

THE SURVIVAL OF THE SENTIENT

1. Introduction: Ourselves and Sentient Others

In this quite modestly ambitious essay, I'll generally just assume that, for the most part, our "scientifically informed" commonsense view of the world is true. Just as it is with such unthinking things as planets, plates and, I suppose, plants, too, so it also is with all earthly thinking beings, from people to pigs and pigeons; each occupies a region of space, however large or small, in which all are spatially related to each other. Or, at least, so it is with the bodies of these beings. And, even as each of these *ordinary entities* extends through some space, so, also, each endures through some time. In line with that, each ordinary entity is at least very largely, and is perhaps entirely, an *enduring physical* entity (which allows that many might have certain properties that aren't purely physical properties.) Further, each ordinary enduring entity is a *physically complex* entity: Not only is each composed of parts, but many of these parts, whether or not absolutely all of them, are themselves enduring physical entities, and many of *them* also are such physically complex continuing entities.

When an ordinary entity undergoes a significant change, then, at least generally, this change will involve changes concerning that entity's constituting physical parts, whether it be a rearrangement of (some of) these parts, or a loss of parts, or a gain of parts, or whatever. Often, the entity will still exist even after the change occurs. As we may well suppose, this happens when, from two strokes of an ax, an ordinary log loses just a chip of wood. As we may then say, such a change conforms with the log's "persistence conditions." Somewhat less often, such an ordinary entity undergoes a change that means an end to it: When a bomb's explosion makes our log become just so many widely scattered motes of dust, the log will no longer exist. Such a momentous change *doesn't* conform with the log's persistence conditions.

Insofar as we may learn which changes involving a particular log conform with its persistence conditions, and which do not, we might learn a fair amount about what it is for a physically complex enduring entity to be that log. Perhaps pretty similarly, insofar as we may learn which changes involving *you* conform with *your persistence conditions*, and also which do not, we might learn a fair amount about what it is for a physically complex enduring entity to be *you*; and, presumably in parallel, we might learn what it is for *another* such complex entity to be *me*. This learning is clearly a possibility for us, I'll suggest, should materialism be true, and should a weak form of dualism be true, where some concrete individuals, at least, have not only physical properties, but also some nonphysical mental properties. And, it may also be possible, I'll suggest, should the truth lie, instead, with a more substantial dualism, rather like Descartes' view, but one allowing, perhaps, there to be nonphysical minds that aren't personal minds, as with porcine minds, and canine, and feline.

Whatever the metaphysic we might favor, when inquiring into our persistence conditions we should seek to appreciate what's involved in a *philosophically adequate concept of ourselves*. As I'll even now suggest, such an adequate concept must be well suited for engagement with our central prudential thoughts and concerns, with what, in my *Identity, Consciousness and Value* (henceforth ICV), I called our *(broad) egocentric values*.ⁱ And, it must be well suited for engagement with our morality. Our appreciation of that may help us see, better than I saw in ICV, that an adequate concept of ourselves must be a psychological conception, perhaps the concept of a being who'll exist when, and only when, his mind does. This may be so *whatever* worldview may be true, whether materialistic, or dualistic, or idealistic, or what-have-you.ⁱⁱ

A prompting cause of the present effort is the appearance of Eric Olson's valuable (1997) book, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity without Psychology* (henceforth THA). Using the label "The Psychological Approach" very broadly, Olson has it cover all the views on which our persistence is tied to the continuation of our psychology. In opposition to all such views, he forcefully advocates a Biological Approach:

In place of the Psychological Approach I propose a radically nonpsychological account of our identity. What it takes for us to persist through time is ... biological continuity: one survives just in case one's purely animal functions -- metabolism, the capacity to breathe and circulate one's blood, and the like -- continue. I would put biology in place of psychology, and one's biological life in place of one's mind, in determining what it takes for us to persist: a biological approach to personal identity.ⁱⁱⁱ

In much of what follows, I'll be arguing that, with the Biological Approach, there can't possibly be any philosophically adequate view of our existence or persistence: As any conception of ourselves that's a biological concept isn't (primarily) a mental conception, it won't comport well with central prudential thoughts and concerns, and also with our moral thinking. Even as either failure shows the inadequacy of a Biological Approach to ourselves, with both there's an overwhelming case for a Psychological Approach.

In parallel, I'll argue that it's only a Psychological Approach, and not a Biological Approach, that's adequate for those *nonpersonal* sentient beings whom, in the normal course of events, will be found with typical living animals: Even if they be subpersonal entities, still, a philosophically adequate concept of such nonpersonal beings my feline pet, Felix, and your canine pet, Oscar, must closely parallel an adequate concept of ourselves.

Toward the essay's end, I'll float an extremely general thought about our commonsense metaphysic, about our ordinary ontology: Though this ontology recognizes many entities whose mentality is essential to their very existence, it recognizes *none* whose biology is truly essential. Perhaps there are *no ordinary entities*, I'll conjecture, for which the Biological Approach provides an adequate account.

2. Questions of Strict Survival, Vegetable Cases and Transplant Cases

After the book's Introduction, the body of *The Human Animal* (THA) begins with this paragraph:

The topic of this book is our identity through time. What does it take for you and me to persist from one time to another? What sort of changes could one survive, and what would bring one's existence to an end? What makes it the case that some past or future being, rather than another, is you or I? (7)

As an early step in advocating a Biological answer to these opening questions, in the book's first section Olson presents a relevantly puzzling pair of cases. Apparently favoring the Biological Approach, there's first a "Vegetable Case;" and, apparently favoring the Psychological Approach, there's then a "Transplant Case."^{iv}

To do justice to the intriguing Vegetable Case, I quote Olson at some considerable length:

Imagine that you fall into what physiologists call a persistent vegetative state. As a result of temporary heart failure, your brain is deprived of oxygen for ten minutes...by which time the neurons of your cerebral cortex have died of anoxia. Because thought and consciousness are impossible unless the cortex is intact, and because brain cells do not regenerate, your higher mental functions are irretrievably lost. You will never again be able to remember the past, or plan for the future, or hear a loved one's voice, or be consciously aware of anything at all,....

The subcortical parts of the brain, however,....are more resistant to damage from lack of blood than the cerebrum is, and they sometimes hold out and continue functioning even when the cerebrum has been destroyed. Those...sustain your "vegetative" functions such as respiration, circulation, digestion, and metabolism. Let us suppose that this happens to you... The result is a human animal that is as much like you as anything could be without having a mind.

The animal is not comatose. Coma is a sleep-like state; but a human vegetable has periods in which.... It can respond to light and sound, but not in a purposeful way; it can move its eyes, but cannot follow objects consistently with them....

Neither is the animal "brain-dead," for those parts of its brain that maintain its vegetative functions remain fully intact. The patient (sic) is very much alive, at least in the biological sense in which oysters and oak trees are alive.

How can we be sure that the patient (sic) in this state has really lost all cognitive functions? there may be room for doubt. So imagine that you lapse into a persistent vegetative state *and* that as a result your higher cognitive functions are destroyed *and* that the loss is permanent. (THA, 7-8)

..... My question in the Vegetable Case is whether the human animal that results when the cerebrum is destroyed is strictly and literally you, or whether it is no more you than a statue erected after your death would be you. Do you come to be a human vegetable, or do you cease to exist...? (THA, 9)

Both among people and within folks, there are conflicting responses to the Vegetable Case. Of most interest for Olson, there's the reaction that, even at the Case's end, you'll still exist (albeit as a "human vegetable.")

When confronting a relevantly similar case right on the heels of the Vegetable example, we'll be pretty primed to respond to it, too, along a similarly Biological line.^v And, it's right on those heels that Olson offers us his Transplant Case:

...Imagine that an ingenious surgeon removes your cerebrum...and implants it into another head. ...Your cerebrum comes to be connected to that human being in just the way that it was once connected to the rest of you. ...; and so it is able to function properly inside its new head just as it once functioned inside yours.

The result is a human being who is psychologically more or less exactly like you. ... On the other hand, she does not remember anything that happened to the person into whose head your cerebrum was implanted, nor does she acquire anything of that person's character (at least at first).

The puzzle, as you have no doubt guessed, is what happens to you in this story (call it the "Transplant Case"). Are you the biologically living but empty-headed human being that has inherited your vegetative functions? Or are you the person who ends up with your cerebrum and your memories? (Or has the operation simply brought your existence to an end?) (THA, 9-10)

(Now, for such a Transplant Case to be most instructive, what's extracted from [the head of] the body must be fit for subserving what's central to mentality. But, as science seems to show, your upper brain, by itself, can't subserve conscious experience; rather, there must be some neural interaction between your upper and your lower brain. So, the presented example will be suppositionally enhanced; as may be safely done in the current context, we suppose this scientific appearance misleading and, in fact, your cerebrum's sufficient to subserve all your mentality.) Even though it's presented right after the Vegetable Case, most respond to the Transplant Case by thinking you are "the person who ends up with your cerebrum and your memories."^{vi}

With our responsive tendencies to Olson's two main cases being such a perplexingly messy batch of proclivities, there's much reason to think hard about the examples. What's more, we

have yet more reason to think hard when we ponder passages in W. R. Carter's valuable recent (1990) paper, "Why Personal Identity is Animal Identity," which boldly begins:

We start with two felines, Felix and Jefferson, say, who are treated by the same veterinarian. A bizarre surgical blunder occurs and Felix's brain winds up in Jefferson's head. The resulting cat, call him Felixson, *looks* for all the world like Jefferson but *behaves* exactly like Felix (and not at all like Jefferson). The situation is complicated by the fact that Felix's debrained body is provided with enough transplanted tissue [tissue that does not come from Jefferson] so that it continues to live and function in feline-like ways. (Let's call this cat Felixless.) We are confronted here by certain questions of feline identity. To my way of thinking, these questions have rather obvious answers. It is true that Felixless is (=) Felix. Accordingly, it is false that Felixson is (=) Felix. My guess is that this assessment of the matter will encounter little, if any, serious resistance. This is surprising (to me), since many people take an entirely different view of a similar situation involving human rather than feline subjects.^{vii}

As we'll eventually see, the questions Carter thinks "have rather obvious answers" are actually subtly difficult questions. Now, we'll see these related words from Carter's paper:

... a psychological continuity account of feline identity looks so utterly implausible. Why is this? Well, perhaps it is because it is clear (isn't it) that cats are (attributively) *animals*. ... Since the term "Felix" refers to the animal .., and the term "Felixless" refers to the animal .., there is no denying that Felix is identical with Felixless. Accordingly, Felix is not identical with Felixson. And why should the situation be different when we turn from feline identity to personal identity?

With at least some force, Carter *challenges* the thought that, in the Transplant Case, you are the being who ends up with your mentality, even as he *provides at least some* plausibility for the idea that (before getting new brain tissue) *you are* the (temporarily) mindless being that's inherited your vegetative functions, much as you (permanently) might be in the Vegetable Case.

Much more than favoring any particular Approach to ourselves, this section supports this importantly more general proposition: Whatever the right approach to the general conditions for the existence and persistence of Peter Unger, the personal sentient being, it will be, in all essentials, the same as the right approach for Felix Unger, the *nonpersonal* sentient being.

3. Thoughts and Concerns about Particular Sentient Beings: Avoiding Great Pain

Whatever else you may be, you must certainly be whatever it is that you think about when you think about *yourself*; if you're not *that*, you're nothing at all. Likewise, you must be whatever it is you *care* about when you care about *yourself*. On a most natural and central reading of these sentences, both are, of course, quite platitudinous. Yet, the second sentence, concerning your concern for yourself, might serve as a helpful reminder and guide, helpful toward our appreciating our deepest beliefs about ourselves. For, it may help us bear in mind these related sentences: When you truly care about yourself, then, whatever else may concern you, you must certainly care, and care very greatly, that *you'll not experience protracted excruciating pain*; when just *that* concern of yours is quite fully in force, it's from a *strictly egoistic* perspective that your concern flows. Conversely, and maybe most instructively, if there's someone that, from a strictly egoistic perspective, you *don't* care whether she'll experience such horrible great pain, then, as far as you can tell or believe, *that person isn't you*.

A concept of ourselves that comports well with these points concerning self-concern might be a philosophically adequate conception, as with, perhaps, a concept that's central to a Psychological Approach. By contrast, any concept that comports *poorly* with them, as with, perhaps, concepts central to a Biological Approach, can't be an adequate concept of ourselves.

The sensible thoughts just proposed may be sensibly generalized from us people to all sorts of sentient beings: So, flowing from a concern *for Oscar*, there might be no concern on your part whether a certain canine sentient being will feel great pain. But, then, as far as you can tell or believe, *that* sentient being *isn't Oscar*. And, any concept that comports poorly with *this* point, as *might* be true of any central to a Biological Approach, can't then be a philosophically adequate concept of Oscar, or of any canine sentient being.

Guided by this section's reflections, I'll look to use a "philosophical tool" first employed in ICV, the Avoidance of Future Great Pain Test.^{viii} Eventually, I'll apply it to Olson's Vegetable Case, or to a most suitable enlargement of that example, and to Carter's Feline Transplant Case, or to a most suitable enlargement of that related example. By the time all that's done, few should be friends of a Biological Approach to the existence and persistence of any sentient beings,

ourselves included, and many should favor a Psychological Approach. First, let's look at a case where it's easy to observe the test to be quite well employed.

To begin, suppose that, for no good reason, a bad surgeon replaces your heart with an artificial blood-pumper. About the person who has only such a plastic "heart," our central question is this: Is the person emerging from this operation *you*? For a most convincing answer to the question, we may employ our Test: With the choice flowing fully from your purely egoistic concern, will you choose to (have yourself) suffer *considerable pain* right before the operation takes place, if your *not* taking the bad hit up front will mean that, soon after the procedure's over, the person emerging from the operation then will suffer *far greater pain*? Yes; of course, you will. This response indicates that, as your strongest beliefs run, *you'll be* that person. Now, I'll try to use our Test to make progress with this essay's philosophically far more interesting questions.

Following Sydney Shoemaker's early work on the subject, in recent decades the literature on personal identity has seen many cases where there's the exchange of two people's bodies.^{ix} Much as was done in ICV, let's consider such a case involving you and, not someone qualitatively quite unlike you, but, rather, your precisely similar twin.^x At this case's end, do *you* still exist? And, if so, *who are you*? Toward answering these questions reasonably, we may employ the Avoidance of Future Great Pain Test. Indeed, we may employ it twice over.

First, about the person who ends up with your original brain and a new body, we ask this question: With the choice flowing fully from your purely egoistic concern, will you choose to (have yourself) suffer considerable pain right before this case's wild processes begin if your *not* taking the bad hit up front will mean that, soon after all its processes are complete, the person then with your brain, and thus with your mind, will suffer *far greater pain*? Yes, of course, you will. Though not completely conclusive, this strongly indicates that, as we most deeply believe, throughout this case you're the person with your brain.^{xi}

Second, and yet more tellingly, we ask the parallel question: With the choice flowing fully from your purely egoistic concern, will you choose to (have yourself) suffer considerable pain

right before this case's wild processes begin if your *not* taking the bad hit up front will mean that, soon after all its processes are complete, the person then with your body, but with your twin's mentally productive brain, then will suffer *far greater pain*? Not at all; from an egoistic basis, that's a *poor* choice. Though this response might not be absolutely decisive, it's quite conclusive enough. So, we conclude, well enough, that *you haven't even the slightest belief that here you're the being (with your healthy old body) who's inherited your vegetative biological functioning.*

At least as regards our commonsense view of ourselves, about the general conditions of our existence and persistence, this negative response may be indicating a very bad fate for the Biological Approach, in any of its versions. As well, it may also be indicating doom for any view on which the survival of our *bodies* is central to our own survival.

With parallel moves, we may see some indications that a Biological Approach might be no better for canine sentient beings than it is for personal sentient beings: We may see this with a slight variant on the case just considered, in which each occurrence of you is replaced by Oscar, each occurrence of your precise twin is replaced by an occurrence of his twin, and so on. About the canine being who ends up with Oscar's original brain and a new body, we ask this question: With the choice flowing fully from your *concern for Oscar*, will you choose to have him suffer considerable pain right before this case's wild processes begin if *his not* taking the bad hit up front will mean that, toward the end, the being then with his brain, and his mentality, will suffer *far greater pain*? Yes, of course, you will. And, this strongly indicates that, as we most deeply believe, here he'll be the being with his brain. Second, and again far more tellingly, we ask the parallel question: With the choice flowing fully from your *concern for him*, will you have him suffer *considerable pain* near the start if *his not* taking the bad hit up front will mean that, toward the end, the being then with his body, but not his mind, then will suffer *far greater pain*? Not at all. So, again well enough, we can conclude that *you haven't even the slightest belief that Oscar is the being (with his healthy old canine body) who has inherited Oscar's vegetative biological functioning.*

4. Can There Be an ENORMOUS Separation of Strict Survival and Relevant Concern?

For clear thinking about (our deepest beliefs about) the conditions of our existence and persistence, the points observed in the preceding section are, I think, of great importance: Where there is a being that's the proper object of your full-fledged egoistic concern, just there you yourself will be. And, most crucially, where there's no such "properly protected" being, there's no being that's you. But, some able philosophers have even so much as denied that importance, and many, I think, may fail to appreciate it.^{xii} Why?

In recent thinking about the relation between our transtemporal identity and our egoistic concern, there's much confusion engendered, I believe, from encounters with some salient and seductive hypothetical examples. Most salient among them may be a certain physically robust case of "symmetrical fission." Toward dispelling the confusion, and toward furthering clarity, let's now most thoughtfully encounter just such an example.

Suppose, now, that each half of your brain can do all that the whole does, as far as subserving mentality goes (and, we may now add, as far as sustaining biology goes.) Further, suppose that, when we extract your brain from your body, and we nicely slice your brain in two, we'll have two new people, each relevantly just like you were right before this two-sided fission occurs. (Each of them may then be given a new body, each precisely like the old was at the time of extraction.) Further still, we'll agree that you're not either of the two who are so new.

From a rational concern for yourself, how much should you care about each of the two resulting people? Well, as we've agreed, neither is you; so, from just that concern, you shouldn't care a fig. But, then, closely related to your purely egoistic concern, you might have other rational attitudes that are quite small and natural extensions of self-concern. And, then, we may ask: Flowing from at least some few of these related concerned attitudes, how much should you care about one of your fission descendants?

As it has seemed to many philosophers, you should care just as much as, even in the ordinary case of your own day to day survival, you today should care for yourself tomorrow. And, as it has seemed to some of these many, the salient lesson to be learned from that first thought is this

second proposition: Questions regarding someone's strict survival can come apart from questions regarding his egoistic concern, and also his closely related concerns, quite *as far as you please*.

Even should all of the prior paragraph hold true, a thought that seems nearly as absurd as it's extravagant, there still might be no reason whatever to think that these questions can come apart so enormously that, from concerns much like purely egoistic attitudes, it may be natural, or rational, for us to care about beings with whom we have no substantial mental connection. But, what's needed to give some plausibility to the Biological Approach is precisely some reason to think just that. And, as it certainly seems, the prospects here are as bleak as can be.

Suppose that, flowing from your own egoistic concern, or even from any relevantly small extension thereof, you haven't even the least concern whether a certain being will experience terrible pain. Well, while that being might then be a certain horse, perhaps somewhere in Australia, or even a certain person, perhaps a young girl in Africa, one thing of which we can be quite confident is that, as far as you know or believe, *that being isn't you*. Perfectly parallel points hold for other sentient beings: Suppose that, flowing from your concern for *Oscar*, you haven't even the least concern whether a certain being will experience terrible pain. Now, while that being might then be the President of France, we can be quite certain that, as far as you know or believe, *that being isn't Oscar*.

5. A Complementary Pain Test Confirms Our Avoidance of Great Pain Test

Because we're hardly omniscient, and we're not even close to being perfectly logical or rational, it's good to see that, as a check on our results with the Avoidance of Great Pain Test, we may appropriately employ a logically related test, even a *complementary* test, and observe the results that then obtain. Just so, we'll now look to apply, most relevantly, a philosophical tool that may well be called the *Sparing from Future Great Pain Test*.^{xiii}

So, let's return to consider the body-exchange (or, as the Biological Approach would have it, the brain-exchange) between Oscar and his precisely similar twin. As we've supposed, at this

case's end there'll be one canine being with Oscar's original brain and mind, though little of his biological structures and processes, and there'll be another with another canine being's original brain-based mentality, and a great deal of Oscar's biological structures and their continuing processes. About all of that, you've never had even the least choice or influence.

In application to such a nicely relevant case, our Sparing from Future Great Pain Test directs that, always to be flowing (as closely as possible) from your concern for Oscar, your choice is to be just this choice: Shortly after awakening from the operations just envisioned, one of the two canine beings will experience much excruciating pain and the other will be spared from feeling even any pain at all. You are to choose, perhaps even before the operations are performed, which of the resulting beings suffers such great pain and which of the canines is spared. Very rationally, you will choose for the canine with Oscar's original brain, and Oscar's canine mind, to be spared, and for the torture to go to the other resulting canine. For, your reasoning, evidently, is every bit as appropriate as it's simple: The former canine is Oscar, the being about whom you're here so especially concerned; the latter is another sentient being.^{xiv}

With simple variations, we may strengthen the probative value of our Sparing Test. For example, we may suppose that your choice is between (1) sparing the being with Oscar's old brain the infliction of severe pain for a certain significant period and letting the being with his old body suffer *far more* severe pain for a *far greater* period and (2) sparing the being with his old body that *far worse* severe pain and letting the one with his old brain suffer that *far less bad* pain. With the concern being for Oscar, this great imbalance of pain makes no difference; just as surely as before, you choose (1), sparing the one with Oscar's brain-based mind. So, this now seems very clear: It's just that canine being that, as far as you really believe, is actually Oscar.

Now, if we were perfectly logical and rational, it would be a foregone conclusion that these responses with the Sparing Test would comport with those previously elicited with our Avoidance Test. But, of course, we're not perfectly logical or rational. So, while the observed agreement was at least somewhat to be expected, it wasn't a foregone conclusion. Thus, the

results obtained with our truly complementary test confirm those obtained with our previous philosophical tool. So, in our inquiry, we'll employ them both.

6. Clear Moral Thinking about Particular Sentient Beings

Early on, I said that, just as much as for engagement with our central prudential thoughts and concerns, a philosophically adequate concept of ourselves must be well suited for engagement with our morality. In a brief treatment of the issue, I'll show why that should be so.

As the progress of our project suggests strongly, many of our moral thoughts regarding you and me will regard, just as well, Oscar and Felix. Then, at a bare minimum, an adequate concept of ourselves must engage morality in the way that's well done, as well, by a philosophically adequate concept of a particular sentient being.

Suppose that I've solemnly promised *you*, a moral agent, to look out for (the well-being of) your son, Al, who's another moral agent, and also to look out for (the well-being of) your sentient canine pet, Oscar, who's not a moral agent. Then, in the normal run of things, I'll have incurred a moral obligation, first, to look out for Al, and, second, to look out for Oscar. Let's focus on this second obligation.

Going philosophically hypothetical, suppose that some dastardly super-scientists have produced a precise duplicate of Oscar, one Oscarnew, and, shortly thereafter, they've taken Oscar's brain and nicely placed it in Oscarnew's debrained body, and vice versa, with the philosophically expected result. Finally, we suppose that they force, on me, this instance of our Sparing Test. I must choose between (1) having terrible pain inflicted on the being with Oscar's original brain - still subserving Oscar's mind - in Oscarnew's original body and sparing from pain the being with Oscarnew's brain - still subserving Oscarnew's mind - in Oscar's body and (2) having terrible pain inflicted on the being with Oscarnew's brain in Oscar's body and sparing the being with Oscar's brain in Oscarnew's body. Flowing from my obligation to keep my promise to you, what should I do? As we deeply believe, I morally must choose (2) over (1). What does

that suggest? Contrary to the Biological Approach, it suggest that, as we deeply believe, Oscar will be where his original brain is still subserving his mind.

As it is here with Oscar, so it is with AI. And, so it will be with us, too. As with any sentient beings, a philosophically adequate concept of ourselves, one well suited for engagement with morality, must be, primarily and essentially, a psychological conception. So, as those suitably sensitive to moral matters should agree, a Psychological Approach is very far superior to a Biological Approach even for the likes of Oscar and Felix, let alone for you and me.

7. Properly Painful Problems with Human Vegetables, and with Feline Vegetables

As I'm suspecting, by now most will indeed agree that, at least for such personal sentient beings as ourselves, a Psychological Approach is quite as appropriate as a Biological Approach is irrelevant. But, even if there's very widespread agreement on the matter, it's still well worth resolving, I think, some problems, or puzzlement, whose treatment we've deferred. Among this unfinished business, perhaps the most salient task is to provide a satisfactory treatment for Olson's intriguing Vegetable Case. Anyhow, to that task, we'll now turn.

As with other examples relevant to our central topic, for a treatment that's revealing we should use one of our Pain Tests. But, as a being in persistent vegetative state hasn't any capacity to feel any pain, how can we apply even our Avoidance of Pain Test? Initially at least, that seems a tall order. As things turn out, the job may be done rather well.

Toward that end, we make these suppositions: Within the next month, you'll have just such a horrible temporary heart failure that, as your brain will be deprived of oxygen for ten minutes, your cerebral cortex will die of anoxia; consequently, you'll "become a human vegetable." As you also know, there'll then be extracted, from the head of the "vegetative animal," its dead (upper) brain. And, into the continuously living "debrained body," there'll be well implanted a suitable living (upper) brain: Perhaps even coming into existence via a "statistical miracle," but, in any case, this will be a brain made of matter quite distinct from any that ever served toward constituting you. At the same time, this implant will be precisely similar to your (upper) brain,

as it was when last it subserved your mentality. By the end of this sequence, there'll be a person with your original body, who's inherited your biology, though there'll be nobody who's inherited your mentality. While this person's mind will be precisely similar to yours, in its last moments of existence, it will be a numerically different normal mind. As with anyone with a normal mind, this person can certainly suffer terrible pain.

With such suitable suppositions made, there's an Aptly Enlarged Vegetable Case. And, with this Enlarged Case, there's ready to hand, I think, a revealing employment of our Avoidance of Future Great Pain Test: From your egoistic concerns, at the beginning you are to choose between (1) your suffering some significant pain, before a human vegetable's in the situation, so that, near the sequence's end, the person with the new (upper) brain suffers no pain at all and (2) your suffering no early pain and having it that, near the end, that person suffers terrible torture. Rationally, you choose (2) over (1). This choice shows that, as far as you know or believe, you *won't* be the entity that's inherited your biology.

It's still a "logical possibility," let's agree, that, after the anoxia but before the implantation of a new living upper brain, you were an insensate human vegetable. Then, just with that vegetable's receiving just such a new brain, you ceased to exist. But, really, is any of that even the least bit plausible? Are we really to believe that, though it's possible for you to come to have *no* mind, what's impossible is for such a mindless *you* to survive your coming to *have a mind*? Such a suggestion as that, I'll suggest, is quite an absurd idea.

From Human Vegetable Cases, there's really no case to be made for a Biological Approach to *ourselves*. And, from Feline Vegetable Cases, as may happen with my sentient Felix, there's nothing to be gained for a Biological Approach to *nonpersonal sentient* beings, as an Aptly Enlarged Feline Vegetable Case can help us easily see.

Sensibly, we may extrapolate from our recent experiences: The more we're free from confusions about sentient beings, saliently including ourselves, the less there'll even seem to be said for a Biological Approach to beings that must have minds.^{xv} Nor will there seem anything significantly favoring a "Bodily Approach" to ourselves, or to nonpersonal mental others. Now,

without going hypothetical in a way that's utterly wild, it may be impossible to take a case with a *completely dead* human, wholly devoid of life as well as mind, and to enlarge it so that our Pain Tests can be revealingly applied. But, so what: If a *living* mindless human body won't ever be one of us, and won't even ever subserve one of us, a *dead* mindless body will hardly do better. And, again, what's true of you and me also holds for Oscar and Felix.

By this point, we've seen more than enough, I think, to do a good job with what may be the sole remaining salient piece of unfinished business, namely, the provision of a satisfactory treatment for Carter's Feline Transplant Case. For, what does this case involve, if not a feline vegetable, an insensate Felixless obtained from the sentient Felix, by the extraction of that feline being's (upper) brain? According to Carter, though he has no mentality at all, still Felixless is (=) Felix, because the mindless entity's inherited the biology that supported, or subserved, the sentient being. But, Felixless really isn't Felix, as our recent reasoning revealed.

We've just taken good care of what might well be called "the harder of the two main halves" of Carter's Transplant Case. The easier half concerns what we are to make of Carter's Felixson, a feline being who results from transplanting Felix's brain into the debrained body resulting from extracting a feline brain from one Jefferson; at the case's start, this Jefferson is another normal feline sentient being, who's wholly distinct from Felix. In either of two ways, our Avoidance Test can show that (as far as we know or believe) Felixson is Felix (and he's not Jefferson.) To the most energetic reader, I leave all that as an exercise.

8. People and Seople

On our "scientifically informed" commonsense view of things, your psychology is realized in, or it's at least subserved by, your brain: If there's someone else who's physically precisely similar to you, then *his* mentality will be realized only in *his* brain and *yours* will be subserved only by *yours*. There will be this numerical difference of the two mentalities, of the two minds, even if the distinct brains that subserve the two are precisely similar in every detail. And, if your

mentality ceases to exist, then you yourself will cease to exist, even though your "duplicate" may continue to exist.

Equally on this commonsense view, though quite completely against the "vivisectionist" view of Descartes, the brain of Oscar, your beloved canine pet, realizes *Oscar's* psychology, or at least it subserves the mentality of that canine sentient being: If there's a canine who's physically precisely similar to Oscar, and wholly distinct from Oscar, there will be a numerical difference of the two minds, even if the canine mentalities are qualitatively quite the same. And, if his mentality ceases to exist, then Oscar himself will cease to exist, even though his "duplicate" may continue to exist.

Now, even while our commonsense view has these parallels be quite deep commonalities, our common language might lack a sortal common noun that serves nicely to highlight them for us, so that, for such central issues as this essay's main questions, we're prompted to take an essentially parallel approach to all sentient beings, us people being just some among many. In what's meant to be a sensibly progressive spirit, let me introduce a new English sortal noun, "seron," whose meaning is the same as the phrase "sentient being," and whose most colloquial plural is "seople." (As well as having such new nouns, we may have correlative new words, saliently including new quantifier words. For example, even if "everyone" doesn't include, in its proper reference, Oscar and Felix, we may have "everyane" - pronounced EVERYWANE - properly include them, just as properly as it will include you and me.)

With these terms, we may progressively express propositions that, even as they concern our main topics, feature centrally in our commonsense view of things: Every earthly seron, and not just every earthly person, has both a body and a mind. And, while it's *not* true that an earthly seron will exist just exactly in case her body exists, it *is* true that any seron at all, whether earthly or not, will exist when, and only when, her mind exists. Following from the foregoing, some such sentences as these should be treated more as commonplace thoughts than contentious ideas, both by materialists and by commonsensical dualists: If there's only a barely developed organic body extant, and there's not yet any mind even so much as barely subserved by the body,

as with an early fetus, then, in such a mentally insignificant situation, there's really no person existing, neither personal nor even nonpersonal. [In ICV I left it as an open question whether there might have been an (earlier) time when I wasn't a person and, even, when I lacked all capacity for thought and feeling. (5-6) In THA Olson argues that, given my book's main views, there's no good way for me to have us people, or any people, be (identical with) any such wholly mindless things. (81-85) Agreeing now with Olson, in the present essay I no longer leave that question open; on my present position, a more complete view, I never was any mindless early fetus, nor was sentient Oscar ever any mindless canine fetus.] By contrast with such wholly mindless early episodes, if there's a more developed body that's subserving a mind, even a quite rudimentary mind, then there'll be a person. And, if it comes to pass that there's only our person's body extant, with the mind no longer existing, then this person will no longer exist.

When a person is alive and well, what's the relation between the person himself and, on the other hand, his body?

On what I take to be a pretty appealing substantial dualist view, but a view that might be at least as troubling as it's appealing, a person's body will causally support, and subserve, the person's immaterial mind. What's more, and what may be metaphysically even a bit more basic, just when providing just such support, the person's body will support the immaterial being that's the person himself. Further, Oscar won't have any spatial extension and, perhaps, that immaterial being won't even have any spatial location. In ways we might never well understand, immaterial Oscar may be, nonetheless, quite directly affected by, and he may quite directly affect, certain physical entities, perhaps certain parts of a certain brain.

On what I take to be a pretty appealing materialist view, but perhaps also a view as troubling as it's appealing, a person and his body will be spatially coincident entities; with each in the very same space as the other at the very same time, the very same matter will serve to constitute each of the two distinct material entities. So, even as Oscar may now be alive and well, he and his body will be different material complexes, though each is composed of exactly the same matter, and each occupies precisely the same space. On a pretty commonsensical materialist view, a

rather plausible reckoning of such ordinary entities will have that be so, even if, perhaps, that reckoning is hardly free of difficulties. How, or why, will that be so? As with you and me, Oscar's *persistence conditions* differ from those of his body. To see what that rather technical sentence says, I'll aim to display its main implications, in the next section, while providing the sentence with intuitive support.

9. A Person and His Body Are Distinct Entities

Even if it subserves mentality, as it now does, your brain is just one of several salient organs in your body that, together with various other bodily parts, serve to constitute the body as a whole. Accordingly, whether your body's dead or alive, in this regard, at least, the relation between your brain and your body is very like that between your heart and your body, and very like that obtaining between your liver and that whole human body. It's no surprise, then, that, if any single one of these organs is removed from the bodily whole, and then is even annihilated, your body will still exist. Of course, the same holds for other person's bodies, as with Oscar's.

Along with some philosophically familiar thoughts, and some ideas here previously presented, those intuitive propositions suggest a certain pair of cases. While each example is but a slight variant on the other, the lesson that one suggests is, in an obvious way, quite the opposite of, and quite a nice complement of, the lesson we may learn from the other.

Continuing to employ the suppositions that have served us so well so far, we'll start with the Brain Explosion Case: Right out of sentient Oscar's skull, some strangely fanatical scientists remove his (upper) brain, and they place it in the philosophically familiar stimulatory vat. While in this vat, that living brain will subserve just as rich a stream of conscious experience as ever it did when in the person's head. At the same time, and still lying on a laboratory table, (the rest of) Oscar's body, as it's placed on a highly effective life-support system, remains alive, though it can't, of course, subserve mentality.^{xvi} For a while all is pretty peaceful, until an exploding bomb destroys the brain in the vat, the vat itself, and even the building in which the vat is housed. In this explosion, the matter that served to compose Oscar's brain is so utterly wrenched

apart, and the tiny bits are so fully intermingled with so much other dust from the explosion, that there's not even any significant chance of anything like a relevant reversal ever occurring. Meanwhile, (the rest of) your canine person's body remains intact, and even alive.

At the end of this Brain Explosion Case, Oscar, the salient person, no longer exists. (On a materialistic metaphysic, and on plausible forms of dualism, that will be so.) At the same time, Oscar's body continues to exist. On the most relevant understanding of the terms employed, it's most reasonable to accept both sentences. So, Oscar's body can survive the termination of Oscar himself.

It's time to turn to the complementary example, the Body Explosion Case. From the example's start right up to the time when "all is pretty peaceful," things are just as in the previous case, with Oscar's brain in a vat in one area and, at a distance, his living body on a lab table. Then, an exploding bomb destroys (the rest of) the body on the table, the table itself, and the whole lab building. In this explosion, the matter that served to compose (the rest of) Oscar's body is so utterly wrenched apart, and the tiny bits so fully intermingled with so much other dust, that there's not even any significant chance of anything like a relevant reversal. Meanwhile, your canine person's brain continues to subserve his mind.

At the end of this Body Explosion Case, the salient person's body no longer exists. At the same time, Oscar himself continues to exist. On the most relevant understanding of our terms, Oscar can survive the termination of Oscar's body.

Now, if Oscar could survive the cessation of his body, but Oscar's body couldn't survive Oscar's own cessation, then, while we should think the two were different, we might well think that, while Oscar himself was a genuine entity, his body had some lesser ontological status. And, in such an event, perhaps we shouldn't think that, with Oscar and his body, we have two distinct entities. But, as we saw just before, Oscar's body *can* survive Oscar's own cessation, just as Oscar can survive his body's cessation. So, apparently, we do quite well to think that, inasmuch as each has persistence conditions so utterly different from the other's, sentient Oscar is one being and, though spatially and materially coincident with him, Oscar's body is quite another

entity. Apparently and intuitively, even if we should accept a most materialistic version of our commonsense metaphysic, we should think that much to be true.

Finessing Questions about Materially Coincident Entities: At least to my mind, sometimes it's puzzling, to put the point mildly, how there could be two quite different entities each composed of the very same matter, in the very same space, at the very same time, and not just one entity that we may think of in two quite different ways. But, for two related reasons, this paper's not the place to dwell on any such puzzle.

First, and as was stated at its outset, we're here just assuming that, for the most part, our "scientifically informed" commonsense view of the world is true. And, in dwelling on our puzzle, we might well be calling into question what's here our working hypothesis, rather than seeing what work we can do within the compass of what seems the accepted view.

Second, and as is familiar in philosophy, the puzzle about the possibility of materially coincident entities is a quite general puzzle, hardly peculiar to questions about embodied people and their bodies: In illustration, consider a certain ball, we'll call it "Barry," and a certain spherical piece of brass, we'll call it "Patty," each composed of the very same brass, in the very same place, throughout all the time of their existence. (The brazen alloy first comes to exist in the very form in which it composes Patty and Barry and, later, it ceases to exist suddenly, suddenly composing neither.) Yet, even as Barry and Patty have quite different persistence conditions, there are here, it seems, two quite distinct entities. So, on the one side, if the brass were forced through a wire extruder, that brass would come to compose a long thin brass wire and no ball at all. In such an event, it seems, we'd have the same *piece* of brass as before, and Patty would still exist, but Barry wouldn't exist. And, on the other side, we might have gradually replaced our ball's brass, bit by tiny bit, by congruous bits of gold, widely scattering all our brass. In such a very different event, it seems, we'd have the same *ball* as before, and Barry would still exist, but our piece of brass, our Patty, wouldn't still exist.

As is proper with this quite modestly ambitious essay, we leave for other inquiries such a general problem as the puzzle about the possibility of materially coincident entities. As is also

proper, we set aside other puzzles, more or less related, that may similarly seem to call into question, more or less effectively, our commonsense view of the world.

10. Reference and Existence, Appearance and Reality

For what's really a very bad reason, many of my paper's points might be denied by philosophers, perhaps especially by materialists, who may be unduly impressed by what sometimes seem plain expressions of common sense in ordinary discourse. For example, after my mind no longer exists and there's only my living body in a vegetative state, someone may point at what's in that state and say, apparently with complete propriety, "There's Peter Unger." Doesn't that serve to indicate that, even if my mind no longer exists, I can still exist? And, isn't that a strong point in favor of a Biological Approach to my existence and persistence?

Well, quite the same may be done, apparently, when there's only my dead body in the situation. So, such apparently ordinary and proper episodes won't provide any strong points, it seems clear, in favor of a Biological Approach to me. But, then, mightn't they provide a strong point in favor of a Bodily Approach to my existence and persistence, on which I may still exist not only without my mind, or any mind, but also without my biological life, or any such life? No; it does not.

Very often, we refer to one entity, conveniently, obliquely and indirectly, by more directly referring to another, with which the first is, especially in the context of the current discourse, readily associated. Now, sometimes the discrepancy between the two referents is blatantly obvious. This happens when we say of a bus driver that she's over fifteen feet high, and unable to get through a certain tunnel, referring not only to her but, less directly and more truthfully, to the bus that she drives. Now, when the discrepancies are that blatant, there's little tendency to take our direct remark, about the driver herself, to be a literal statement that's really true; rather, it's only some implied statements, like the statement that a certain bus is over fifteen feet high, that we take to be true.

Other times, however, the discrepancy is less blatant. That happens, I'll suggest, with (standard uses of) sentences like "As Uncle Joe is dead, we should get him off the floor and out of the house, so that we can put some nice big potted plant right where he is" and "As Oscar is dead, we should get him off the floor and out of the house, so that we can put some nice big potted plant right where he is." Though not so blatantly obvious, in these sentence's closing clauses there's reference to more than just the relevant people themselves; rather indirectly, there may be a reference to the people's bodies, or to their remains, or to both of the foregoing, or to yet something else that's fit for spatial removal. And, while the standardly expressed statement about the moving of the people themselves might not be true, there may then be such suitable implied statements, about the moving of their bodies, and about the moving of their remains, that are perfectly true. And, the discrepancy just stressed will be made yet more evident when we observe such closely related sentences as "Billions of years after Uncle Joe's death, he'll be interstellar dust" and "Billions of years after Oscar's death, he'll be interstellar dust."

What is more, paralleling the "apparent facts of reference" regarding ourselves, there are such apparent facts regarding our bodies. Thus, after I'm dead, you may point at my corpse and say "There's Peter Unger's body;" and, not only may what you say be in perfect conversational order, but, as well, it may be perfectly true. Now, a sentence like "Billions of years after it decays, Unger's body will be interstellar dust" also looks to be in perfect order. But, when standardly uttering such an orderly sentence, will you be saying what's true? Of course, not.

Now, suppose that, after I die, my corpse is placed in a spaceship and, when the ship is somewhere between Mars and Jupiter, the spaceship explodes, along with all its salient contents, including my body. Pointing at an apt place between Mars and Jupiter, when night next comes you may say "There's Peter Unger's body;" and, what you say may be in perfect conversational order. But, is what you say really true; does my body really still exist? Not a chance. By contrast, it might well be that my *remains* still exist and, mainly between Mars and Jupiter, they're widely scattered.

Over a wide range of referential discourse, what may first look to be plain facts may come to look, much more realistically, to be nothing factual at all.

11. Seople (Conceptually) Can Survive the Loss of Their Biological Lives

Absent sufficient psychological continuity, biological continuity isn't sufficient for the continued existence of sentient beings, neither people, like you and me, nor nonpersonal seople like Oscar and Felix. But, is biological continuity *necessary* for our survival? Well, insofar as it's needed for subserving the serson's mind it may be necessary. But, then, this biology's needed only causally, or quasi-causally; it's not most basically necessary, as the persistence of the serson's mind is necessary, for the survival of the sentient being.

As a philosophically adequate concept of the sentient canine who is Oscar centers on his sentience, it follows that the concept won't place any biological requirements on Oscar, provided only that there's no entailment from his sentience to anything biological. And, as it certainly seems, there isn't any such entailment. To confirm this appearance, it may be useful to reflect on an example that's just an adaptation, to the canine situation, of a case concerning people that, perhaps a bit too timidly, I offered in ICV. (122) So, suppose that very gradually, over the course of a year, the neurons of Oscar's brain are replaced by inorganic entities, but always in such a way that, from one day to the next, there's precious little effect on his thought and feeling. (If the supposed proposition conflicts with actual natural laws, then, suppose that there's a change in the laws so that, in consequence, there's no longer any conflict.) During the year, there's a serson whose brain, partly natural and organic, and partly artificial and inorganic, continues to subserve Oscar's mind, including his conscious thoughts and feelings. By the end of this year, there's a serson whose entirely inorganic brain, we're supposing, still subserves the nonpersonal mind of sentient Oscar. Finally, suppose that this mentally productive brain is transplanted into a suitable inorganic "canine" body, so that the nonbiological whole is able to engage with his environment, and experience this active engagement, just as effectively, and just as vividly, as the original organic Oscar ever did.

From your concern for Oscar himself, supposing that also to continue, you choose lesser early pain for Oscar, even though he's then organic, rather than much greater later pain to be inflicted on the inorganic being we've just been supposing. As this indicates, we take this later being to be the very same sentient being that was sentient Oscar at the case's start; though he's no longer biologically alive, your nonpersonal person survives.

12. Are There ANY Ordinary Entities that CAN'T Survive Losing Their Biological Lives?

On our ordinary metaphysic, many of the things we recognize are in fact alive; they all share the property of *being alive*, we may say, where that property's understood to be a purely biological attribute, a property without any psychological implications. And, among these living entities, there are many that, so far as we know and believe, haven't even the least capacity for thought or experience. These insensate ordinary entities include many organisms, as with a tree outside my window that we may conveniently call *Trudy*, as well as many that are far from ever being organisms, as with a skin cell of yours that we may call *Sylvia*.

As has happened with ever so many trees, some day *Trudy* will die. When that happens, we may agree, *Trudy* will no longer be alive; but, will *Trudy* no longer exist? On our commonsense metaphysic, at least, it seems that *Trudy* may still exist, even as, on this common view, there may exist, on earth right now, very many dead trees that were once alive. (Now, when a dead tree undergoes a great deal of decay, and almost all its matter becomes widely dispersed, then, in the typical case, at least, the tree will no longer exist. So, should *all that* happen to *Trudy*, and not just the cessation of her (biological) life, then *Trudy* will no longer exist. And, should an exploding bomb blow our living *Trudy* sky high, as we lately imagined happened with Oscar's living body, then, again, *Trudy* will no longer exist. But, then, apparently, it will not be simply by ending *Trudy's* (biological) life that the bomb will end *Trudy's* existence.) Perhaps it might be that, on our common metaphysic, *Trudy's* being alive isn't essential to *Trudy's* existence, no more than it's essential to the continued existence of Oscar's body that it remain alive.

As has happened with ever so many cells, some day Sylvia will die. When that happens, Sylvia will no longer be alive, we may agree; but, will Sylvia no longer exist? Perhaps it might be that, on our commonsense metaphysic, Sylvia will still exist, even as it seems that, on your feet right now, there really are many dead cells that were once alive.

Without having confidence in the proposed propositions, I've suggested some thoughts for the serious consideration of contemporary philosophers. Continuing to assume our commonsense metaphysic is generally correct, I'll just as neutrally propose a few further propositions.

First, there's this quite general statement: With *being alive* not essential even for the likes of Trudy and Sylvia, there *aren't any* ordinary things, or things (of a sort) ordinarily recognized by us, for which having that property is crucial to their existence.

Second, and more cautiously, there's this more specific statement: It's not essential to the continued existence of any *animals* that they continue to be alive.

For the moment, let's suppose that this second proposition is true. Then, even if it may be easy to distinguish conceptually between sentient Oscar and his body, it might be impossible to distinguish between Oscar's body, which might also bear Oscar's name, and a certain canine animal, which might *also* be an Oscar. So, then, it just might be that, while there's one Oscar who's so much as a sentient being, there's another, materially coincident with him, that's both a canine animal and a canine body. On the other hand, it may still be possible to distinguish between Oscar the canine body and Oscar the canine animal, even if, as we're supposing, neither need be alive. Then, there'll be (at least) three materially coincident Oscars, the person, the animal and the body. Sometimes inclined even toward this somewhat suspicious last alternative, I leave further thinking on these matters to future investigations.

13. Maintaining an Adequate Philosophical Perspective on Ourselves

When attempting ambitious philosophical work, we may fail to maintain an adequate philosophical perspective: For example, we may come to think that, when properly concerned

for ourselves, what we should be most concerned for are certain bodies, or animals, or organisms, that may have not even the least capacity for any thought or feeling at all. Far from bettering our understanding of ourselves, we've then quite lost sight of ourselves. To better our understanding, we must, at the very least, maintain an adequate philosophical perspective on ourselves. And, for that, we must continue to think of ourselves as being, most essentially, thinking and feeling individuals.^{xvii}

NOTES

ⁱ In ICV, see pages 212-217 Henceforth, ICV's numbers will be (bracketed) in the text.

ⁱⁱ Owing largely to considerations concerning agency and the will, I'm now far more inclined toward a substantial dualism than when I wrote ICV and when, a couple of years later, I replied to a prominent dualist, Richard Swinburne, in a Book Symposium on ICV; see Swinburne (1992) and Unger (1992) Detailing these considerations would be the work of another essay, much longer than the present paper. Due to the complex considerations, I'm now *at least somewhat* more inclined toward *any* view on which I'm not wholly constituted of parts each ontologically more basic than myself. So, it's important to me now that, for the most part, this paper's thoughts comport well with very many metaphysical conceptions.

ⁱⁱⁱ THA, pages 16-17 [As with ICV, often THA's page numbers will be (bracketed) in the text.] Though failing to notice the intriguingly allied work of W. R. Carter, Olson does usefully observe on page 19 that, in recent decades, such a biological view, or a position much like his, has been advocated by at least these other able authors: Michael Ayers, Paul F. Snowdon, Judith J. Thomson, Bernard A. O. Williams, and Peter van Inwagen. Yet, on that very page, Olson says, "The Biological Approach has been strangely neglected in the literature (sic) on personal identity." If, along with the five philosophers he there notes, we count Olson himself, who'd already published several papers to this effect, and Carter, with even more such papers then published, we find at least seven able and active advocates in the recent literature. (Mentions of their relevant works constitute most of the present paper's References.) By my standards, this Approach has been *very* strangely neglected!

^{iv} The Vegetable Case is first presented on pages 7-9, the Transplant Case on 9-11

^v Here, I may well rehearse these words from page 92 of my (1996): "Long examined by psychologists, but longer ignored by philosophers, the response someone makes to a given example can be greatly influenced by (her memory of) responses made to cases previously

encountered. And, since folks want their responses to seem consistent, often the influence is greatest when the present case seems "essentially the same" as the just previous example."

^{vi} Though it seems recently to have gone into a great and welcome decline, at least for several decades and right up through the 1980s, all too many philosophers have championed the view that, when thinking about hypothetical cases that are more than just quite modestly hypothetical, we'll be (almost) doomed to promote far more confusion than philosophical insight. Toward showing the prominence of that protracted pessimism, on page 200 of his (1984) *Reasons and Persons*, Derek Parfit presents this passage from W. V. Quine (1972): "The method of science fiction has its uses in philosophy, but ... I wonder whether the limits of the method are properly heeded. To seek what is "logically required" for sameness of person under unprecedented circumstances is to suggest that words have some logical force beyond what our past needs have invested them with." But, such very wholesale pessimism has no real basis. Indeed, soon after offering the quote from Quine, Parfit makes quite a good case for the truth that there's at least as much to be lost from a great aversion to using far-fetched cases as from a dogged reliance on such examples.

Let me close this note with the observation that in my (1996) I give a great deal of thought, and space, to making the case that, though very far from always, quite often our responses to cases, including even actual cases, do more toward engendering confusion than providing instruction. So, I'm no friend of an *uncritical reliance* on cases, not even on *actual* cases.

^{vii} For the quoted opening passage, Carter (1990) has two notes; the first just specifies salient ways in which Felix and Jefferson are qualitatively different, and the second just says what I've above placed in [square brackets]. Right after the quoted material, Carter places in display a quote from page 78 of Sydney Shoemaker's contribution to Sydney Shoemaker and Richard Swinburne (1984), rightly acknowledging Shoemaker's seminal influence for our topics.

viii In ICV, it's first used in section 10 of chapter 1. Much later, in "How Presumptive Tests for Survival Beliefs May be Improved," which is section 5 of chapter 7, the avoidance of future great pain test is refined. But, for most of what's to be done in the present essay, the refinements are more distracting than enlightening.

ix For the exchange case that starts this flurry of examples, see pages 23-25 of Shoemaker (1963). As he plainly realizes that case is very naturally regarded as a materially robust version of a famous case in Locke. Indeed, just before presenting his own example, on page 22 Shoemaker quotes Locke's remark that "should the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon deserted of his own soul, every one sees that he would be the same person with the prince, accountable only for the prince's actions," appending a footnote for Locke: *Essay*, I, 457. (In a footnote on his page 14, Shoemaker cites Locke's *Essay*.)

x On page 103 of ICV, there's an exchange case that's thus qualitatively symmetrical. In some notable respects, the qualitative symmetry provides a useful purification.

xi What I've just been saying *doesn't* imply that, throughout all conceivable cases, or even all nomologically possible cases, you will be wherever your mentally productive brain will be. Indeed, in ICV there's an entire section, section 6 of chapter 5, that's devoted to providing argument for the contrary view, those arguments providing an affirmative answer to the section's interrogative title, "Might We Survive Brain Replacements and even Brain Exchanges?"

xii In section IV, chapter 3 of THA, Olson conspicuously denies this.

xiii In ICV I used this test rather rarely. Thus, till now, it's been anonymous.

xiv Though the examples are pretty far-fetched, it's very clear, and it's perfectly determinate, what is the truth of the salient matters in these cases. Indeed, the salient matters are very nearly as clear as with cases of *heart-exchange*: When there's the exchange of hearts between you and a qualitatively identical other person, it's extremely clear, and of course perfectly determinate, who's who throughout and, in later stages, who's acquiring which heart. And, that's hardly any

clearer right now than it was years before the first (successful) heart transplant operation, when it was (already) very clear, and perfectly determinate, who'd survive in the event of such a (successful) operation.

^{xv} As our treatment of Vegetable cases also shows, there's also precious little to be gained from hybrid approaches that feature biological continuity as an even reasonably central element. For example, we might consider a "closest continuer" view according to which, whenever suitable psychology is present, the mentality dictates the conditions of our survival, but, when it's absent, biological continuity might suffice for our survival. What we just said for the Biological Approach itself, we may say, apparently with equal justice, for such hybrid approaches: The more we're free from confusions about our existence and persistence, the less there'll even seem to be said for them. For the main point of this note, I'm grateful to Kit Fine.

^{xvi} When the person's active brain is way over there and (the rest of) his healthy body is right nearby here, is the person simply over there, a quite cohesive entity, or he is partly there and partly here, a rather scattered entity? And, what of his body? In this essay, I mean to leave open what are the answers to these questions.

As I'm inclined to believe, the person himself is, in the envisaged situation, a quite cohesive entity that's just where his mentally productive brain is, way over there. As I'm also inclined to think, the body is also quite cohesive, but it's right nearby here, not at all where the brain is. But, to support these inclinations, at all well, rather complex arguments may be required. So, in this essay, I set them both aside.

^{xvii} Many people have been helpful toward getting this paper to be more useful and less riddled with error. Very helpful indeed have been David Barnett, John Carroll, W. R. Carter, John Gibbons, John Heil, Peter Kung, Jeff McMahan, Michael Lockwood, Eric Olson, Michael Rea, Sydney Shoemaker and, most especially, Mark Bajakian and Kit Fine. To such helpful sentient beings, I'm duly grateful and thankful.

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