not need to discredit the ontology of the older, less theoretical conception of the world. (Cf. Chapter Six, §8.)
cases where that older ontology still counts as adequate in its own terms. The older ontology may yet be tenable with the more theoretical conception. Contrasting the actual discrediting of entities of some kind, palpable or impalpable, with the discovering of new entities at the atomic or subatomic level, let us not conduce the latter as determining the level to which everything else must be reduced (in the serious sense of 'reduced')

10 Even if this is the level at which macroscopic events are promised certain sorts of explanation. Let us note too that these promised explanations may or may not be forthcoming and may or may not be completely formulable at that level; and may even if forthcoming, leave high and dry but perfectly unharmed the familiar macroscopic entities in which we cannot abandon our interest. Indeed there are some practical interests we cannot become blind to, and some entities in which it is impossible for us to lose our interest (most notably perhaps the entities to be treated in Chapter Seven).

(iv) A new conception of the world and its accompanying ontology will not come bare of individuating concepts or of de re necessities of its own. As always, the thing that generates these de re necessities will be the requirement that everything conceivable of the new entities be conceivable in the new ontology with which that is most fundamental sortal identification. Principle A of Chapter Four concerned a necessity that is not in the narrow sense logical necessity. But its strength (contrast certainty) is equal to that of logical necessity. For once the theoretically fundamental sortal property \( f \) is fixed upon and its extension comes to light, it is not for thought to renounce, even hypothetically (lest thought lose its grasp of its object), upon the determination of how a thing falling within that extension has to be in order to be an \( f \) (belong to \( f \)).

10 For the serious sense of 'reduced' deployed in philosophy, let me commend the following:

Most people are natural metaphysicians, and it is an easy passage for them from the translatable methodological doctrine that physics and chemistry are applicable to biological objects, to the metaphysical doctrine, that living organisms are 'nothing but' physical systems. This... retards the search for explanatory hypotheses on the biological level, just as a purely behaviouristic approach to psychology retards and disorients the search for other hypotheses in that science.

There is one more point to be mentioned in connection with the doctrine of the reducibility of biology to physics and chemistry, people who hold the doctrine do not in fact believe it. If you want to reduce biology to physics and chemistry, you must then add to the set of postulates of physics and chemistry, and work out their consequences. Then and only then will it be time to go into your laboratories to discover whether these consequences are upheld there. From the fact that people do not believe it, I venture the guess that they confuse reducibility of biology to physics and chemistry, with applicability of physics and chemistry to biological objects. J. J. C. Smart, "Philosophy and the Sciences," 1968, p. 436. Compare also Albert Laski's Appendix F, for Woodward's earlier work, The Aims and Method in Biology, Cambridge, 1977.

Identity: absolute, determinate, and all or nothing, like no other relation but itself

Wherever identity is real, it admits no degrees. Thomas Reid 1785

Identity is the vanishing point of resemblance. Wallace Stevens

1. Three contrasted views of singling out an object

When something is singled out, an object of some sort impinges on a conscious subject, and the subject, in having the de re thought that he has when he is so impinged upon (a thought that may issue in a claim such as 'That bald man has been standing out there in the snow for four hours'), takes the object for something that it is (a bald man). The subject apprehends the object in at least one way correctly (even if, in all sorts of ways that are neither cognitively nor practically crucial, he misapprehends it). Let us label this claim \( (i) \). \((i) \) is not drafted in order to exclude animals from the role of subject.

We can also say \((ii) \) that, when the subject singles out an object, his thought is answerable for its success to the nature and condition of the object singled out and his thought counts as the kind of thought that it

For those sensible enough to have reached this point by skipping the many pages that stretch back from here to the summary of the first three chapters (see Chapter Three, \( S6 \)), or for those who simply prefer to begin the book here, I resume at this point one key theme, repeating certain essential and conceptual claims in order to push them further. (For some of these, see the partial résumé furnished at Chapter Five, \( S8 \).) Bearing in mind the interests of those stalwart enough to have arrived hither by the longer route, the résumé is made in a fresh, albeit highly partisan fashion. At some points the text derives from my contrivance (E. Pettit and J. McDowell eds.), Subject, Thought and Context (Oxford, 1988). See also my (1988).

A support for the reader first, this chapter seeks to support Reid's claim and nuanced claims about identity. The chosen route is through a further development of the thesis of conceptual realism. Then the chapter seeks to confer a general conception of identity apparently unable in Wallace Stevens's doctrine (from disingenuously, as I see it) and in related formulations, like Stevens from Anne Righter in Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (London, 1982) or in p. 192.) Identity will emerge in this chapter as determinate, irreducible, autonomous and not interestingly supervenient on anything else whatever like upon no other relation.
call objects that fail this crucial condition 'artefacts'. But this is without prejudice to the question, which is scientific not philosophical, of the possibility (which I have no wish to prejudge) of the artificial synthesis of natural things.

It should go almost without saying that the distinction of natural thing from artefact is presented here in a fashion conformable at every point and in every particular with the plausible scientific belief that, however we have arrived at the individuation of a given thing, the thing will be subject to the fundamental laws of physics and chemistry. For the purposes of that belief, there is no more difficulty in our distinction between natural things and other things than there is in making a further distinction, within the class of natural things, between (a) those things which, being alive, are not in chemical and energy equilibrium with their surroundings but suck from their environment the energy that they need for their typical activity or their molecular self-renewal and replacement, and (b) those natural things that maintain a typical mode of activity without being alive and cannot help but be in equilibrium with their surroundings. (Take the Chesi Bank, for instance, or the River Nile or the Caspian Sea.) It is true that live things exemplify most perfectly and completely a category of substance that is extension-involving, imports the idea of characteristic activity, and is unproblematic for individuation. But not all extension-involving concepts are concepts of live things and I should stress that non-equilibrium with surroundings is an additional and special distinguishing mark. In fact, terrible confusion will result from mindless assimilation of the live/not live distinction to the other two distinctions. In other words, (1) extension involving or not extension involving, with respect to the specification of their concept; (2) not synthetically produced or synthetically produced; (3) live or not live (as elucidated in terms of non-equilibrium and of self-renewal at the molecular level)— these are three distinctions, for all that living animals fall on the same side of each of them. Moreover, once we move in this way towards a more fundamental basis of distinction, we need not flinch from trying to understand some harder cases: an India rubber ball for instance (individuated by a stuff sort that is extension-involving and that simultaneously lends nomological import to a thing-kind, the ball itself being something artificially produced, not live) or even a wasps' nest (something individuated by reference to other things which are themselves individuated in the extension-involving fashion, an animal artefact not a human artefact, an artefact constrained in respect of its material constitution, not live).

3. Problems of Artefact Identity

Our concern passes now to the problems associated with singling out artefacts and the similar difficulties we shall have with other things that cannot furnish the theorist of identity with a principle of activity. Summing up the argument so far in the general (if qualified) claim that natural things are individuated by reference to a principle of activity naturally embodied, but ordinary artefacts are individuated by reference to a parcel of matter so organized as to subserve a certain function: and advancing next to the consequences of the finding that there is nothing nomological to make up for the logical indeterminacy that seems to inher in the individuation of artefacts, one feels the temptation looming to exaggerate the degree to which questions of artefact identity are matters of arbitrary decision. Even here, though, and even for the most typical cases of our own artefacts, conventionalism is not immediately plausible. For human purposes and decisions might enter into the invention and modification of human artefact-kinds without its following that any particular questions of identity and difference (between this artefact and that artefact) should qualify for decision by stipulation.

Artefact identity does, however, present some difficult problems. D(iii) requires that the contribution that is made by an artefact-word such as 'clock' to the sense of 'x coincides with y under the concept clock' should suffice to render this relation both an equivalence relation and a congruence relation. But how is this to be secured? And how are we to get for artefacts the effect that was got for natural things by the notion of activity? (The conceptual effect, I mean.) It would be unrealistic and absurd to suppose that coincidence under the concept clock required a clock's continuous functioning or expect the functioning spoken of in D(v) to be more than remotely analogous to the activity of natural things. A clock may stop because it needs winding up. Such a pause does not prejudice its persistence. A clock can stop because it needs to be repaired; and again it persists, however long the lapse before the repair. (The nominal essence of clock does not make 'broken clock' problematic for existence or peculiar in the manner of 'dead person'.) The nominal essence of clock must involve a stipulation of some sort concerning the capacity to tell the time. But surely the uninterrupted continuance for all of the capacity at t to tell the time at t will not be stipulated. This is too strong. The

\[ \text{Contract works of art, which do not normally, \textit{e.g.} works of art, have any \textit{function}. See below, Chapter Four, \textit{\textbf{gs}}.} \]

Concerning the expression 'principle of activity', see Preface.
only loss that could count to any appreciable degree against the persistence of a clock is a radical and irretrievable loss of the time-keeping function. (Sometimes, even under this circumstance, the clock itself may be held to have survived, however irremediably damaged.) Another reason why a clock-persistence condition has to be undemanding is that the repair of a clock apparently permits both disassembly and replacement of parts. We do not look back to the time when a clock was being repaired and say that the clock’s existence was interrupted while it was in a dismantled condition. For a thing starts existing only once; and in the case of a clock its proper beginning was at the time when its maker finished it. In the case of dismantling, there is not even a time limit upon reassembly.

When these several points of discontinuous functioning, disassembly, and part replacement have been accommodated, the condition of coincidence and persistence for clocks that emerges is not merely weak. It is so undemanding that there seems to be nothing to prevent one clock, identified by a description applying at the time when it was functioning normally, from clock-coinciding (i.e. coinciding in a manner supposedly sufficient for identity) with two distinct clocks, each identified under a description applying to it after some radical repair or muddled reassembly in a moderately disorderly clock maker’s workshop. But the coincidence of one thing with two things breaches requirement \(D(iii), D(vi)\), and almost every other interesting declaration made in Chapter Two.\(^\text{15}\)

Nor is there one piece of clock—the spring, the regulator, the escapement, the case, the clock...which the concept clock could suggest that we should revere as the ‘focus’ or ‘nucleus’ of a clock, and which can help us past this difficulty. Here, and in the extremes of ingenuity and opportunism to which such problems pushed the Roman laws of accessio and specificatio (cf., for instance, Justinian, Institutes Bk II, 1.34 et passim), we see that, however questionable it may be, Leibniz’s transition in the decade of his writing the Discourse of Metaphysics from Aristotelian substances to Leibnizian monads, and his demotion of things with parts to the status of mere aggregates (for a characteristic statement see Gerhardt II, 261), did not arise from a simple misconception of the logical level of the number word ‘one’.

A good place to embark on the difficulties of artefact identity is with a case that Thomas Hobbes put forward expressly against those who regarded ‘unity of form’ as a principium individuationis: on this view, he suggests,


Two bodies existing both at once would be one and the same numerical body for, if, for example, that ship of Theseus, concerning the difference whereof made by continued repair in taking out the old planks and putting in new, the sophisters of Athens were wont to dispute, were, after all the planks were changed, the same numerical ship it was at the beginning; and if some man had kept the old planks as they were taken out, and by putting them afterwards together in the same order, had again made a ship of them, this, without doubt, had also been the same numerical ship with that which was at the beginning; and so there would have been two ships numerically the same, which is absurd.\(^\text{16}\)

The unity of form theory that Hobbes means to attack here is not dissimilar from ours. In our version of the theory, the finding of \(a\) coincidence with \(b\) under the concept ship needs to be the makings of a sufficient condition of \(a\)’s being the same ship (unless the concept ship is to be not a sortal concept). It might seem that in our theory the difficulty Hobbes mentions is escaped because our theory favours the repaired ship. For the constant availability of this ship, and its uninterrupted service as the sacred ship by which the annual voyage was made from Piraeus to Delos, may seem to mark this ship out as the one that is continuous in the manner of a ship with Theseus’ ship. But is such a fact really enough to trump all the claims of a reconstituted ship, which may well be much closer not only in matter but in its design, its manoeuvrability and its handling qualities to the ship that Theseus sailed? Can one who favours the working ship ignore all of this? Cf. \(D(v)\).

Few of us will hurry to make a choice between the two options as so far specified. Some will even say we do not have to choose. They will ask us to imagine its being decided, in an age that no longer believed in Apollo but still believed in Theseus, to erect a monument to Theseus and to put his ship upon the monument. Then antiquarians might say that the ship put together from discarded planks was the right one to raise up there. But dispute might break out about this matter between them and

\(^\text{16}\) I do not know who proposed the final twist in the story that made it into Hobbes’s objection. An addition to our modern store of problems in this area is furnished by Jonathan Barnes in ‘Bits and Pieces’ in Matter and Metaphysics, ed. J. Barnes and M. Mignardi (Bibliopolis, 1990); another by T. W. Rhys David’s The Questions of King Melinda (New York, 1920).
the superannuated priests who favoured the working ship.\textsuperscript{17} The difficulty (it will then be said) is a certain incomparability between the positions. It might be evincingly suggested that, if one party is looking for an archaeological relic and the other for a functionally persistent continuant, then the whole dispute ought really to be traced to a disagreement about what it is for something to be such a sacred ship. The antiquarian who favours the reconstituted ship has a different interest, it might be said, from the priest who favours the continuously repaired ship. Both are stuck with the identification ship but, having different interests, they do not mean quite the same thing by 'ship'. The priests and the antiquarians hold different entities with different principles of individuation in one and the same place.\textsuperscript{18} Neither party can vindicate its view by reference to the 'laws of development' of a ship.\textsuperscript{19} There are no such laws.

\textsuperscript{17} A metrologist making reference to the metrological definition of identity

\begin{align*}
\text{if } b \text{ is a part of } b \& \text{ is a part of } a
\end{align*}

might well side with the antiquarian and against the priest. Readily though, it is a precondition of the acceptability of the metrological definition of identity, supposing that this is what is involved on the antiquarian's behalf, that, for any non-empty class of individuals, there should be one and only one sum of all elements of a. That is to say that the sum axiom of metrology must be interpreted truly. True whatever entities we add to the class a, including continuants that persist through long gaps of time. (The sum axiom is the second postulate in the tenetist presentation of metrology given by Tarski, \textit{op. cit} in footnote 2 of Chapter One. See the text of Chapter One for the definition of 'sum'.) Under the conditions stated, however, no longer looks obvious that this axiom is true, unless 'part' is given a sense specially designed to save the possibility of Tarski's postulate a. In that case, any metrological definition of identity that depends upon the axiom loses any direct support; it might have lost all the antiaptarian case. For my own conversion to the view that Tarski's second postulate a is false, see \textit{Wagons} (1960). For a general account of the doubiableness of the second postulate see also \textit{S樽ers} (1969). Note also that, on a strictly metrological view, it is neither true nor false for the sum of fusion whether the elements are together in one place.

Relative identity theorists are apt to claim for their view of such puzzles as Theseus' ship a particular naturalness. Griffin in \textit{Relator Identity}, p. 17, proposes that he calls the 'simple and appealing', solution that the original ship of the ship is not the same ship as the reconstructed one, though it is the same ship in connotation. There is then nothing peculiar at all about the case. The reader is left to decide for himself whether there is a matter of a relative relation that is so weakly distant from the issue which they suppose they disagree about and from the ontology of absolute identity.


\textsuperscript{19} There may then be a temptation to dismiss the question as mere metaphysical. But we must not confuse the fact that it is in some sense a psychological matter, why we choose to adopt the arts or the archaeologists' view, with using a merely psychological matter which one is an identity: or an arbitrary matter. Compare \textit{Friendship}, p. 386.

The objectivity of the North Sea is not affected by the fact that it is a matter of our arbitrariness. One may see parts of all the water on the earth's surface marked off and entitled the 'North Sea'. This is no reason for deciding to study the North Sea by psychological methods...

\textsuperscript{20} This third view seems as unsatisfactory as the uncritical ship-continuity view and the antiquarian-case-merological view. Let us call it the naive conceptualist view. Admittedly it divorces the antiquarian view, sensibly enough, from crude merologism. But in the process it makes the antiquarian view seem unstable. By its nature antiquarianism looks back to Theseus. But Theseus looked forward to the priests who would continue the cult he took himself to be establishing. The competing conceptions of Theseus' ship really are rival views. Philosophical quietism is a sensible outlook upon some questions, but in the present case it does not convince. We need at least one more idea.

\section*{4. Two Approaches to the Problem of Artefactual Identity}

Two further methods suggest themselves for the resolution of such difficulties. These will define a fourth and a fifth view of the example. The fifth will emerge in the form of an improved application of the unity/continuity of form view advocated in this book. The fourth is an alternative approach widely adopted in the present-day literature of identity and individuation.\textsuperscript{21} This runs contrary to the spirit of Chapter Two and involves our seeing a certain further complexity in the notion of 0-identity.

The fourth view proposes that we start with the relation in which \(x\) and \(y\) stand just in case \(x\) is a coincidence-candidate (of type \(f\)) for identity with \(y\). We then say that \(y\) veritably coincides under \(f\) with \(x\) if and only if \(y\) is an \(f\)-coincidence candidate for identity with \(x\) and nothing distinct from \(y\) is as good an coincidence candidate for identity with \(x\) as \(y\). If one wanted to proceed like this, one could then elaborate an account of the degrees of strength in a candidature, and arrange to distinguish best from second best, third best... claimants. In application to the present case, the best candidate theorist might say (i) that, where 'Theseus' ship' is continuously repaired without any retrieval of the parts that are shed, the working ship persists into an open future; (ii) that, where a ship is reconstituted and the

\textit{If we say: 'The North Sea is one square mile in extent... we assert something quite objective, which is independent of our ideas and everything of the sort. If we should happen to wish on another occasion, to draw the boundaries of the North Sea differently... that would not make false the same content that was previously true. (C. E. Dummett [1977], p. 576.)
working ship is no more, the reconstituted ship is Theseus' ship; (iii) that, where a ship is reconstituted from discarded planks but the working ship is not destroyed and continues working, the working ship is Theseus' ship and persists into an open future. (These decisions reflect the perceived strengths of considerations that are meant to count, however delisibly, in favour of an identity.)

In the application to our case, the best candidate proposal, so given, perpetuates some questionable preferences, especially concerning the working ship. (Does it really not matter, as in (i), provided that the working ship continues and is the sole candidate, what changes the candidate undergoes? Could Theseus' ship continue in the shape of a Dutch barge or a Chinese junk? But the proposal might easily be hedged or qualified. Nor is it necessary to take exception to the fact that the best candidate theorist's method is dialectical or in the correct and non-condemnatory sense casuistic. The chief objection is rather that this approach proves inappropriate, as so far characterized, to questions of identity. The most general form of the objection is this. In notionally pursuing object a in order to ascertain its concinance or non-concinance with b, or in retracing the past history of b to ascertain its identity link with a, I ought not to need to concern myself with things that are other than a or other than b. This is not to deny that singling a out or singling b out may involve contrasting a or b with a background of other things. But the identity of a with a, of b with b, and of a with b, once we are clear which things a and b are, ought to be a matter strictly between a and b themselves. Let us call this D(x) or the Only a and b rule and adjoin it to the other D principles of Chapter Two. In its official form - see the sentence italicized above, as glossed by the two succeeding sentences - this is not a principle that is stated in the object language. Contrast D, D(i), D(ii), D(iii). It is akin to D(iv) or D(v). It is a dialectical rule for the adjudication of persistence and coincidence claims founded in the nature of the identity relation.

Consider the cases (ii) and (iii) mentioned in the last paragraph but one. Here it is supposed that the reconstituted ship claims identity with Theseus' ship; and whether this title is accorded to it or not depends at least in part on the presence or absence of the working ship. Does that contravene the Only a and b rule proposed in the previous paragraph? It appears that it does. In the present version, the best candidate theory sees the reconstituted ship as a weaker claimant than the working ship. If so, then the working ship candidate and the reconstruction candidate must be distinct. But then (as remarked) the reconstruction's identity with Theseus' ship, wherever it is identical, seems to depend on a third thing.

I should expect that, at this point, someone will ask why one should not simply reword the fourth view. Why not say that, where the claim of the reconstituted ship is good, namely in case (ii), this ship, precisely by reassembling Theseus' ship, ipso facto reconstructs a ship that was at one point a working ship, was constantly repaired, then broke up (though some of its parts were recovered)? That suggestion, it will be said, has the effect of preserving the Only a and b rule. And I agree that it does. But to preserve the rule in this way effectively dispenses altogether with the best candidate formulation. (See below, the fifth view.) The reconstructed ship is Theseus' ship, if that can be made out, not because it is the best candidate for the role but because it is in this reconstruction from the original materials that the effort to track Theseus' ship from its beginning onwards finds Theseus' very ship. One finds the ship that is Theseus' ship and thereby one finds a ship that was reconstituted by restoring to Theseus' ship, after accidents that befell it at some intermediate moment, original planks and materials.

Someone who was as sure as Hobbes was that working ship and reconstituted ship could coexist might try to salvage the identity that the best candidate view assumes by asking us to consider the reassembled ship 'on its own' or as it might have been if it had been put together before the break-up of the working ship. But that only starts more trouble. Do we want to say of this reconstruction that it is premature but, if only it had appeared later, it would have been identical with Theseus' ship? Or do we want to say that at the break-up of the working ship, the prematurely reassembled ship becomes identical with Theseus' ship? (Can literal sense be made of being not identical at one moment and then

\[1\] Compare Bernard Williams (1960), a discussion amending in the philosophical literature of identity the rediscovery of Miss Burn's proof (1917), of the necessity of identity. See also (1938, pp. 56-60). At Philosophical Explorations (Oxford, 1976), pp. 32-4, Robert Nozick amends sceptically upon this insight of Williams'. But I do not think he measures up to this full Hegemon-metaphysical rationale.

\[2\] For that which is surprising is the very idea of weaker and stronger claimants, compare Arnauld, letter of 13 May 1686 to Leibniz:

I can as little conceive of different varieties of myself and a circle whose diameters are not all of equal length. The reason is that these different varieties of myself would all be distinct from one another, otherwise there would not be many of them. Thus one of these varieties of myself would necessarily not be one which is consistently a contradiction. (Gerhardt ii, 39, translated by H. T. Mores.)
becoming identical?\(^2\)) Neither of these suggestions is at all promising. Let us remember that the title in question is not the title to the sobriquet 'Theseus's ship'. It is the title to identity with Theseus's ship, a particular ship originating from the eighth century BC.

Similar troubles arise for the best candidate view where the finding is that we have case (iii), namely the working ship's defeating the candidate by reconstitution. The best candidate theorist says that the working ship is Theseus's ship by virtue of its being a stronger candidate than the reconstructed ship. That infringes the Only a and b rule. Of course, we can respect the rule better if we can find some other basis on which to say that the working ship is indeed Theseus's ship. But here we must remember that this other basis might have nothing to do with the relative 'strength' or 'weakness' of the claims of reconstructed ships against working ships. One might say instead that, in tracking Theseus's ship through its journeys and various repairs, one comes upon the working ship, not a reconstruction from original materials. The idea of candidacy and strength of candidacy could, of course, be restored to the scene by someone's pointing insistently to the reconstructed ship, and describing its claims as not quite good enough, etc. But once that line is preferred, there is further trouble. We are laid open to the thought that this reconstructed ship, now lying in Piraeus, this very ship - if only the working ship, which is the so-called 'better candidate', were not still extant and plying once yearly to Delos - would have been Theseus's ship. Someone might perhaps say that. But the idea that on these terms, namely the simple absence of the stronger contender, the ship now deemed the worse candidate would have been Theseus's ship itself seems to be absurd. There is a temptation to add as a separate modal step: nothing might have been a different entity from the entity it actually is. (Compare Chapter Four, §3.) But it is the utter oddity of such a claim about the weaker candidate that discovers to us the real intuitive grounds for doubting that anything might have been a numerically different entity from the one it actually is. The absurdity of the idea confounds the understanding of '=' that is implicit in everything we think and say about identity. If the issue is one of what grounds what, then the impossibility of conceiving of an entity's not being identical with that with which it is in fact identical seems to be the real foundation for the modal claim, rather than the other way about.

A simple conclusion suggests itself - that the best candidate theory, lacking obvious means to talk sensibly or intelligibly about plural candidates for identity, mustcede place to a theory that identifies, for a given circumstance and a given question of identity, the best way to think of a thing and the best way to track the thing. Preferably this will be a theory that excludes, by its operation and application, the very possibility of distinct rivals for identity with Theseus's ship. Such a theory will surely regulate the dialectic of same and different by the Only a and b rule. An adherent of this fifth view will say that \(D(x)\) could only be abandoned on pain of forswearing any claim to the effect that the dialectic just spoken is a dialectic of real sameness and difference.\(^2\)

The search for the fifth view already promised and hinted at may usefully take off from a simple reflection: the problem with which Theseus's ship confronts us is that of conjoining the ordinary commonsensically strict notion of identity with the commonsensically loose requirements that we place upon artefact persistence. Even if we are to relax cautiously the demands we have been placing on artefact identity or we are to recognize the tolerance that so many of our conceptual practices require and in real life rarely abuse, we can scarcely grant ordinary artefact concepts or the things that satisfy them an indefinite tolerance of disassembly, repair, discontinuance of function, and part replacement. Unless we grasp this nettle, and are prepared for some degree of reform, either of concepts or of the philosophical account we give ourselves of our concepts, we shall not disarm Hobbes's ship paradox. Will this mean that we are faced here with a stark choice between abandoning the laws

\(^2\) This is not of course to deny that a third thing may be essentially relevant (as in detective reasoning) to the question whether \(a = b\). For further discussion of \(D(x)\) see Harold Noonan, 'Wiggins, Nuel Annual Identity and Best Candidate Theories' and 'The only X and Y Principle', both in *Br. J. Phil*. 45 (1965). But see also Nathan Salmon (1984), pp. 209–29.
of identity and abandoning, in the spirit of the maxim no entity without identity, the received ontology and ideology of artefacts. That fearful outcome is to some extent anticipated in the high metaphysical tradition of substance that seeks, for related reasons, to demote artefacts from the status of genuine entities.25 But in truth, the data before us suggest a much less exciting conclusion.

Suppose that we forget analogies with living substances and, running to the opposite extreme, we remake our conception of artefact persistence on the model of the identity-condition for quantities that has been proposed by Helen Morris Cartwright.26 The condition she proposes does not exclude change, but it excludes all addition or subtraction of matter whatever. As remodelled and adapted to the formulation of a persistence condition for artefacts, this condition would need to be made more demanding in one way, in order for it to require some however vestigial continuance of the thing's capacity to subserv the roles or ends the artefact was designed (as that very artefact) to subserv. (Cf. D(v).) On the other hand, the 'no subtraction' condition could be relaxed somewhat without our confronting the risk that condition D(vi) will be breached. Even on these revised terms, the possibility can still be excluded of competition à la Hobbes between different candidates for identity of Theseus' ship. Some of an artefact's matter may perhaps be exchanged with matter from its surroundings, provided that all replacement of material parts is referred back to the first state of the finished artefact, and provided only, if the reader will forgive the comical precision of this first attempt, the artefact retains more than half of that original matter (or provided that it retains, where such is definable, the material of some indivisually paramount nucleus). Under this condition there will never be more than one claimant to the title of ship of Theseus. Under this condition, it can remain determinate whether the ship of Theseus itself has been traced effectively through time. (For the requirement of determinacy, see Chapter Six, §4, thesis (iv).) Finally, by reference to some strict condition like the one we began with or some

25 A point maintained that natural things are the real beings par excellence to which everything else is secondary. Leibniz maintained that the title of real unity must be reserved to 'animate bodies endowed with primary entelechies'. (Cf. Leibniz, Nouveaux Essais, 421–25.) It is true that there appear to be species which are not really sense for sense, bodies endowed with a genuine unity or with an indivisible being which makes up their whole active principle, any more than a mill or a watch could be. (Cf. also 241, on which see R. Colman (op.cit). For further discussion, see on (1995), p. 242.

be repaired, altered and (without our realizing it very well) replaced. But could there not be artefact concepts that were less permissive in their definition (as required by D(iv) and D(v)), were more like natural kind terms in the specificity of what they required of their instances, and did not raise the problems that are raised by artefacts that are subject to disassembly, part-replacement and discontinuance of function? The answer to this question is that there surely could be. True, I have not been able to find any normal artefact concepts which require of their exemplifications anything remotely analogous to unremitting obedience to some specialized principle of activity that conditions the sense of the artefactual substantive itself. There is, however, one very special kind of artefact whose survival requirement is extremely detailed and specific. This is the work of art. We shall postpone the special features of this and cognate concepts until the last section of Chapter Four, where we shall maintain that the conceptual need which a natural law will supply for the identity of a natural thing but not for an ordinary artefact kind, the artist’s conception of his activity and its eventual product can supply for the work of art. But works of art and their like are in a special class of their own among artefacts, and most especially perhaps for purposes of the theory of individuation.

Rather than explore this or other analogies with the principle of activity of a natural substance (e.g. the analogy furnished by such social artefacts as an administration, or a governing body recruited and replenished by a formal procedure) or seek to extend further the discussions begun in this chapter, it is time to provide an outline of what is supposed to have been achieved in the first three chapters.

5. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS TO DATE AND A METHODOLOGICAL REMARK

(i) The formal properties of identity, both = and \[\equiv\] and ‘the same something as’, are transitivity, reflexivity, symmetry, and the congruence defined by Leibniz’s Law, although the dyadic relational predicates ‘is the same as’ and ‘is, for some f, the same as’ have a content that amounts to more than could be explained, to one who lacked the concept of identity altogether, by a bare rehearsal of these principles. A fortiori, the principles themselves are not dispensable.

(ii) If (i) above is true, then R is false.

(iii) There are two distinct standpoints from which D as stated at the beginning of Chapter Two can be maintained. It may be held that a could be the same as b without being the same g. That is the philosophical contention R. Or it may be held that to say what a is is to subsume a under a predicate which either gives a’s principle of continuity and individuation - its principle of activity or its mode of functioning - or else restricts some other predicate that gives this principle. This principle furnishes the wherewith to vindicate the absoluteness of identity.

29 See Chapter Two, §1, and Chapter Six, §10. Neither there nor in the sentence to which this footnote is affixed do I seek to controvert Quine’s claim that, for a given language, we can settle objectively and absolutely what predicate to count as the identity predicate. If we once have settled what notations to count as quantifiers, variables and the truth functions, the requirements on treating an open sentence ‘\(\phi\)’ as \(x \equiv y\) are strong reflexivity and substitutivity. If \(\phi\) and \(\psi\) both meet these requirements, then they are coextensional. See ‘A Reply to Professor Marcus’ in Mind (New York, 1955), p. 178.

Quine’s claim itself is not to be gainsaid. But the two words I have italicized, namely ‘if any’, are not unimportant. They need to be there, as Quine points out, because it may be that in a given language an open sentence in ‘x’ and ‘y’ is strongly reflexive and substitutive. There is also another reason why they have to be there. This too can be put in Quine’s words ‘If the universe is taken as that of persons, and the predicates are interpreted as always depending on what one’s incomes then the proposed manner of defining ‘x \equiv y’ will equate any persons who have equal incomes, so here indeed is an unfavourable case where ‘\(x \equiv y\)’ defined in the manner indicated here and in ‘Reply to Professor Marcus’ does not come out with the sense of genuine identity.’ (W. V. Quine, 1955, p. 175.)

The first conclusion that I draw from the difficulty that Quine acknowledges is that one cannot say perfectly generally that the sense of ‘\(x \equiv y\)’ in a given language I, is exhausted by the fact that it is a reflexive relation and a congruence relation with respect to \(L\)-predicates. (Compare Chapter Six, §9.) The second thing I think I see here is support for something I have already contended: namely that questions about identity and questions about kinds of thing are not clearly separable from one another. The indiscernible primitive forms ‘\(x \equiv y\)’ and ‘\(x = \text{a} \equiv \text{b}\)’ need one another. Each must be present for the other to operate. See Preamble (ad fin.).

Whatever Quine might say about these conclusions, they are oblique to Quine’s interests in the passage I have cited. He goes on to consider there the suggestion that matters might be straightened out by reconstruing the members of the universe at whole income groups. (I. 1414, p. 36.) He says that, whether or not we do that, ‘no discrepancies between (the surrogate for identity) and genuine identity can be registered in terms of the theory itself’. I don’t think this last would furnish everything he needed to one who wanted to dismantle the identity relation into reflexiveness and congruence. But in the background is something else that is well worth questioning: namely whether absolutely everything that grounds interpretation for a given language must be such as to register in the explicite predicative repertoire of the language. It would not matter for these purposes to say plausibly enough and in line with everything we have said in Chapters Two and Three that there is a process by which an interpreter’s implicit or practical understanding of the rule of language in the life and conduct of its speakers can be made more and more explicit. For, first, the process may not terminate. Secondly, in so far as the process does not terminate and the predicative resources and repertoire of the language are constantly extended towards semantic saturation, the intended definition of surrogate identity given by means of extension of predicates will never quite be available. See further Chapter Six, §10.
At this point we will turn again to Parfit’s definition as it lies on the page, and then at last (with a start perhaps) we must wake up. The thing we see that Parfit presents there, once we attend properly to the passage I have quoted in §3, is not a definition of ‘quasi-remember’ or ‘quasi-memory’ at all. It’s a definition he himself announces that it is a definition of ‘have an accurate quasi-memory’. Inaccurate quasi-memory is not provided for.

This is not a tiny oversight, but the trace of a major philosophical difficulty. Nor is it hard to guess how the definition in front of us came into being. Putting together the two distinct issues of mode of mental functioning or mechanism and of norms of correctness, but being aware of the extent to which his condition (3) screwed things down too tightly, Parfit must have seen that he had to ‘balance’ his proposed equation (equivalence). Then he found (or so I suppose) that the only way of doing that was to add something to the left-hand side, rather than to remove an unwanted surplus on the right. So the definition was changed in the way we see in front of us.

Here one cannot help but sympathize. For it is simply not obvious how to lighten the right-hand side, or what to remove. The trouble is, though, that, as a technical term newly defined, ‘accurate-quasi-memory’ has now to be seen as a (so to speak) fixed term. The components appear to have independent meanings, but, when they are taken as combining to mint a new technical term, no separate meaning has been given to them. Under this mode of definition, nothing Q-analogous to inaccurate ordinary memory could be provided for.

To dwell, as we do so often, on examples of highly accurate and otherwise perfectly ordinary remembering tempts us (I conclude) into elision. Such examples distract our attention from the difference between questions of mental mode/mechanism and questions of correctness.\footnote{It may seem that I believe I have shown automatically that these questions are not independent. No. The most obvious is that the question of why there are two types of memory. The operation of the terms is conditioned by the mechanism for which it is the norm. None of this is denied by one who simply insists as I am doing on the distinctness of distinct questions.} So soon as these issues are allowed to coalesce, as they seem to have done in Parfit’s definition, quasi-memory leaves the epistemological economy with a marked deficit.

In the first place, if quasi-memory excludes inaccurate memory and/or excludes variants on the actual mental modes or mechanisms of memory, there is already a serious problem. For the growth of knowledge by criticism, refinement and correction really cannot dispense with either of these possibilities. The relation R that Q-theorists want to define will not then be built on memory at all.

In the second place, if quasi-memory is to be akin to memory all or to count as a direct source of knowledge about that to which it pertains, then there needs to be room for the whole purport of a given act of quasi-recollection—room for its pretensions qua memory state as well as room for that which it purports to present and room for how it presents that thing as having been—to be determinable independently of questions of the accuracy of the recollection and the goodness of its fit with the experience. Condition (3), taken as it stands, makes this separation problematical for Q-epistemology.

It may seem that the difficulties that arise from the confusion I allude of questions of mode or mechanism and questions of correctness are imported by the contingent particularities of Parfit’s definition. But that style of definition arose out of his need to purify the memory concept of identity. It was indispensable to the campaign to show that identity was irrelevant to the thing which mattered constitutively in Brown’s survival in the shape of Brownson.\footnote{There is a special difficulty in disentangling memory from identity. Unlike a perception, whose occurrence ties it to what there was to be perceived and whose correctness can in principle be regulated from other investigations of what there was to be perceived at the time and place of the perceiving, and unlike a portrait whose title and original provenance tie it to some other to whose appearance it is answerable, the act of recollecting an experience, the event to which the recollection is answerable for its correctness, does not permit the identification of its content as referent, namely, I, to be made on the simple basis of the place or time of the occurrence of the act of recollection. The place and time of doing the act of recollection afford no indication what it is.}

\section*{PART TWO}

\subsection*{13. AS IT NOW APPEARS. THE STATE OF THE WHOLE ARGUMENT TO DATE}

Here is a summation of what has been claimed so far in this chapter: for personhood as we know it, the identity of persons coincides (I began by
Brown. But in so far as quasi-remembering gets us beyond that anodyne judgment into something that is stateable without the use of the 'as if', it brings nothing but conceptual disruption.38 ‘Quasi-remember’ is ill-defined; and in its application to Brownsons (1) and (2), a confluence appears of two things that scarcely mix, the idea of a person as a singular thing with an individual biography and the idea of a person as a quasi-universal, susceptible of multiple instantiation.

14. PARTICIPATION IN THE GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE

The force of the considerations mustered so far would be blunted if there were some way to contend that Brownsons (1) and (2) might after all participate in the ordinary processes by which empirical knowledge is expanded. Before we go further it needs to be enquired (even at risk of doing again work done already) what prospects there are of its being shown that, despite the fact that their ‘earlier lives’ are shared, Brownsons (1) and (2) could in their own way keep track of things they live through, mark ‘memories’ by their provenance, and place the experiences that ‘memories’ record by the position these experiences once occupied in their lives, etc.

I begin by saying that the whole case for examining this possibility may seem to depend upon the prospective availability of something like the relation R. If so, let us note how easily and unthinkingly we can relapse into the supposition that R is available already. Perhaps this is because we are bewitched (as I have said) by the putatively sufficient condition that is given such prominence by the hackneyed, familiar but special examples where the norm and mode/mechanism constraints are perfectly and simultaneously satisfied. These happy cases furnish no understanding of the necessary conditions of the presence of the R relation. All we really know about R we learn from purported cases of it and the role that R is meant to play in philosophy. But that measure of understanding cannot (I have claimed) assure us that there really is a relation that will both perform that office and be independent of identity. Indeed, the rationale began to appear some sections ago for insisting upon some residue of the ‘one parcel’ condition mentioned in §7.

38 At this point in the argument it may be desirable to point out that, for one who agrees to discuss these thought experiments but is drawn to the line I am still taking at this point in the argument, it is not at all necessary to deny that the splinters Brownson (1) and Brownson (2) have mental states. It is not even necessary to deny that any of the respects owed to Brown should be extended, where they actually exist, to Brownsons (1) and (2). However pathetic they seem. They are after all repositories of a kind. See §14.
In the second place, it is worth trying to think further about the epistemological condition of splinters such as Brownsons (1) and (2). In so far as they proceed as if they were direct rememberers, and in so far as they take their experiential memories as direct presentations to them of their own past, they must become party (we have said) to indefinite quantities of error. Each of them says that he remembers a momentous one-to-one dialogue with Isabel (say) or a confidential man-to-man transaction with Stephen. But there are two Brownsons and neither of them is the same as the substance that was there in converse with Isabel or Stephen. Each survivor thinks of himself as a single person with cognitive faculties, and a life altogether of his own, but such thoughts are just wrong. Again, each of the Brownsons thinks that he is a person who lives a life, a substance. He cannot be what he thinks he is. Moreover, if experiential memory is to work as it must work for purposes of cognition, there is no thinkable alternative but for it to induce in Brownsons (1) and (2) the sorts of beliefs that unsplitted people have. Nevertheless, the beliefs that Brownsons (1) and (2) need to have are beliefs that cannot all be true. For the sake of arranging for all this to seem possible, why on earth should anyone want to pretend that R is well defined when it is not?

Paul Snowden has helped me to answer this question. The point is that, even after issuing all these denials about Brownsons (1) and (2) and their supposed experiential memories of Brown’s life, the human being theorist is still faced with some impressive apparent memories. Whatever else one says, it is hard to deny that each Brownson represents a repository of memory traces or traces of memory traces relating to events that took place before either of them existed. So be it. We can and maybe we must treat them as repositories. It is as if they had each been there. There is no more one should say, however. In Parfit’s example, Jane might be the sole remaining repository of information about the appearance of the portico of some remote island church destroyed, since Paul’s death, by flood. Nevertheless, despite any gratitude we may feel for the existence of this vestige, let us be clear that Jane’s state of being such a repository falls far short of the cognitive condition of one who displays her memories in cognitive engagement, takes responsibility for them, places them, and exercises an option to accord them the status of ordinary direct memory. For the same reason, the attainment of repository status by Brownsons (1) and (2) falls short of that which would have mattered in the survival of Brown.

A third remark. By practice, or even without practice, one can fall readily into the frame of mind where, having been impressed by the Brown-Brownson case, one finds it impossible to think that the Brownsons (1) and (2) case represents the passing away of Brown. The explanation is not far to seek. At this point in the supposed history of Brown, one very easily falls into thinking of Brown as a thing that persists in Brownson (1) and Brownson (2). One conceives of Brown as a thing that persists in its/his instantiations, a thing that is wherever they are—just as the sail that lies over you, over me, and over a friend of ours, is where I am, where you are, and where he is. (See Plato, Parmenides, 196b.) In short, one thinks of Brown as a concrete universal. Nothing need be wrong with that. Indeed it is very likely that, with a little care, one could invent a contradiction-free way of speaking of such a corporate being, not merely as a thing with a past but as one with a future. One could index the thoughts that are ascribed to the corporate being by reference to the members or constituents that give local hospitality to the thought, even as other members or constituents lack it or have another, possibly conflicting, thought. Under the new convention, the corporate being Brown will be large, but within him he may safely embrace contradictions. Moreover, if we are careful, we shall be able to say this as theorists without ourselves contradicting ourselves. Nevertheless, Brown reconceived as such a concrete universal is not the sort of thing whose survival was to have been described in the case of Brownsons (1) and (2). Nor is this how we conceive of subjects of experience when posing the question of personal identity. The problem relates to subjects who have lives of their own, to potential authors of autobiographies, who can say ‘I think . . .’, rather than ‘In respect of member m, I think . . .’

Let it be clear that the difficulty here is not that metaphysics needs to look askance at corporate beings. Perhaps departments of physics or psychology or philosophy could conceive of themselves as such. By an effort of imagination or of memory, one might find even now some way of thinking of such departments as participating not merely in power or glory (high ratings) but in the growth of knowledge or understanding. But there is an important difference here from the sort of thing which Parfitians might think of as surviving or quasi-surviving. For, as we have said, Brown thinks of himself not as corporate and not as composed of splinters. If a concrete universal Brown thought of himself in Shoemaker’s Brown’s way, he would be wrong. Departments of physics, on the other hand, considered as cognitive beings that do not need to conceive of themselves as not having members or as not multiple,
rather thinking of themselves as pursuing the truth about physics along the multiple paths pursued by different individuals or teams, must see it as their business to push physics forward by promoting individuals' and teams' constant effort, in seminars, in the laboratory or the canteen, to explain anomaly and transcend inconsistency. A department of physics has no need to suffer from the delusion that it is itself an individual person seeking after truth. Its corporate thought had better be that it is what it is, namely a corporate thing in search of the truth about physics by dint of the efforts of its members. Not only that. A corporate being such as this can offer a perfectly ordinary account of what sort of thing its members are. Suppose a correspondingly corporate notion of Brown were conjured, what then? Then corporate Brown would be conceived as a person with members which could see itself as a person with members — and could say what sort of thing any one of its members was. Corporate Brown is not then the sort of thing to figure in an autobiography, a story of itself as one individual person. Parfit's account of survival is not, however, designed as an account of the survival of a corporate sort of thing. It is an account of the survivals of things on the ontological level not of corporate Brown but of the members of corporate Brown. 39

Epistemology has long needed to engage with the collective nature of our cognitive labours, with knowledge by hearsay, with the role of testimony, with the conditions for the accumulation and collective criticism and emendation of knowledge. Yes. But no sane enthusiast for these tasks will seek to dispense with the hard-won insights of the empiricist epistemology of experience, eyewitness and recollection by individuals with lives and histories of their own. Not even an underlabourer can be a splinter like Brownson (1) or (2). The charm of neo-Lockeanism was that it seemed to engage with our given notion of memory of personal memory, that is. When defended by all the necessary philosophical refinements, it gradually deviates with that notion and puts into question the only account we know how to give of the evidential fabric of our knowledge. Not only does its revised conception of memory denature memory. It has now put itself in danger of disengaging altogether with the idea of an individual 'self' which was its starting point.

15. The Penultimate Problem and a Verdict Upon It, All Leading in Due Course to a Reassessment of the Original Shoemaker Case 40

In the philosophical transition that will carry us slowly back to our starting point, viz. the Shoemaker case in its original state, there remains one other case I have to comment upon, namely the case where the brain of Brown is split but only one of the two portions is successfully transplanted into a Robinson twin. The other dies, we may suppose. Let us call the survivor of these events Brownson Sole. In the circumstances (it will be asked), how can we refuse to treat Brownson Sole as Brown himself? If Brownson Sole claims to have seen the Aurora Borealis from a fishing boat off Orkney on which he was the only US national, if he gets the numerous details of Brown's adventure right and this is no fluke or accident, then how can we help but treat Brownson Sole as one who was indeed there? It may seem that the only thing that is left to ask is how well he remembers seeing the Aurora Borealis.

We can go as far as we like with the as if (I reply) and we can take the as if as lightly or as seriously as we wish to take it. Indeed we can take the as if fully seriously enough to experiment with questions put to a being that we count only as a 'repository' or the carrier of traces of some event they were not present at. When someone devises a whole philosophy of als ob, that can be taken seriously too. But consider the judgment that Brownson Sole is the same as Brown. If it is true, it ought to depend only upon Brown and Brownson Sole. It ought not to depend on an assurance about the existence or non-existence of another thing altogether besides Brown and Brownson Sole. It cannot depend ad hoc on the accomplished death or destruction or non-viability of the other half-brain that was poised to animate some rival to Brownson Sole. Any verdict about Brown and Brownson Sole issued in such dependence would infringe the Only a and b rule, D(x) of Chapter Three, §14, which is founded on D(vi) of Chapter Two, §7 (ad fin.) and the sortalist cum conceptualist argument for D(vi). The argument there was all of a piece, moreover, with our commitment to the distinction between a particular and a universal. (See above, §14, the paragraph beginning with the words, A third remark.)

At this point, it is easy to imagine that someone may say that the Only a and b rule looks plausible enough as an abstract logical requirement,
but ask how the normal theory and practice of individuation as we have described it could ever underwrite its satisfaction: 'In practice, in the actual business of making identity judgments, the Only a and b rule is unworkable.' My answer to that runs as follows: if Brownson-Sole were the same as Brown, where Brown is a human being and thereby a cognitive being, then Brownson would have to be the same human being and the same cognitive being as Brown. But Brownson-Sole came into being from Brown not in a manner constitutively sufficient to preserve the transitivity of identity or to perpetuate the activity of a human being as a cognitive being. (See §9 following.) On these terms, there is no question of Brownson-Sole's being the same as Brown. The Only a and b rule is not unworkable at all. It asks no more of us than that, when we address questions of identity, we should persist in a way of thinking that preserves the distinctiveness of identity and marks the difference between singular and universal. If identity itself is a matter of indifference to you, of course you can ignore the rule. (Cf. Chapter Three, §4, paragraph 9.) In that case, your judgments will not differentiate identity from resembling, succeeding, going proxy for, being a replica of . . . , and you don't care. If you do care, don't ignore the rule.

16. BROWN—BROWNSON RECONSIDERED

There is a point here which, if it deserves anything at all, deserves to be followed through completely. The principle we have just invoked is that, since our judgments of identity need to be informed by consideration of the kind of things that are in question and thus by the principle of activity of these, our positive judgments of sameness are answerable to their nature; to a norm that requires anyone who makes a judgment of identity through change to assure himself whether the change is one that preserves this principle of activity and equally requires him to withhold the verdict of identity in any case where the change is in question would, in other cases that exemplified the same process, fail to preserve that principle of activity.

Once such a principle is announced, it will seem that in our application of it the question ought constantly and repeatedly to arise: what counts here and in this or that connexion as the same process? One will expect that a constant need to engage with such questions will make us part to an elaborate system of causality by which the specific of each ongoing process can be interrogated in the light of the formal properties of the identity relation and of the character of the thing-kind whose members are subject to the process. One will expect then that anyone making judgments of identity will have to put himself constantly into the frame of mind of a common law barrister, as if testing his every thought against previous rulings or precedents. But as an expectation relating to the world that we know, doesn't this seem extraordinarily implausible?

If there is a mystery here, I think it will disappear with the reflection that the individuative norms by which we normally proceed so effortlessly (but which it seems we have such difficulty in rendering articulate to ourselves) are incorporated already, en masse, within the grasp of thing-kind conceptions by which we find our way about the world. These conceptions are effective in Leibniz's sense clear. They are not necessarily explicit or distinct. By reflection and practice we can make them more distinct (cf. Chapter Three, footnote 6). In so far as we have mastered these conceptions at all, however, they not only enforce for us the Only a and b rule that is disregarded in the proposal that Brownson-Sole be ruled identical with Brown. They mark for us the distinction between singulars/particulars, which are not things instantiated, and universals which are. (Cf. Chapter Two, D(vi), Chapter Three, §4.) Normally we do not need to think about what we do. When we do need to think, we may have to struggle. (Philosophy is no sure ally here. Rather the reverse perhaps.) But none of this need count against the principle recently identified, the principle stated at the end of §15 and resumed in the paragraph before last.

In the light of that principle, the time has come to look once more at Shoemaker's version of the Brown-Brownson case. In pursuit of the enthusiasm of yesteryear, we allowed that case. Then we disallowed all the cases that followed on after it. But as soon as I announced (§8) that I would mark such a frontier, many philosophers will have wondered how much difference I could insist that there is between the process by which a whole brain is transplanted into a body ready and suitable to receive it, that by which only half of a brain is transplanted into a body ready and suitable to receive it and the process by which the second act is done twice over. If the second and third cannot yield identity, can the first?

Taken neat, this question is hard to answer, or even to see straight. But fending off the thought that questions of this sort ought to be reduced without residue to questions about the individuation and differentiation of surgical processes (questions for which I have just allowed we are ill prepared), why do we not remind ourselves yet again of our method and say, ‘Well, here as everywhere it all depends on what sort of thing we take ourselves to be’? If we take that question more fully seriously, maybe we
can recover a wiser norm of judgment than any that we exercised in §§6–7. So let us go back to that point and everything that led up to it.

At the beginning we organized our inquiry around the sortal concept human being and bracketed the concept person. But the aim was not to let go of the idea of personhood, still less to place the question of what we are under the alien direction of physiologists, biologists, evolutionists or others who are expert in matters relating to organisms. The aim was only to free the philosophical conceptions criticized in §2 following, then to force upon ourselves and other persons the question of what, in thinking of ourselves as human beings and human persons, we have undertaken to think of ourselves as being. No doubt, the answer must be discursive and draw on our inexplicit knowledge. No doubt it will be essentially contestable too. But what should I say?

The answer I give begins from yet another misappropriation of Locke’s thoughts. It proposes that we apply equally to the concepts human person and human being that which Locke said of self and of person.

Wherever a man finds what he calls himself, there I think another may say is the same person. It is a Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery. This personality extends it self beyond present Existence to what is past only by consciousness, whereby it becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to itself past Actions, just upon the same ground, and for the same reason, that it does the present. (Essay II, xxvii, §26, punctuation modernized.)

If a term is truly forensic, it surely needs a palpable and public use—a use that is intelligible in the forum. But then the term’s use in connexion with questions of praise and blame needs to be all of a piece with its other uses in the interpersonal sphere and not least with all the uses to which P. F. Strawson drew attention when he showed how intimately our ideas of agency and responsibility depend on human beings’ reactive and participative attitudes towards other human beings.11 Because such attitudes depend on the reality of human presence, that directs us to find out the connexion between these questions and Strawson’s earlier insistence on the indispensability to the metaphysics and epistemology of personhood of the idea that a person is the bearer of both P- and M-predicates. How a human being stands or walks or browses or smiles or laughs or talks or earnestly entreats, or how he frowns an egg, this is one part of what he is—no less than is the sort of thing (more neutrally) he chooses to say to this or that conversant, how musically he plays the violin (if he does), or how calmly or wildly, how sensibly or recklessly or obsessively, how magnanimously or ignobly (in a manner he is held responsible for) he responds day by day to the predicaments of ordinary life. Human beings’ dispositions and capacities are gradually but constantly shaped and reshaped. In the process, the particular ways in which they come in due course to do whatever they do will become distinctive of what they have then become and can be responded to as having become.12 If so, then P-predicates, properly understood, are a subset of M-predicates. Unless they are, unless physiognomy and the particularities of a person’s physical presence and being find their way into the story, Strawson’s account of reactive and participative attitudes is hard to follow through. But is enough room left for all these things by the acceptance of Shoemaker’s thought experiment? Surely the character of a person is not independent of his or her physiognomy, and this physiognomy can scarcely be independent of the body.

Consider the same matter from another point of view, which is complementary to the foregoing. In the Brown–Brownson case, after all the events that Shoemaker describes, it seems that Robinson still walks. But Robinson is no more (or so we were prompted to decide). We must get used to this. It seemed that Brown was dead, but that isn’t right either (or so it has been decided). Where Robinson seems to be, there is Brown. We must inhibit then the affective responses we once trained upon Robinson, and redirect our affective responses for Brown onto the person who looks like Robinson but is Brownson. We must look into the face of Robinson and try to see there, try to find there, Brown. Meanwhile Brown himself, wearing Brownson’s face, must come to terms with the difficulty that we have in finding him there. These are among the things to be made sense of in the Brown–Brownson experiment. Can they really be made sense of?

In considering the characteristically human modes of activity that appeared to be preserved in the Shoemaker case and not preserved in the cases that go beyond it, there was much to learn about the cognitive

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12 As one speaks of these things, the phrase that may come to one’s lips is ‘his doing such and such scamorly in this or that particular way is a part of his identity’. When we speak at such of one, of ‘our identity’, what are we concerned with? Surely we are concerned with the fullest determination of one that has or have by the time those one. But this involves us with the so-called principle of activity which permits certain judgments of identity over certain imaginable transformations, but disallow other judgments of identity over all sorts of other apparently imaginable possibilities. These other possibilities are thought of, however contentiously and by whatever admixture of bluff, as bringing with them the end or virtual end of the subject who undergoes them (not necessarily of the subject’s memory traces or the traces of those memory traces).
facilities and the conditions of their operation. But on the proper forensic view of human being-hood, why did not considerations of physiognomy (etc) that are familiar to us prompt, at the outset, all sorts of other doubts or hesitations about the Brown-Brownson case? How can the present author have been persuaded by the contingencies of current controversy to devote six long sections of this chapter to C, C' and R, but have allowed so fundamental an objection against most or all of these thought-experiments to lie fallow? It was strange, just because Brownson seemed in some ways to perpetuate Brown, for us to ignore the developed facilities of Brown which Brownson does not inherit and pay so little attention to all the implications of brain transfers of the kind that were described by Shoemaker. The high quality of the actors and munificence one sees on the stage should not lead one to think that the question of the fit of the brain to the physiognomy of the new body which is to receive it is as relatively simple as the transposition of music from one instrument to another. 13 But now that the Brown-Brownson case has the potentiality multiple output of the process by which Brownson Sole emerges as Brown alert us at last to further doubts, let us take them more seriously.

17. ONE LAST VARIANT – AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL MORAL OF SAMÉ. FINALLY, HUMAN PERSONS AS ARTEFACTS?

At this point, the position must be considered of a philosopher who was not at all convinced by that which I said about the case of Brown and Brownson Sole (§15), but is suddenly persuaded that there is a serious case to answer concerning physiognomy and the Brown-Brownson case. The difficulty posed by physiognomy impresses him. Nevertheless, after further reflection, we may imagine that this philosopher insists that even the point that he has allowed casts no doubt on a case where Brown's brain is transferred to the body of a Robinson who is an identical twin of Brown. We may suppose that the philosopher also insists, with fervour characteristic of present-day controversy (if not yet of science fiction, New Comedy), that the point he accepts about physiognomy casts no doubt at all on a complicated situation where Brownson Sole emerges from a transplant of half of Brown's brain to the body of a Robinson who was one of four quadruplets. Let the first be Brown himself, a long lost son with a name given by foster parents; let the second be the Robinson whose body is animated by half of Brown's brain; let the third be a Robinson in whom it happens that the other half of Brown's brain dies; let the fourth be long since dead.

In the first of these two cases, as newly conceived, the body of Brownson Sole is for all relevant purposes indistinguishable (my adversary will say) from the body of Brown. In the second case too, anything Brown can do with his body Brownson can do with his, etc. As for the process by which Brownson Sole comes to be from Brown [this philosopher may say], let that be characterized as the process by which a person x is perpetuated in matter qualitatively indistinguishable from x's and as the sole inheritor of x's particular faculties and physiognomy. If such a thing were demanded [he will add], then a guarantee could certainly accompany the process just characterized. For, as thus characterized, this process can be guaranteed not to create multiple candidates for identity with x. It can also be guaranteed not to confuse with any of the cognitive considerations adduced in the endless chapter on this subject by David Wiggins, it is all very well for the purist of identity to claim that he is coming to terms with the forensic marks of our concept of human being. It is time for the purist to come to terms with the forensic character of our disputes about identity. Provided that we slightly redescribe the Brown-Brownson case and all its successors, these cases can still show everything they were intended to show.

My preliminary reply to this philosopher will be to voice my doubt whether making Brownson's face very like Brown's face can fully overcome the disquiet that attaches to the very idea of 'wearing' a face. Off stage, one does not wear a face, only an expression of the face.

My second point of reply is that the guarantee my opponent proffers for Brownson Sole is entirely empty if the guarantee now given for the said process's not delivering multiple candidates only consists in the fact that, if it did co so, then we shouldn't call the process in question 'the process by which a person x is perpetuated in matter qualitatively indistinguishable from x's own and as the sole inheritor of x's particular faculties and physiognomy'. Within our given ontology of processes, with going standards (however local, inscrutable or challenging to theory) of identity and difference, a separation of the kind that my opponent is attempting simply cannot be achieved by putting a special label upon one part of one variety of one of them. (Compare Aristotle, Metaphysics, vii. 1070 a. 13f) New nomenclature cannot undo the obvious truth that, by the processes he is deploying and the means he is using to perpetuate Brown in Brownson, a surgeon skilled in such techniques...
(namely transplanting brains or half-brains into bodies matching exactly the bodies they come from or else, for this involves the same things, into the bodies within which they will be viable) could produce multiples, and might indeed produce all sorts of further outcomes for which we are even worse prepared.44

The third point of reply relates to the idea of a guarantee. This is an idea my opponent wants to cut down to size, to mock and belittle. Let us strive harder to make sense of it. A genuine guarantee relating to this or that process must relate to the nature of the process itself rather than a mere description of it. Moreover, genuine guarantees exist. However, you describe it, the process of jam-making can be guaranteed not to produce heavy water out of ordinary water. The now standard process by which a stone is removed from the gall-bladder or is broken up there can be guaranteed not to remove the appendix. Another process that comes with a certain guarantee is the natural process, sustained by the operation of numerous laws of biochemistry, physiology and the rest, by which a human being comes into existence, matures and eventually ceases to be, by 'natural death'. That process is not of course guaranteed to save a human being from murder or from premature death by asphyxiation, say, or irradiation. But it is certainly guaranteed not to produce multiples, not to transplant brains or half-brains, and not (if that were the better way to think of Brownson) to furnish new bodies to living, continuing brains. That is what makes this familiar process and the principle of activity associated with it one part of the basis for the making of judgments of identity. It is the lawful dependability of this process that entitles one whose judgments are shaped by that principle of activity to claim that his practice is answerable to the Only a and b rule. If the practice is answerable to that rule and it sees itself as reliant on dependable processes of this sort, then the practice will properly differentiate judgments of identity from judgments to the effect that the object b is the

44 'When Parties in a State are violent, he offered a wonderful Contrivance to reconcile them. The Method is this. You take a hundred Leaders of each Party, you dispose them into Couples of such whose Heads are nearest of a Size; then let two nice Operators saw off the Heads of each Couple at the same Time, in such a Manner that the Brain may be equally divided. Let the Operatives thus cut off be interchanged, applying each to the Head of his opposite Party-man. It seems indeed to be a Work that requires some Exactness; but the Prosector assured us, that if it were dexterously performed, the Cure would be infallible. For he argued thus, that the two half Brains being left to debate the Matter between themselves within the Space of one Swift, would soon come to a good Understanding, and produce that Moderation as well as Regularity of Thinking, so much to be wished for in the Heads of those, who imagine they are in the World only to watch and govern its Motion: And as to the Difference of Brains in Quality or Quantity, among those who are Directors in Faction; the Doctor assured us, from his own Knowledge, that it was a perfect Trifle' (Jonathan Swift, 'Gulliver's Travels: Book 3, A Voyage to Laputa').

45 I find that, years ago, intuitively and in its own way, by a route not wholly dissimilar from that followed in the text, the Committee of Enquiry into Human Fertilization and Embryology (1982) chaired by Baroness Warnock came to substantially the same conclusion. See Lord Hanning, 7 December 1986) On 'become' at p. 73, note 14.

If one is misled by moral argument to adopt a certain conception of the person and one correctly deploys this conception upon some question of identity and difference, must the decision about identity and difference be not simply to adopt the position that would have been taken had the moral argument not been available? I am uncertain, if only because of uncertainty concerning the terms of the question. Leaving that uncertainty on one side, let us not forget that seeing a moral reality can be the reminder of a metaphysical reality.
interventions of orthodox medicine and dentistry from 'proper' or 'admissible' application to human beings as such.

To this I should reply that it is not my concern, either here or anywhere else, to represent judgments of strict identity as resting on justificatory premises that culminate in the deduction of an identity or that bring among their logical consequences the satisfaction of the D principles given in Chapters Two and Three. That is not how the strictness of the relation of identity is to be marked or vindicated. We have long since rejected the deductive conception of identity-judgment. See Chapter Three, §5. (See also Chapter Six, §10, where I found myself reminding the reader of the familiar fact that one can see directly, however fallibly, that it is one's brother not one's uncle who has come to call on one.) The thing which really matters, where someone makes a responsible (however fallible) judgment of identity between the individual objects a and b, is that the various things the person judging has regard for in arriving at it should be the right things for a judgment of identity — that they be things appropriate for a type of judgment which, by its nature, goes well beyond the weaker claim that b instantiates a, that b inherits the role of a, or that b is interchangeable or interfungible with a. One who makes the judgment that a is b deploys an understanding which is all of a piece with the business of subsuming object a under some kind that is associated with a principle of activity (or way of behaving) that things of a's kind exemplify. His understanding must be all of a piece with knowing how to keep track of such things, with grasping things' natures well enough to chronicle what they do or undergo, etc. (See Chapter Two and the various D principles that are assembled and paraded there. See also the Preface, last paragraph but six, for the description I see as consequential upon conceiving this of identity and individuation.) For any genuine object, there is some right way of keeping track of it and this must track it as a particular. Cf. Chapter Two, §6. It is from this simple truth that the whole business of making judgments of identity extrapolates.

What remains then of the difficulty about splitting (etc)? The real difficulty that the theory of individuation must have from cases of splitting, medical intervention, transplantation and the rest (or so I conclude) is not that such occurrences breach the limited and specific guarantees at which the objector is sneering (and which are all that are needed to sustain the relevant way of thinking of something's being securely singled out), but that they add complications to the picture we have held out of a substance coasting along (as it were) autonomously or under its own steam. (Which does not mean that, even in this picture, it interacts with nothing else.) In coming to terms with these complications, quasi-casuistically so to speak, without much generality but in ready appreciation of the universality of the commitments that one creates by deciding in one way rather than another, we need constantly to refer the issues that arise back to our conception of the sort of thing that we are dealing with. Minor interventions (medical, dental, orthopaedic, osteopathic . . . ) in a human being's pattern of being and acting confront us with no conceptual difficulties at all. In acquiescing in these, we do not prejudice our understanding of such a pattern. The substance's organic independence can still be conceived as undiminished. There is no problem of persistence. (We do not commit ourselves to allow anything on the scale of the Brown-Brownson case.) At the other extreme, however, in the so far imaginary cases where it seems a human being is simply treated as a template for the production of copies, it is manifest (it ought not to be controversial) that ideas are changed almost out of recognition. That is what I should say about Parfit's teleportation, a fictional process which can as readily carbon-copy me twice (or thrice, or the number of times it takes to make a regiment) as once. In so far as these cases are taken as amounting to the perpetuation of the person Brown, we have lost hold altogether of the notions we began with of what Brown is. The judgment that the singular being Brown persists thereby is unsustainable.

Everything depends then on that which lies between the unproblematic cases and the cases that are out of the question. In these intermediate cases, where massive transplanting of organs or constant interchange of parts is contemplated, as well as constant fine-tuning of a human being by such expedients as gene therapy, the newly emerging conception under which we subsume a human substance will still be the conception of an individual thing or substance with a destiny of its own. Nevertheless, as we proceed along the road indicated, the conception of a human person will diverge further and further from that of a self-moving, animate living being exercising its capacity to determine, within a framework of its own choosing and replete with meanings that are larger than it is, its own direct and indirect ends. The conception will converge more and more closely upon the conception of something like an artefact — of something not so much to be encountered in the world as putatively made or produced by us, something that it is really up to us (individually or collectively) not merely to heal or care for or protect but also to repair, to reshape, to reconstruct . . . even to reconceive.

This new or emerging conception of what a person is will perplex us not only with philosophical variants on the problem of artefact identity.
but with practical questions. At the beginning, it may seem these questions will be easy enough. Later on, when less and less seems to be excluded by the then prevalent conception of human beinghood, they may bewilder us. I speculate that this bewilderment can only grow as that conception is progressively adjusted to the thought that little or nothing that a human being might more than idly wish needs to be out of the question or excluded by our human limitations. Will not bewilderment then turn to total aporia as our conception of human personhood is adjusted to the further thought that it is not merely our destiny that is (in large part) up to us, or our ethical identity, but even the kind of thing it is that we are? In the here and now, at a point well short of this limit, there has, of course, been a huge increment in the sum of human well-being. Why deny that? But before extrapolating this gain mindlessly into the open future, or simply rejoicing in the technological freedom that geneticists and medical scientists have been encouraged to create for us, there are questions to answer.

Here is one of them. If we cannot recognize our own given natures and the natural world as setting any limit at all upon the desires that we contemplate taking seriously, if we will not listen to the anticipations and suspicions of the artefactual conception of human beings that sound in half-forgotten moral denunciations of the impulse to see people or human beings as things, as tools, as bearers of military munals, as cannon-fodder, or as fungibles; if we are not ready to scrutinize with any hesitation or perplexity at all the conviction (as passionate as it is groundless, surely, for no larger conception is available that could validate it) that everything in the world is in principle ours or there for the taking; then what will befall us? Will a new disquiet assail our desires themselves, in a world no less demured of meaning by our sense of our own omnipotence than ravaged by our self-righteous insatiability?

I frame the question and having formed it, I grave it here. But a book such as this is not the place in which to enlarge upon it, to answer it, or to speculate about the mental consequences of our available energies being diverted from the gradual discovery and enhancement, within the limits set by our animate nature, of more sustaining human ends, and the further consequences of these energies being progressively redirected to the endless elaboration of the means to ends that are less and less often explored in thought or feeling. This book is not the place nor

is its author the philosopher or moralist to hold up to human beings the image of the insatiability by which they relentlessly simplify the given ecology of the earth and change out of all recognition the given framework of human life. In a treatise on identity and individuation, it is enough and more than enough to point to the conceptual tie that links together these issues of life's framework and meaning, of individuation, and of the way in which we conceive of a human being.

In this work, the chief thing that needs to be made clear is that no freedom that the theory of individuation leaves open to us to exercise in how we think of ourselves could ever liberate us from the constraints laid down in Chapter One. Whatever it may amount to, our freedom to remake the idea of personhood (to remake it by our pursuits and our choices) could not entail that it would be up to us, once it was determinate what a and b were, whether a certain identity judgment a = b was true or false. For it is impossible on the level of reference and truth-value for there to be such freedom. As soon as it is determinate what a or b is, the result of Chapter One, §10, is inescapable. Moreover, once an identity question is construed in a definite way, it must be determinate what the question turns on. Nothing is left to stipulate. Only at the level of sense is there any room for conceptual invention to enter. At that level, I do not deny, there is freedom to reformulate bit by bit the answer that we commit ourselves to give to the what are we? question. It is a freedom we cannot freely escape. It is cognate with the conceptualist (residually idealist) insight we expounded in Chapter Six and linked there with our miscellaneous capacities to come to terms with the exigency of the identity relation. But we should think much harder how we exercise it. We should think harder then about the choices that commit us to think of personhood in one way rather than another. These questions are essentially contestable. But from that it does not follow that they permit of more than one answer.

Apart from the logic of individuation, what ought to constrain us in how we think of human beinghood? Only the power of discursive reflection. How wise is it then to allow the goal of attaining the perfect state of material and bodily well-being to fly constantly before us like the rainbow or a will o' the wisp? How wise is it for those who have almost everything to project limitlessly into an open future their opportunities to reconstruct and reconceive themselves in order to have yet more? Where once angels feared to tread, how far will we go? If Schopenhauer had conceived how elusive and difficult the question was going to be found of what conception we should make for ourselves of ourselves; if
he had conceived how difficult it would be found by the very substances
who exemplify the thing-kind whose nature has come into question; if
he had known what kind of commotion the question would occasion or
how sensitive the answer would be to the stability or instability of the
expectations that still prevail about the world in which we still hope to
find meaning and have our engagement; then I wonder whether he
would have wanted to persist in his optimistic declaration that ‘Just as
the boatman sits in his little boat... so in the midst of a world of suf-
faring the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting the pro-
cipium individuationes’ (World as Will and Idea, §63).

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