

WHAT AM I?

A NON-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANSWER TO A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

By

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## ABSTRACT

### WHAT AM I?

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The objective of this dissertation is to provide an answer to the fundamental ‘What am I?’ question. The work is composed of two parts. The first part aims to reject the Psychological Account, the view which states that we are most fundamentally persons. By pointing out the problems such a view is prone to creating it aims to show that ‘person’ is not a substance concept, that no kind of psychological continuity, like the continuity of character traits and/or memory, is either necessary or sufficient for our persistence through time. It is argued that the emotional attitude we have towards the concept ‘person’ leads many philosophers like Locke, Hume, Butler, Reid, Rudder Baker, to come up with a person-centered account of identity, which in turn leads to metaphysical problems and complicates our ontology.

The second part of this dissertation is an attempt to develop a version of animalism, the theory which states that we are essentially human beings, i.e., members of the biological species *Homo sapiens*. ‘Continuous existence under the kind human being’ is proposed as the criterion of diachronic identity for human beings. It is argued that this version of animalism is not faced with the problems the Psychological Account

creates for itself. Finally, the theory is defended against possible criticisms the advocates the Psychological Account may come up with.

## ÖZET

### BEN NEYİM?

#### TEMEL BİR SORUYA PSİKOLOJİK OLMAYAN BİR YANIT

Bu çalışmanın amacı çok temel bir soru olan ‘Ben neyim?’ sorusuna yanıt aramaktır. Çalışma iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümün amacı temelde kişi olduğumuz tezini savunan Psikolojik Kuram’ı reddetmektir. Bu yaklaşımın yol açtığı sorunlardan yola çıkarak ‘kişi’nin bir töz kavramı olmadığı ve bellek ve karakter özelliklerinin devamlılığı gibi bir psikolojik devamlılığın sürekliliğimiz için gerekli ya da yeterli olmadığı gösterilmeye çalışılmaktadır. ‘Kişi’ kavramına verdiğimiz duygusal önemin Locke, Hume, Butler, Reid, Parfit, Rudder Baker gibi pek çok felsefecinin kişi-merkezli özdeşlik kuramları geliştirmelerine neden olduğu ve bu yaklaşımın pek çok metafizik soruna yol açtığı vurgulanmaktadır.

İkinci bölümün amacı ise temelde insan, yani biyolojik bir tür olan Homo Sapiens’in üyesi olduğumuzu iddia eden biyolojik yaklaşımın bir versiyonunu geliştirmektir. Bu bölümde psikolojik devamlılığın değil insan türünün bir üyesi olarak devamlılığın sürekliliğimiz için gerekli ve yeterli olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Geliştirdiğim kuramın Psikolojik Kuram’ın yol açtığı sorunları nasıl çözdüğü tartışıldıktan sonra bu kuramı savunanların getirebileceği bazı eleştirilere cevap verilmektedir.

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For Kaysu Beyazyürek

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. PERSISTENCE.....	8
“If I Voted for the Fascist Party I Would No Longer be Me”.....	8
Two Theories of Persistence.....	11
The Endurer Account.....	11
The Perdurur Account and the Branching Problem.....	12
How Can Branching be Avoided?.....	17
Summary.....	19
III. PERSONHOOD.....	20
What is a Person?.....	21
The First Person Perspective.....	24
Second Order Volitions.....	28
Person as a Certain Sort of Animal.....	32
Person as a Socially Constructed Concept.....	36
Summary.....	40
IV. IS PSYCHOLOGY RELEVANT TO OUR SURVIVAL?.....	42
Is ‘Person’ a Kind?.....	42
Kinds, Substance Concepts and Phase Sortals.....	43

A Dilemma Created for the Psychological Account.....	46
Luis and Human Being.....	46
The Constitution View.....	55
Animal People and Psychological People.....	63
Has Human Being Replaced Luis?.....	64
The Foetus Problem.....	66
Summary.....	68
V. FURTHER PROBLEMS.....	70
Coincidence and Overpopulation.....	70
Why They Claim Persons and Human Beings are Distinct.....	70
Human Beings, Persons and Talksons.....	73
The Corpse Problem.....	80
Can There be other Psychological Kinds?.....	82
Summary.....	90
VI. WHAT ARE WE?.....	92
Possible Answers.....	95
Animalism.....	98
Wiggins' Version of Animalism.....	98
Olson's Version of Animalism.....	102
What I Mean by Animalism.....	105
Summary.....	107
VII. CONTINUITY UNDER THE KIND HUMAN BEING.....	108
What is a 'Human Being'?.....	108
Persistence Conditions for Human Beings.....	112
Alterations.....	112
What is Death?.....	118
Death versus Ceasing to Exist as a Human Being.....	121
Uninterrupted Existence.....	125
Summary.....	128
VIII. WHAT DOES 'I' REFER TO?.....	129

Can the Human Being Think?.....	130
The 'I' User versus the Referent of the 'I'.....	134
'I' Refers to a Person Constituted by a Human Being.....	139
'I' Refers to a Human Being.....	144
Summary.....	147
IX. CONCLUSION.....	149
The Branching Problem is Avoided.....	150
Identity is What Matters.....	152
Coincidence is Avoided.....	157
Is There a Corpse Problem?.....	159
Conclusion.....	161
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	163

## PREFACE

My grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease eight years ago. In the early stages of the disease she was just suffering from forgetfulness and had problems with abstract thinking. Then we started observing changes in her personality. She stopped reading her books and seeing her friends and became disoriented about time and place. That is when I started asking myself whether this being who was sitting on my

grandmother's chair, playing with toys all day was the same being who used to be interested in philosophy and enjoyed talking about politics.

Were the psychological properties she has lost essential to her? If they were, that would mean she has ceased to be and was replaced by different entity. Most of the philosophers I have read, including Locke, Hume, Parfit, Rudder Baker, seemed to be holding this view. They were asking what a person is and what it took for a person to persist. However, there was a more fundamental question: What am I? Maybe I was not essentially a person and another set of persistence conditions applied to me. As I was trying to answer these questions I came upon Eric Olson's work. He was rejecting Psychological Account and arguing that we are essentially biological being. His theory seemed very appealing to me. In the summer of 1999 I was admitted to the M.Phil. program at the University of Cambridge and have had a chance to meet him in person. He kindly agreed to be my thesis supervisor. Working with him and attending his seminars helped me understand the theory and start developing my own ideas about it.

Earlier versions of some of the ideas in this dissertation appear in the M.Phil. thesis I wrote at Cambridge. During the last five years I have attended the Ph.D. program at Boğaziçi University, Department of Philosophy under the supervision of Prof. Stephen Voss I have had a chance to develop these ideas.

In this dissertation, I argue that my grandmother did not ceased to be when she lost her psychological properties. The entity I visit every week, who is now connected to a feeding tube, is the same entity I used to discuss philosophy with. She has just lost the property of personhood.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Imagine the following scenario. Elizabeth is a dancer with the National Ballet and she is driving towards the Opera House. Helen who is a professor of physics is driving in the same direction; she has tickets for the performance Elizabeth will be dancing in. The young ballerina, realising she is about to be late, does not stop at a red light and crashes into Helen's car. A couple of days later, when she regains consciousness in a hospital room, she sees that she is surrounded by people she has never seen before. All around her are unknown faces who are calling her Helen. Her body feels strange too, she feels heavier, taller and older. She then notices that her wedding ring is missing, her hand looks very unfamiliar and on her wrist is a band which says 'Helen Sup'. In panic, she asks for a mirror. Looking at it she comes across a totally unfamiliar face, the face of some strange woman. In the next room, a similar incident takes place. Helen looks in the mirror to see some other woman's face. Both women call out for the doctor hoping he will tell them they are hallucinating. The doctor asks the nurses to bring both patients into his office. The moment they see each other they experience another shock; they see in the other person what used to be their face and body. After trying to cool them down the doctor explains the bizarre situation. It turns out that in the car crash the cerebrums<sup>1</sup> of both Helen and Elizabeth were

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<sup>1</sup> The organ responsible for all higher brain activity such as memory and reasoning.

severely damaged and they were both removed for C-Repair, a process which repairs the damaged cerebral tissue. However, after the repair, due to the carelessness of one of the nurses, they were put into the wrong skulls. Now which of the two women is Elizabeth and which one of them is Helen?

Discussions on personal identity through time are usually based on similar stories<sup>2</sup> and puzzles. The philosophers who argue that Elizabeth and Helen went where their cerebrums did are referred to as the advocates of the Psychological Account. They claim that Helen, Elizabeth, Albert Einstein, Frank Sinatra, Michael Jordon, Van Gogh, you, me are most fundamentally persons, beings with psychological and mental properties. We go out of existence when we stop being persons. That is to say, our persistence consists in some psychological relation such as continuity of mental contents or capacities.

This view strikes us as very plausible. Let us assume you are Helen's brother, the doctors have just explained to you what has happened, and then you have visited both of the patients, in which room will you say your sister is? In the room where someone is staying who looks and sounds very different than her but who remembers you, the things you did together, talks about her students and work? Or in the other room where there is someone who looks and sounds exactly like your sister but claims she has never seen you before, has no recollection of the things Helen did and liked? I assume you would say your sister Helen is where her cerebrum is and continue visiting the patient who has her cerebrum but someone else's body rather than the one who has her body and someone else's cerebrum.

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<sup>2</sup> Locke's Prince and Cobbler, Perry's Peter Pressher and Shoemaker's Brown-Browson are the most frequently referred to stories in the literature.

As plausible as it seems the Psychological Account has surprising consequences. Now imagine this following scenario. Helen's cerebrum is removed, her body is discarded and then each of her cerebral hemispheres is put into a different skull. Both patients survive the operation. Now where do you say Helen is? In room 204 or in room 205? The patients in these rooms both claim they are Helen, both recognise you, both remember the project she was working on before the accident occurred. In other words, they are both psychologically continuous with Helen. Advocates of the Psychological Account, Shoemaker for one, claim that for identity to hold only one being has to be continuous with you. Accordingly, if the neurologist discards one of your hemispheres and the other one gets put in a skull you survive this adventure and are identical to the being which carries your skull. If, on the other hand, both of your hemispheres are successfully transplanted, since you cannot be identical to both of the receivers, you cease to exist. To put it in other words, your survival depends on what happens to the other hemisphere. I find this incredible.

In this work, I will examine The Psychological Account and argue against it. I will try to show that it has very odd consequences like the branching problem I have briefly laid out above. My aim is to show that any kind of psychological continuity is neither necessary nor sufficient for our persistence through time. The main task I set for myself is to develop a version of animalism, the view which states that we are essentially human beings, i.e., member of the species *Homo sapiens*, and explain why it is a better account of what we are and defend it against possible criticisms my opponent may come up with.

Unlike what some of my readers may expect, I will not deny the importance of the concept person, nor will I try to *devalue* it. I hold with many philosophers, physicians, theologians that the concept of person is very valuable to us. Since the qualities which make others people enable us to relate to them, form relationships with them, fall in love with them or hate them the concept of person plays a very important role in our everyday lives. I do not deny that when I form a relationship with someone I am more interested in the person than the human being. However, I hold that this special attitude we have towards the concept person leads to some metaphysical misjudgements and inconsistencies. We as philosophers, like everyone else, have a right to believe that the concept person is more significant and central than the concepts human being, organism or biological entity. However, it is projecting this emotional attitude to our ontology and trying to come up with a person-centred account of what we are, and our persistence through time which leads to metaphysical problems and complicates our ontology. I think this will become clearer as I explain and defend animalism over the Psychological Account.

Since the ontological problem this work will be dealing with is our persistence through time I will start by analysing the persistence question and distinguishing it from other questions. I will underline the fact that the persistence question, and hence the subject matter of this work are about numerical identity, rather than qualitative identity. Chapter 3 will be devoted to the very significant concept of person. I will try to clarify what a person is and discuss some of the features which distinguish a person from a non-person. As I have mentioned above, I will acknowledge its importance in our lives but question the ontological status the Psychological Account attributes to it.

After these two introductory chapters in Chapter 4 I will challenge the most fundamental assumption of the Psychological Account, the assumption that ‘person’ is an ontological kind, that it can define our persistence conditions. I will argue that this assumption creates a dilemma for the Psychological Account. A defender of this account either has to admit coinciding objects in her ontology or claim that a human being replaces the person when the psychological properties are lost. The first horn of this dilemma is referred to as the Coincidence View. Rudder Baker is one of its forerunners. It states that although the human being and the person are made up of exactly the same particles they are not identical because they have different persistence conditions. To give an example, the human being can survive lapsing into a persistent vegetative state whereas the person cannot. The relationship between them is that of constitution, the human being constitutes the person. I will examine this view in detail and try to show why it is implausible. Then I will claim that the dilemma the advocates of the Psychological Account are faced with cannot be resolved unless the assumption that person is an ontological kind is given up.

In Chapter 5 I will try to show that allowing for coinciding human beings and persons, creates further problems for the defender of the Psychological Account, that it leads to an ontological inflation. I will try to show that if we accept this view we may also have to accept that when having coffee with a friend we may actually be having coffee with three or more numerically different beings.

Chapter 6 will be devoted to a very fundamental question, ‘What are we?’ The answer to this question tells us what sort of things you and I are, whether we are concrete or abstract, material or immaterial beings. It also provides us with the substance concept

which is applicable to us, which determines our essential properties and sets the limit of the amount of change we can undergo without ceasing to be. I will consider possible answers to this question and will argue that there is only one substance concept applicable to us, namely, human being. I will try to show that this answer avoids all the problems the Psychological Account creates for itself – it does not have to admit coinciding objects, avoids the branching problem, it can plausibly explain why the foetus, the teenager, and the patient in a persistent vegetative state are one and the same being.

Having established that we are human beings, in Chapter 7 I will offer an account of persistence for human beings. I will suggest continuous existence under the kind human being as the criterion of diachronic identity for human beings. I will begin by expounding what a human being is, and then I will discuss what it is required for a human being to persist through time. Following this, I will define the conditions under which a human being goes through a substantial change, i.e., ceases to be. After discussing the criterion of death, I will distinguish between death and ceasing to be. In my view, when a human being dies a biological death it goes through a substantial change. That is to say, it ceases to exist, and is replaced by a corpse. However, it also goes through a change in kind under the hypothetical circumstances when it stops falling under the kind ‘human being’ and becomes, say, a cat.

In Chapter 8 I will tackle the problem of the referent of the personal pronoun ‘I’. What do I refer to when I say ‘I’? Those who defend the Psychological Account claim that I refer to a person. I will discuss the problems this answer is prone to creating and argue that this reference problem is closely related to the question whether a human being can think. If he can think then he can think about himself. But can he refer to himself by

using the personal pronoun 'I'? My answer to this question, unlike that of my opponent, will be "yes". I will argue that 'I' refers to the human being, and the human being is both its utterer and referent. Finally in Chapter 9 I will list my conclusions and summarise the strengths of animalism, point out that it is a more plausible and coherent account than its rival the Psychological Account.

Throughout this work I will assume the Complex (Reductionist) View<sup>3</sup> which states that we can give an informative account of personal identity, that identity of persons and human beings is analysable in terms of observable facts. I maintain that we can give an account of diachronic identity of persons and human beings in the same way we can give an account of diachronic identity of artifacts like ships. Hence, I will assume that persons and human beings are nothing above observable things like cerebrums, brains, nervous systems and bodies. I will also assume that identity is absolute, that it cannot be relative to sortals as Peter Geach suggests.<sup>4</sup> I maintain that x and y which are the same A cannot be different Bs. Finally I will be using Psychological Account and Psychological View interchangeably.

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<sup>3</sup> As opposed to the Simple View of personal identity which states that personal identity is an ultimate, further unanalysable fact which resists definition in any other terms. The defenders of this view, which is also referred to as the non-reductionist view include Swinburne, Reid and Butler.

<sup>4</sup>See Geach 1968: 150-53.

## CHAPTER II

### PERSISTENCE

The general question of persistence, i.e., existence through time, applies to all things<sup>5</sup>. We can ask what it takes for a person, a table or a kingdom to persist from one time to another. We can inquire into what sorts of adventures a human being can survive and which changes would bring a cat's existence to an end. In this chapter, I will begin by analysing the persistence question and distinguishing it from other questions. Next I will discuss the two main accounts of what it means for an object to persist from time  $t_1$  to time  $t_2$ . Following David Lewis' terminology I will refer to them as the "endurer" and "perdurantist" accounts of existence through time. When discussing the perdurantist account I will focus on the branching problem — a problem created by the Psychological Account and which the perdurantists attempt to solve. Finally, I will argue that one does not have to adopt a perdurantist view to avoid branching, another strategy can be giving up the Psychological Account.

"If I Voted For The Fascist Party It Would No Longer Be Me"

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<sup>5</sup> When I say "all things", I mean all the concrete objects around us — tables, human beings, pieces of clothing etc. There are things which do not persist through time such as abstract objects, and events.

Very often we hear people utter sentences in the form “If I did X, I would no longer be me”, or “If X happened to me I would be someone else”. “If I lost my memory I wouldn’t be me”, “If I voted for the fascist party I would be some other person” and the like. These sentences are not about numerical identity, because if they were, since nothing can be one thing at t1 and a numerically different thing at t2, they would obviously be incoherent. They are rather about qualitative identity. Throughout our lives many things about us change including our ideas, beliefs, desires, character traits and the things we value. We definitely are qualitatively very different from the five year old toddler we see in our photo albums but we still point at the picture and say “this is *me*, on the day I started school”.

Sometimes the person may undergo some unanticipated or radical qualitative changes. For instance, a devout communist — after being brainwashed or having witnessed the misdeeds of the communist party — may one day come to support a fascist party. A devout catholic can become an atheist or vice versa. These are real-life situations in which a person goes through some sort of radical psychological change. The changes can be physical, too. Someone who goes under certain kinds of plastic surgery can be unrecognisable even by his parents. If we look at some of the reality shows aired in the U.S. we can see examples of this. The participants move into a clinic for several months during which they undergo several operations, follow a strict diet and exercise plan. They also receive psychological support from a professional. For months they are not allowed to see their friends and family and look in the mirror. At the end of the season when they see their reflection in a mirror most of them have a hard time recognising themselves. The one who has changed most wins the prize. However no

matter how radical these qualitative changes may be we still have *one* thing; the change is taking place within the scope of *one* human life. Numerical identity is preserved both in the case of the atheist who becomes a devout catholic and in the case of the winner of the metamorphoses contest.

The persistence question, on the other hand, is about numerical identity, rather than qualitative identity.<sup>6</sup> The philosophers who are working on this question ask whether one thing picked out at one time and another thing picked out at another time are one and the same thing or not. The things we point at when asking this question can be qualitatively very different, i.e., we can ask whether the foetus and the grown up human being are one and the same thing or not, or whether someone who gets your cerebrum or your brain kept in a cooler would be you or not.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, the brain and you do not look alike. The brain weights a lot less than you do, you can play tennis, go to work whereas it has to be kept in the cooler to be kept alive... Still, we can first point to you and then to the brain kept in the cooler and ask whether we have pointed to the one and the same thing or to two different things. The same goes for the human being who receives your cerebrum and your brainless body kept alive by being connected to a heart-lung machine. We can first point to you and then to the human being who has received your brain and then to your brainless body and ask which one of them — if any — is numerically identical with you.

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<sup>6</sup> Not all philosophers agree with this. Marya Schechtman for one, argues against the radical distinction between numerical and qualitative identity, between 'survival-threatening' and 'benign' changes. She refuses the claim that survival and identity are all-or-nothing relations and argues for a more 'subtle' sense of survival. For more on her theory see Schechtman 2003.

<sup>7</sup> We can ask similar questions of inanimate objects. Some philosophers argue that the Ship of Theseus survives the replacement of all of its parts, provided that the process is very slow.

To put it very simply, the persistence question, as it applies to us, is whether any of the things which existed in the past and which will exist in the future is you or not. If so, which one(s) and why.

## Two Theories of Persistence

There are two major accounts of what it means for an object to persist from time  $t_1$  to time  $t_2$ . Following David Lewis' terminology I shall refer to them as "endurer" and "perdurant" accounts of existence through time and try to discuss the advantages and the disadvantages one has over the other.

### The Endurer Account

On the endurer account, we, together with all the other objects around us, endure through time. Let us consider a hypothetical human being who lived between the years 1940 and 2000 and call him Matt. Saying 'Matt endured through these years' means he was wholly present<sup>8</sup> on each and every day between 1940 and 2000. When he was celebrating his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday he was there as a "whole" object. To clarify what exactly I mean by a whole object I want to compare him to an event, namely, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Film Festival. Like many other events, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Film Festival is extended in

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<sup>8</sup> This should not be confused with the metaphorical use of "being wholly present" meaning "being there with all one's thoughts, being committed, being in the moment or interested..."

time. It is an event taking place between April 10<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> 2004. Hence, April 17<sup>th</sup> is not the whole of the festival but only a part of it, more precisely 1/15 of it. The festival is stretched out between these days in the same way a city is stretched out in space. April 17<sup>th</sup> is only “part” of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Film Festival in the same way Taksim is not the “whole” but “part” of Istanbul.

Now let us go back to Matt. Since he does not cover as vast a ground as Istanbul does and since he is not extended in time like the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Film Festival, he was wholly present at his birthday party. If the endurer account is right, when his mother, as she was introducing him to a friend, pointed at him and said “This is my son Matt” (instead of “This is a temporal part of my son Matt”) she has uttered a true sentence.

Since this account treats us human beings and the objects around us as three dimensional entities extended in space only, it is close to the common-sense conception of persistence. The defenders of the account I will discuss next, on the other hand, argue that all living and non-living objects are stretched out in time like events, that only part of Matt was present at his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday party, in the same way in which only part of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Film Festival was present on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

### The Perdurant Account and the Branching Problem

Perdurantism<sup>9</sup> regards a “whole” object as a four-dimensional continuant lasting from the date of its coming into existence until its destruction. Let us go back to Matt celebrating his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. When I look at him opening his presents he appears to me

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<sup>9</sup> Some philosophers refer to this account as the ontology of temporal parts or four-dimensionalism.

as a three-dimensional entity. However, what I see before me is actually only a temporal part of the whole object which is four-dimensional. Since he is the sum of not only his spatial but also temporal parts I can only see part of him or rather, it is impossible for me to see the whole of him.

Now I would like to discuss how this rather counterintuitive conception of persistence helps its advocates solve one of the main problems of personal identity. In the literature this problem is referred to as branching. Take the fission case where there is more than one candidate who is psychologically continuous with you. This could happen if your cerebrum was removed, the nerve fibres connecting the two hemispheres were cut and each of the hemispheres was implanted into two (empty) skulls.<sup>10</sup> There are many patients who go under hemispherectomy and continue to live with either one of their cerebral hemispheres. Hardly anyone claims that if you were to undergo hemispherectomy you would cease to be.<sup>11</sup> The resulting person would have some impairments but would be psychologically continuous with you, would remember your past, recognise your friends.<sup>12</sup>

Accordingly, since under those hypothetical circumstances two hemispheres are implanted into two skulls, two people would be psychologically continuous with the

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<sup>10</sup> There are many other hypothetical scenarios which may give rise to branching e.g., if we made two clones of Adam and destroyed the original being, if we saved all the data on a brain on a disc and loaded the information to more than one person...

<sup>11</sup> Some perdurantists claim that the sum of all temporal parts is a logical construct. What exists in reality are only temporal parts. So, they could claim that if “you” refers to a temporal part, “if you were to undergo hemispherectomy you would die” is a true sentence. Since it is beyond the subject of this work I will not go into a detailed discussion of this position.

<sup>12</sup> For more on patients who underwent hemispherectomy see Puccetti 1973: 352-54. He talks about a patient whose left hemisphere was removed. He underlines the fact that she could speak excellently, walked well, and wrote fluently with her right hand. Puccetti holds that there are dual persons before hemispherectomy, that we all are compounds of two persons.

original person. Now which one of the offshoots — call them Harry and Henry — is you? Since identity is a one-one relation you cannot be numerically identical with both of them. Saying “You survive as one but not the other” is also highly problematic. There is no reason why you would be identical to the offshoot who got your right hemisphere but not the one who received your left one. The only other alternative is to say that you do not survive at all. Parfit and Unger are advocates of this view. Parfit also goes on to say that identity is not what matters. You do not survive but (a) being(s) which is psychologically continuous with you, who enjoys the music you used to enjoy, who remembers your past, who can continue with your work, loves your kids, does. This is as good as survival.<sup>13</sup> Controversial as it is, this is a valid solution to the branching problem.

On the other hand, arguing that you cease to exist because there are two beings psychologically continuous with you reduces identity to an extrinsic relation. If your right hemisphere was transplanted into a skull and left hemisphere was destroyed you would be identical with the offshoot who received your right hemisphere. On the other hand if both hemispheres were transplanted you would cease to be. In other words, whether you will survive and will be identical to the offshoot who has received one of your hemispheres depends solely on what happens to your left hemisphere. If it is destroyed you survive, if it also gets transplanted you cease to exist. That is to say, what happens to the other hemisphere makes a difference in our identity judgements about you. This is an undesirable consequence which can be avoided if one adopts a perdurantist account of existence. I will try to explain how.

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<sup>13</sup> See Parfit 1984, Chapter 12 for his discussion of why identity does not matter.

One of the proponents of this view, David Lewis solves the fission problem by referring to temporal parts. He argues that there is no branching in the fission cases. The act of removing hemispheres and placing them into two different skulls does not create two people, Harry and Henry. What appears to be one person is actually two people with a single body. These two people, Harry and Henry, share their temporal stages until fission takes place, and then they are separated. To put it in different words, he argues that there were already two non-identical people before fission took place.<sup>14</sup>

I will try to clarify this position. There were two people, Harry and Henry, in a single body and a single mind until the operation during which the brain surgeons separated them. That is to say, they are two people at  $t_1$  because of what will happen to them in the future, because they will be separated at  $t_2$ . Parfit, when criticising Lewis' position, draws an analogy between the branching cases and East and West Germany. He points out that saying there were two people in a single body before the operation is analogous to claiming that East and West Germany were different nations even before 1945.<sup>15</sup> Because of what happened in 1945, we were dealing with  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  in the year 1936. In other words, Lewis is committed to saying that the future can affect the past. This strikes many of us as false.

Lewis' theory has also problems explaining ordinary cases, cases in which there is no fission. In the fission case, two people start with a single body, single mind and share temporal parts until time  $t_2$  when they are separated. What happens to ordinary single people who are born and die with their cerebrum? No brain surgery. No fission. No fusion. Are we going to count them in a strange way too? The perdurantist account

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<sup>14</sup> For more on this view see Lewis 1976.

<sup>15</sup> See Parfit 1976: 96.

regards people who do not undergo fission as one. This appears to be very counterintuitive. I will try to explain why.

Let us consider two hypothetical patients staying at the same hospital, in the very same room waiting for fission and call them Sam and Brad. Let us also assume we have a god's eye point of view, i.e., that we can see the whole of these patients from the day of their coming into existence until their death. This enables us to see that Brad will be chosen for fission, both of his hemispheres will be successfully implanted into two skulls and both of the offshoots will lead healthy lives. We can also see that after carefully viewing Sam's test results the doctors will tell him that he is not suitable for fission, will send him home and he will live for another twelve years. So at  $t_1$ , that is, before Brad's fission and before Sam was told he was not going to go through the same operation, if I enter their room I am in the company of three people. They both look like ordinary, single people to me, however, in reality, because of what Brad will go through at  $t_2$  he is, in fact, two people at the time I visit them.

Let me try to apply the problem to Parfit's case of Germany in order to underline the absurdities which arise when one adopts a perdurantist view to avoid branching. Let us assume that France and Germany signed a pact on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1934. Because of what will happen to Germany in 1945, the sentence "France signed a pact with a country on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1934" would be wrong. We would have to say "France signed a pact with *two* countries..." Germany was two countries at the time the contract was signed because of what it was going to undergo in the year 1945 and Brad was two people as a child because of what was going to happen to him in his late 30s.

The advocates of perdurantism claim that the reason why we find such results very counter-intuitive is because of our misconception of persons and other beings enduring through time. Once we reject the commonsense view of endurance and construct the entity over time in their fashion, there may be a sense in which France may have signed a pact with two countries in 1934 and Brad may have consisted of two people even before the operation. This is a valid point. For all we know, we may be mistaken about the existence of entities through time and the perdurantists may be right. It is a coherent position and avoids the branching problem.

However, perdurantism is not the only theory which can avoid the undesirable branching I have discussed above. In the following section I will try to show how animalists avoid this problem without appealing to a perdurantist view of persistence.

### How Can Branching Be Avoided?

I hold that we human beings, unlike events, endure through time, that we are not extended in time. I also hold that identity is a one-one relationship, that it cannot be one-many or many-one. The perdurantist claims that one cannot adopt both of these views, that an endurantist must accept that identity can be one-many because of the branching problem. It is not necessarily so. The premise which leads to the branching problem is the following one: 'Identity consists in some psychological relation, i.e., continuity of memory, character traits, etc.' This is the main premise of the Psychological Account. If we give that up we can be endurantists and still avoid the branching problem. I will try to show how.

Let us return to the hemispherectomy case. Brad is lying on his hospital bed and is about to go through fission. Now let us ask the same question ‘Which one of the offshoots will be him?’ The answer is ‘None’. Since identity has nothing to do with psychological continuity none of the people who receive his hemispheres will be identical to him. After the operation Brad will still be there lying on his bed. This approach which I will try to defend throughout this work is called animalism. Animalism treats hemispherectomy in the same way it treats kidney removal and transplant. If Brad were to give his kidneys to two different people he would not cease to be himself, he would just need to be connected to a dialysis machine until he gets a new kidney(s). Moreover, the people who receive each of his kidneys would not be identical to him. Since animalism does not attribute a special status to the brain and treats it the same way it treats other organs, kidneys, hearts, livers or lungs, its removal does not result in the destruction of Brad. He survives the operation.

One might think that since he has no brain left, he is dead, that he is only a corpse. It is true that Brad lacks the capacity for a sentient and conscious life. He cannot solve any problems, speak, he cannot communicate with the people around him. However, the lack of these psychological properties would not suffice to call him a corpse. His biological life is not disturbed. He can breathe, his heart can pump blood, he can digest food. The conditions for organic life – absorption, excretion, metabolism, growth and reproduction – are all satisfied. Therefore, he is not a corpse. He is alive in the sense lady bugs, sea horses, bushes are alive.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed discussion on why human beings with no psychology are alive see section 4.2, for the criteria of death for organisms see section 7.2.2.

Returning to the branching problem, as I have tried to show above, an animalist can adopt an endurantist view and still argue that identity is a one-one relation. In the following chapters I will try to refute the Psychological Account and defend my version of animalism which I believe avoids all the problems — one of them being the branching problem — the Psychological Account creates for itself.

### Summary

In this chapter I have tried to tackle the question of persistence. I have argued that the persistence question is about numerical identity rather than qualitative identity. Then I have considered the two rival accounts of persistence, namely, the endurer and perdurer accounts. I have discussed how the advocates of the perdurer account attempt to avoid the branching problem where there is more than one being psychologically continuous with the original subject. I have then argued that one does not have to embrace perdurantism to solve the branching problem, that the problem arises only when we adopt the Psychological Account. I have suggested giving up the psychological criterion as a solution. In the following chapter I will try to analyse another significant concept, i.e., the concept of person.

### CHAPTER III

### PERSONHOOD

There are two important questions regarding the concept of person. The first one is, “What is a person?” The answer to this question constitutes the definition of the concept, tells us what features make a certain being a person as opposed to a non-person. We can take a certain definition of person and discuss whether this definition allows for babies, chimpanzees, PVS patients, Martians or computers to be persons.

The other question is “Can something cease to be a person and still persist?” This question concerns the status of this concept, whether it is a phase sortal or a substance concept. As I have briefly discussed in the introduction, the latter is a more important question for this work. One of my main contentions is to try and show that person is not a substance concept but rather a phase sortal, that we can cease to be persons and still persist.

In this chapter, I will look at some philosophers who attempt to give an answer to the first question. As regards the second question, Locke, Rudder Baker and Frankfurt disagree with me. They are all advocates of the Psychological Account and all hold that

person is a substance concept, that it determines the persistence conditions for some beings. Wiggins, on the other hand, claims he is an animalist — although I believe there are problems with his animalism.

I will consider the definitions of person these philosophers give, try to show that these definitions, except for Wiggins', are compatible with the idea that 'person' is a phase sortal. I will try to draw the reader's attention to the fact that some of the problems with these definitions may imply that these philosophers are mistaken to think that person is a substance concept.

### What Is A Person?

Being persons we all have strong intuitions about what a person is. When asked "How many persons are there in this room?" we look around, count and give a confident answer. The question becomes tricky when in the room are beings about whose personhood we cannot immediately pass a judgement. To give an example, if we were sharing the room with a one-month old baby, a patient in a persistent vegetative state, a trained chimpanzee, a highly sophisticated computer and a clever Martian the answer to that question would vary between 1 and 6 depending on our definition of a person.

Locke has defined a person as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and

it seems to me, essential to it”.<sup>17</sup> Being the same person, on the other hand means, “the same consciousness extending to actions past and to come”. Thus, on Locke’s picture, persons must be thinkers, intelligent beings, and they also must be capable of transtemporal self reference. Consciousness, as understood in these terms, is essential to thinking, hence it is an essential part of what he means by person. Without the continuity of consciousness, consciousness of what is past we cannot talk about a person. How can we be conscious of the past? Not through sense experience but through memory. That is to say, Locke’s person has to be able to form true sentences of the form “I was the one who took you to school every morning when you were in second grade”. If we go back to the room I had mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Martian and the computer seem to be stronger candidates for personhood than the 1 month old baby, the chimpanzee and the patient in the vegetative state. Neither the baby, nor the chimpanzee, nor the PVS patient can distinguish themselves from other things as the same rational being. Their consciousness does not extend to any past action or thought. They cannot recognise themselves as the same self which at a certain time in the past did something and is now thinking about it, is reflectively aware of it, is evaluating it.

Locke’s answers to the two questions (1) Is X a person? and (2) Is X the same person as Y, when we identify Y in terms that apply to X at some earlier time? are very closely linked. Continuity of consciousness, or in Wiggins’ terms, “a self-recording capacity”, which as I mentioned above can be explained in terms of memory<sup>18</sup>, is an integral part of what it means to be person. It also is what binds together the earlier and later stages of a person. To put it in other words, Locke gives the same criteria for the

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<sup>17</sup> Locke, 1694, Book II, Chapter XXVII, 9.

<sup>18</sup> See Perry 1975: 14 where he makes a similar point.

existence and persistence of a person. Different aspects of his theory of persistence have been criticised by many philosophers including Butler and Reid. Since my main aim in this chapter is to consider the answers given to the first question I will not go into a discussion of these criticisms.<sup>19</sup>

Going back to the “What is a person?” question, we can say that since it allows for non-human persons and human non-persons Locke’s definition of personhood seems very flexible. The human being and the person can also outlive each other. Depending on the changes they undergo, we may end up with a being which is a person but not a human being or vice versa.

However when we consider the development of a human being from a foetus to an intelligent adult it is hard to see at what point the person comes into being. Since the human development is a very slow and gradual process it is impossible to tell exactly when he can be considered a Lockean person. How far does our consciousness extend? Can we consider a two year-old a person? He is intelligent, he has memories relating to his first birthday but like the rest of us, he cannot remember the times when his mother was nursing him. We are faced with the same problem when we try to apply this definition to a patient suffering from a mentally degenerative disease like Alzheimer’s. Since the changes take place at a very slow rate it is impossible to tell at what point this being ceased to be a person.

Is a vague criterion for personhood a necessarily negative thing? It may not be. Vagueness may be part of our concept of personhood, there needn’t be any difficulty with a vague person concept. In other words, we may not know what precisely a person is.

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<sup>19</sup> Butler says “consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute identity”. See Reid 1975 and Butler 1975 for their charges of circularity and absurdity.

As we have seen above, things get very tricky in our classification of babies and patients in PVS as persons. However, it creates a difficulty for Locke's vague person concept. There may be an error in the assumption that person is a substance concept. It may imply Locke is wrong in assuming this. I shall try to explain why. A substance concept determines the persistence and existence conditions for members of its extension. It applies to it throughout its existence. That is why natural kind terms like 'cat', 'human being' are the best candidates for substance concepts. We look for empirical evidence to determine whether a being falls under a certain natural kind. For instance, we can extract a single DNA from a human zygote and determine that it will develop into a human being rather than into a cat. We cannot say the same of the concept of person; we cannot scientifically determine exactly when we have a person before us.

Furthermore, since a substance concept applies to a being throughout its existence and since our consciousness does not extend to the past when our mother was nursing us, under Locke's account we cannot be said to be identical with the baby we see in the photo albums. If Locke did not take person as a substance concept he would not be facing this difficulty. I think this is another indication that he is mistaken in assuming this.

### The First Person Perspective

Following Locke many contemporary philosophers, although they may have defined it differently, have emphasised the importance of consciousness in defining a person. Rudder Baker argues that the key to being a person is self-consciousness and

underlying self-consciousness is what she calls ‘the first-person perspective’. This perspective, which is essential to all persons, allows the individual to see itself as “an individual facing a world, as a subject distinct from everything else”.<sup>20</sup> That is to say, a conscious being becomes self-conscious when she gains first-person perspective.

Rudder Baker distinguishes between the weaker and stronger senses of this perspective and argues that only the beings which have the latter can qualify as persons. Non-human animals and babies, whose behaviours can be explained in terms of practical syllogisms, have weak first-person perspective. The baby sees you hide her musical toy under the pillow after which she lifts the pillow and gets the toy. She has a desire to get the toy. However she has no concept of this desire, or the concept of first person as the bearer of this desire.

On the other hand, the beings who have strong first-person perspective can form sentences of the form ‘I think (believe, fear, doubt...) that ‘\*’ where ‘\*’ is a sentence containing a first-person reference.<sup>21</sup> That is, to qualify as a person a being has to be able to recognise herself as the bearer of her thoughts, desires, doubts. She has to be able to form sentences like ‘At this very moment I have a fear that I will fall’. To be able to recognise herself as the subject she has to be able to recognise herself as being distinct from the other things around her. She has to be able to conceive of her thoughts as her own, rather than someone else’s.

Rudder Baker’s criterion is a weaker criterion than Locke’s. We are not required to remember a past being’s experiences and thoughts to be identical to him/her. We just need to be able to consciously entertain thoughts and recognise them as our own. That is

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<sup>20</sup> See Rudder Baker 2000: 60.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 65.

why, although her theory underlines the importance of consciousness, it is immune to the criticisms Locke is faced with. There, however, is a significant criticism which can be directed at Rudder Baker's definition of a person I wish to consider here. This is how the argument goes: To be considered a person Brown must be able to differentiate himself from the rest of the world he is living in. To be able to do this, he also must have concepts that apply to things which are different from him, i.e., his friends, family, the animals and plants around him. To have developed these concepts he must have had some interactions with these things. Hence, having a first-person perspective looks like a relational property. To put it in other words, Brown could not have developed a first-person perspective if he lived in a universe which only consisted of himself. As a consequence of this, he could not have been a 'person'.<sup>22</sup>

In response to this line of arguments Rudder Baker accepts that the first-person perspective is a relational property:

One cannot think of oneself as oneself without concepts of other things by means of which to distinguish things as being different from oneself; and one cannot have concepts of other things without the presence of other things.<sup>23</sup>

That is to say, to be able to develop a first-person perspective, i.e., to qualify as a person, I must interact with things other than me. Grasping of other things is necessary for the existence of a person.

This is inconsistent with her view that person is a substance concept. There seems to be a conflict between this position and that of the constitutionist who argues that person is a substance concept, and we are most fundamentally persons constituted by a human body. On the Constitution View which Rudder Baker adopts, person is an

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 72.

ontological kind, a substance concept. But this position is highly implausible when being a person is taken to be a relational property.

If person is a substance concept, being a person must not be a relational property. I will try to explain why. For person to be a substance concept, the being to which this concept applies must be a person throughout its existence, from the moment it comes into being until the moment it ceases to be. It has to be able to tell us what that object is independently of what kind of a universe it is located in, what other beings around it are, and what kind of relations it has with them. However, this does not seem to be true of Rudder Baker's conception of person. A being, more specifically, a human being, comes into existence. If this being is totally isolated it lives and dies as a human being. However, if during its development it interacts with other things, comes to see itself as distinct from these other things, as the bearer of its own thoughts, i.e., forms a first-person perspective, a person comes into being and starts to share the same place with the human being. From this we can conclude that no person can come into existence in the absence of other beings.

Furthermore, as in Locke's account, we cannot scientifically determine whether a being is a person or not. Think of a cat. Whether the cat lived in total isolation, in a world which solely consisted of itself or whether it shared its space with thousands of other cats we can do tests and conclusively determine whether it is a cat or not. We cannot say the same of Rudder Baker's persons. There is no way empirical evidence can help us distinguish between person and non-persons.

As I see it, being relational in this sense implies being a phase sortal, not a substance concept.<sup>24</sup> Think of the phase sortal ‘husband’. Being a husband is a relational property. A man living in a universe which solely consists of himself cannot be a husband. Even if the world he is living in is very much like our world except for the fact that marriage does not exist as a social institution he cannot be a husband. The concept of a husband plays a function in the society we are living in. However, it can become completely redundant if and when things change and there is no more need for such a concept. The same applies to other similar concepts like ‘student’. If there are no schools and no teachers in our hypothetical society we cannot talk about the existence of students.

Thus, if she wants to argue that ‘person’ is an ontological kind Rudder Baker has to come up with a non-relational definition of it. She has to show that being a person is what it takes for a being to survive, that this concept applies to the being throughout its career, independent of what kind of relations it forms with the world around him. I hold that having a first-person perspective is part of our concept of person which is socially constructed. ‘Person’ is a phase sortal just like husband and student. As we have seen, Rudder Baker’s definition of a person is compatible with this idea. In fact, it implies that person is not a substance concept.

## Second Order Volitions

Another contemporary philosopher who in his work discusses the essential properties of a person is Harry Frankfurt. According to him, what differentiates humans from other beings which have mental properties, desires and motives, is the capacity for 'self-reflective evaluation', in other words, the ability to form 'second-order volitions'.<sup>25</sup> Before going into second-order volitions he distinguishes between first and second-order desires. Second-order desires take the form 'A wants to want to X', where 'X' is the object of a desire of the first order like "have ice cream", "fall in love", "sleep in", "do drugs". When one has a second-order desire he simply wants to have a certain desire. In other words, these are desires about desires. To give an example, in the 2005 Woody Allen movie "Melinda Melinda" the suicidal character Melinda says with a sigh "I want to want to live". She has a second-order desire. She wants to have the desire to live, she does not want to be a woman who constantly entertains thoughts of suicide. On the other hand, if one has a second-order volition he also wants this certain desire to be his will.<sup>26</sup> He wants his desire to do X to be effective. We can illustrate the differences between second-order desires and second-order volitions as follows. Take the two conflicting first-order desires 'I want to quit smoking' and 'I want to smoke'. We can form a second-order desire in the form 'I want to have the desire to quit smoking'. If I want to make this my will, if I want it to be effective, then it becomes my second-order volition. To put it in other words, when I am not neutral with regard to the conflict between the two desires, i.e., if when the time comes to chose between smoking and

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<sup>25</sup> See Frankfurt 1971: 78 where he says "Many animals appear to have the capacity for what I shall call first-order desires" or desires of the first order, which are simply desires to do and not to do one thing or another. No animal other than man however, appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires".

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, 81.

quitting I want the first desire to constitute my will, to move me, then I can be said to have a second-order volition.

One of the examples Frankfurt gives is that of a man 'who wants to be motivated in what he does by the desire to concentrate on his work'. "If", he says "when the chips are down, it is this desire to concentrate on his work (not some other desire) that moves him to do what he does, then what he wants at that time is indeed what he wants to want"<sup>27</sup>, i.e., a second-order volition.

Frankfurt refers to the beings whose first-order desires lack second-order support as 'wantons': I shall use the term 'wanton' to refer to agents who have first order desires but who are not persons because, whether or not they have desires of the second order, they do not have second-order volitions"... The class of wantons includes all nonhuman animals that have desires and all very young children. Perhaps it also includes some adult human beings as well. In any case, adult humans may be more or less wanton, they may act wantonly, in response to first-order desires concerning which they have no volitions of the second order, more or less frequently.<sup>28</sup>

Accordingly, although we, human beings, all have the capacity to form second-order volitions, it is actually *having* them that make us persons. Human babies all have this capacity but they do not become persons until this capacity is actualised. I will try to apply this theory to some complicated cases.

Think of a being who has second-order desires but no second-order volitions. He has desires, he also has desires to want certain things. Since he can observe the conflicts which arise between them, he can see that not all his desires can be satisfied. All he lacks is the ability to want a certain desire to be his will, to be paramount over the others.

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<sup>27</sup> Frankfurt 1971: 81. My parentheses.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 82

Frankfurt holds that such a being would fail to be a person and be classified under ‘wantons’ together with human babies, the retarded, non-human animals and human vegetables.

In some cases, the very same adult human being can have times when he has second-order volitions and times when he does not. During a time he is addicted to a certain drug, he may lack the ability to evaluate his conflicting desires, i.e., to take the drug, and not to take the drug. He may not be in a position to prefer that one desire rather than the other should constitute his will. Oftentimes, we may hear him say ‘I do not know what I want’. According to Frankfurt, this reduces him to a wanton. In his words, he would be called a *wanton addict*. What if he goes through intense therapy and gradually starts having second-order volitions again? What if at the end of the therapy he wants the desire to quit to constitute his will? Are we going to say of him, ‘Oh yes, Mark, he was a person, then for a while he was a wanton and after the therapy he became a person again’?

Frankfurt tries to show that the essence of a person lies in his will, not in his reason, that a perfectly rational being can still be a wanton.<sup>29</sup> However, his hierarchical theory of desires has been criticised on several grounds. Some philosophers like Watson<sup>30</sup> have drawn our attention to the fact that there can also be conflicting second, third or even higher order desires, that the theory can be faced with a infinite regress problem. Since evaluating Frankfurt’s theory is beyond the scope of this work I will not go into a discussion of these criticisms. I would, however, like to point out that

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<sup>29</sup> See Frankfurt 1971 for a detailed discussion on this subject. See also Petit and Smith 1996.

<sup>30</sup> See Watson 1975 for his criticism of Frankfurt.

Frankfurt's theory is also compatible with the idea that person is a phase sortal. Human beings, for a certain period of time-when they are on drugs, when they are going through psychological strain- can lose the property of being persons and become wantons. They may regain the property of personhood after intense therapy. On the other hand, when person is taken to be a substance concept Frankfurt is faced with serious problems. If 'having second-order volitions' determines a beings' persistence conditions then he ceases to be and comes back to existence when he loses and regains this property. This is not credible. It also violates the principle that one thing cannot have two beginnings of existence.<sup>31</sup> This may suggest that he also is mistaken in thinking that person can determine a being's persistence conditions.

#### Person as a Certain Sort of Animal

David Wiggins is another prominent philosopher who gives an account of the status and the sense of the concept 'person'. He suggests that 'person' is not a natural kind like a horse, a tree or a human being. Natural kinds are individuated by "reference to an activity naturally embodied".<sup>32</sup> They are classified by virtue of relations, appearances and resemblances. For instance, scientists conclude that an oak tree is a kind of tree by considering the resemblances it bears to other trees. Empirical evidence plays a very important part. When they have problems identifying an object under a certain natural kind they try to gather more scientific facts, i.e., observe if the object in question

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<sup>31</sup> I will discuss this Lockean principle in section 7.4.

<sup>32</sup> Wiggins 2001: 91.

reproduces in a certain way, analyse its genetic make-up etc. Wiggins says we cannot classify person in this manner.

Another category is artifacts. Unlike natural kinds, artifacts do not have a *real essence*. They are classified by virtue of their functions. A coffee machine is a coffee making device, a mug is a liquid-containing device, and a mixer is a mixing device and so on. Since person has no such functional description it cannot be an artifact either. It is, rather, what he calls a ‘classificatory concept defined jointly in terms of natural kinds and a functional specification’.<sup>33</sup> Persons do not have clear principles of individuation in the way natural kinds do. However, their identities are not just a matter of convention as in the case of artifacts. With this account of the status of the concept of person in mind he makes the following amendment to the Lockean definition:

[A] person is any animal the physical makeup of whose species constitutes the species’ typical members thinking intelligent beings, with reason and reflection, and typically enables them to consider themselves as themselves, the same thinking things in different times and places.<sup>34</sup>

From this definition we can infer that person is a sort of animal, that the animal component is part of the essence of a person. We can also infer that all persons are animals. The person exists exactly as long as the animal exists. The human being as well as the human person comes into being when the zygote splits and settles down to develop in a unitary fashion.<sup>35</sup> This reconstructed Lockean view does not allow for non-animal persons. An intelligent Martian<sup>36</sup> which has reason and reflection falls short of being a person because he does not fall under the kind ‘animal’. The same applies to highly

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<sup>33</sup> Wiggins 1976: 161.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>35</sup> Wiggins 2001: 239.

<sup>36</sup> I define an intelligent Martian as a being which has reason and reflection but lives on different principles than animals do, e.g., does not need nourishment to survive, does not grow, dies only when exposed to water.

sophisticated computers, androids and to automata. No matter how sophisticated they might be they do not qualify as persons.

However, higher animals like chimpanzees or even dolphins can be considered persons. The term 'person' can accommodate any animal such that a typical member of its species has the *biological* capacity to feel, remember, imagine, desire and to conceive of itself as feeling, remembering, imagining and desiring:

Again it is not excluded that the extension of person should give hospitality to dolphins, to porpoises, or even (in exchange for amazing behaviour suitably explained in neurophysiological terms) to a parrot. A person is then an animal who has or is of a kind to have biological capacity to enjoy the attributes enumerated above.<sup>37</sup>

That is to say, in order to qualify as a person a being himself does not have to have any psychological properties. There is no psychological requirement an individual needs to satisfy in order to be and remain a person. He just needs to be a member of a species whose typical members are intelligent, who can think, feel, reason, remember and so on. Wiggins wants the criterion of personal identity to reduce to a criterion of identity in terms of an individual's biological species. He wants the animal to persist if it retains the minimal capacities essential to its species. He diverges from Locke at this point.

Are these capacities ever psychological? Although Wiggins shares Locke's and Rudder Baker's attitude towards the suggestion that continuity of consciousness is essential to personal identity he tries to sever the strong conceptual link between memory and identity:

Memory is not then irrelevant to personal identity, but the way it is relevant is simply that it is one highly important element amongst others in the account of what it is for a person to be still there, *alive*.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 168.

Wiggins seems to deny that memory determines personal identity. However, as we see above, it is not rendered superfluous or irrelevant either. If the agent suffers from amnesia he can still retain his personhood as long as he is still a member of a species whose typical members can remember. To put it in other words, he just needs to belong to the right species.

What if the individual were to fall into a vegetative state and lose not only all his memories but also the potentiality for experience memory? Given Wiggins' definition of personhood, he would still be a person. Locke and Wiggins disagree on this point. When Locke argues that the person ceases to be but the animal outlives it, Wiggins claims that both the human being and the animal survive falling into this state. He gives the example of the renowned dancer Nijinsky in his madness and claims that he, at this state, is both a person and a human being.<sup>39</sup> Since the person *is* the animal they both survive this radical change. When does the person cease to be? He ceases to be when the animal ceases to be, i.e., when he dies. So, his theory is not compatible with the idea that person is a phase sortal.

Wiggins seems to try to accept the best of Animalism and the best of the Psychological Account- to have his cake and eat it at the same time. However, his is a rather controversial position. Advocates of the Psychological Account would disagree with Wiggins on the idea that a being in PVS or a being who has lost all his psychological properties is still a person. Animalists would not be willing to side with him either. I will try to explain why. As in Locke's definition, memories, feelings, plans, perceptions and desires are part of Wiggins' conception of a person. Human animals still have psychological persistence conditions, not individually but as a species.

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<sup>39</sup> Wiggins 1976: 167.

I, as an individual, may survive falling into a vegetative state but psychological properties like memory are still significant for human-persons. That is why, although he claims to be an animalist, I hold that Wiggins does not make any substantial amendment to the Lockean conception of personhood. His is still a version of the classical memory-based definition.<sup>40</sup> I will come back to Wiggins' account and discuss his version of animalism in broader detail later in section 6.2.1.

### Person as a Socially Constructed Concept

The concept person plays a very crucial role in social life. Our legal systems rely heavily on what a person is. When deciding whether a criminal will go to jail or not, the first question asked of him is whether he is capable of rational choice, which for many is an essential component of personhood. Similarly, when deciding whether an individual is licensed to sell property, keep his driver's licence, or continue to hold office as a district attorney, the courts appeal to the testimony of the psychiatrists, ask them whether the being in question has any mental condition which would not allow him to act as a responsible rational agent.

Biomedical ethics uses the concept 'person' when referring to the rights of a foetus, an embryo and a human vegetable. All the pro choice and pro life arguments arise from different conceptions of personhood. The pro-life activists, those who believe that the human foetus is a 'person', oppose abortion and argue that it is murder. They argue that, just as we do, the foetus has the right to life. The pro-choice activists, on the other

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<sup>40</sup> See Olson 1997: 21 where he makes a similar point and says "Wiggins finds it at least plausible that psychological continuity could be sufficient for one to persist".

hand, try to support their arguments by referring to neurological and biological evidence that the foetus is not yet a person but has the potential to develop into one.

There is a lot of literature on when exactly an individual starts having this right.<sup>41</sup> Similar arguments are given by those who support and who are against stem cell research. If the embryo is considered a person, doing research on it to find cures for diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes is no different than using babies for this purpose.

Yet another similar controversy on foetal rights involves protecting the health of a foetus from a mother who cannot look after it, i.e., a mentally ill, or a drug addict mother. The pro-life advocates have recently gained a legal ground for the idea of 'foetal personhood'. A foetal-homicide law which has been recently passed by the U.S Congress allows for passing charges against a mother who is judged responsible for the death of a foetus. If the baby is not stillborn but has health problems due to the mother's drinking or drug abuse during pregnancy the mother can be charged with child endangerment. This law also allows for passing two charges of manslaughter in case of the death of a pregnant woman and of the foetus she was carrying.

Similar arguments are given when defending the rights of the human vegetables and comatose patients. Those who argue against organ donation and euthanasia claim that the patient is still a person, there still is a possibility that he can 'wake up' from the long sleep and start to function normally.

Debates on artificial intelligence, too, use the concept of person. Scientists and philosophers try to figure out what exactly it is that makes us persons (free will, rationality, intentional agency, the ability to ask questions?) and whether a robot can be

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<sup>41</sup> See Feldman 1992, Chapter 12 for a detailed discussion on abortion and the right to live.

so perfect as to possess this property. If, one day, the futuristic scenario that robots, automata will be part of our society, of our work force, comes true, then we will refer to the concept of person in order to decide whether they should enjoy the same right and privileges we persons do, whether we should respond to and treat them as persons. If we start a living in society similar to the one Philip K. Dick created in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*<sup>42</sup> –the book which inspired the Ridley Scott movie the *Blade Runner*- the concept will be very crucial when deciding on certain social issues, i.e., whether robots can be married to persons, whether they can be elected President or not.<sup>43</sup>

Social sciences like history, sociology, theology, psychology and anthropology also make use of the concept ‘person’. Especially after the Enlightenment when man has started seeing himself as a person above all thing, an intelligent, rational agent essentially different from the rest of nature, this concept acquired more importance. After man acquired this privileged status, many philosophers, following Locke, have tried to come up with a definition for a person and ascribe to it identity conditions different from those for human being and animal.

To put it in other words, the concept ‘person’ was constructed out of *need*. The notion of person has a very important place in social and moral philosophy and in our everyday lives. We need the concept ‘person’ to solve many ethical and legal disputes. We need to know whether the end-stage Alzheimer’s patient in the hospital is the same person as the businessman who owns millions of dollars to decide about the validity of his will. We need to know whether someone very dear to us will be the same person or whether he will be a person at all after hemispherectomy before deciding for or against

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<sup>42</sup> Dick: 1968.

<sup>43</sup> For more on the possible encounters and relationships with machines see Cherry 1991 and Hanfling 1991.

the operation. We need to know whether the convicted man is capable of rational choice before charging him with wilful manslaughter. In these cases knowing that they are human beings, that they are the same human beings, does not solve our problems.

That is to say, I agree that person is a very important concept, an even more important concept for us than the concepts of human being or organism. I am not trying to challenge this. What I wish to do is to raise doubt over its status. Unlike the first three philosophers whose definitions of personhood I have discussed in this chapter, I hold that person is not a substance concept. It does not define any being's identity conditions. I rather believe it is a socially constructed concept, a phase sortal, like husband, student, prime minister, developed to meet our society's need. I will give arguments to demonstrate this in Chapters 4 and 5.

For now, I just want to point out that we can adopt almost any definition of personhood-Locke's, Rudder Baker's, Frankfurt's or someone else's<sup>44</sup>- and hold that person is a phase sortal. The definition of personhood we choose does not say anything about the theory of personal identity we will adopt. Our inquiry into the concept can be evaluated independent of our answers to other questions on personal identity. An animalist and an advocate of the Psychological Account can both adopt Locke's classical definition of personhood. On the other hand, the status we assign to this concept-whether we believe it is a natural kind term, a substance concept, a phase sortal, a socially constructed kind- is very closely connected to the account of personal identity we will defend. Advocates of the Psychological Account must all argue that person is a substance concept, that we cease to be when we cease to be persons. Animalists, on the

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<sup>44</sup> As I have discussed in section 3.4. Wiggins' definition is not compatible with the idea that person is a phase sortal. He cannot be a phase theorist given his definition.

other hand, will try to show that it is a phase sortal, a social concept, that our survival has nothing to do with gaining and losing certain psychological properties.

I am an advocate of animalism, I hold that person is not a natural kind, that we can cease to be persons and survive. Given this, there are many definitions of person I can adopt and use. In different parts of this work, I will mention some of them - Frankfurt's, Unger's, Parfit's. I will not commit myself to any definition. However, since it is the most popular definition used by many philosophers over the centuries, and one most of my readers will be familiar with I will be referring to a Lockean person when I simply use the word "person".

### Summary

In this chapter I have first tried to distinguish between two important questions about the concept of a person. One was about defining the concept, the other about attributing to it a status. I have taken four philosophers and discussed their definitions of personhood, whether they claim person is a substance concept or a phase sortal and whether their theory is compatible with the idea that person is a phase sortal. I have first considered the classical Lockean definition, then moved on to the analysis of personhood given by Rudder Baker. I have claimed that both these philosophers ought to have been phase theorists given their definitions of personhood. I then discussed Frankfurt's theory and tried to show that it is also compatible with the idea that person is a phase sortal. I also argued that some of the consequences of these definitions may imply that these philosophers are mistaken in thinking that person is a substance concept. I then moved

on to the Wigginese amendment to the Lockean definition. I discussed why Wiggins cannot be a phase theorist given his definition and the problems this definition is prone to creating both for the animalist and the advocate of the Psychological Account. Finally, I have claimed that person is a socially constructed concept born out of our needs, that it is not a substance concept. The next chapter will be devoted to the exploration of this claim. I will try to show why person is not a substance concept and why psychology is not relevant to our survival.

## CHAPTER IV

### IS PSYCHOLOGY RELEVANT TO OUR SURVIVAL?

The Psychological Account states that we — you, I, Albert Einstein, Miles Davis, Bill Gates, James Joyce, Lawrence Olivier — are most fundamentally persons, beings with psychological and mental properties. Our persistence consists in some psychological relation such as continuity of these mental contents or capacities. That is to say, if we cease to be persons we cease to exist. We cannot survive lapsing into a persistent vegetative state. On such a view ‘person’ is an ontological kind. It defines our persistence conditions.

Animalism, the view I will develop and defend in the following chapters, denies these assumptions. Hence, this chapter will be devoted to the Psychological Account. By discussing the problems its assumptions creates and providing arguments which challenge its premises I will try to show this view false.

#### Is ‘Person’ A Kind?

One of the fundamental assumptions of the Psychological Account is the assumption that ‘person’ is a kind,<sup>45</sup> a substance concept. Advocates of this view argue

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<sup>45</sup> See Rudder Baker 2000: 11 for a defence of the view that person is an ontological kind.

that the concept “personhood” applies to the being from the moment it comes into existence until the time it ceases to be. I will try to show that person is not a substance concept but a phase sortal, that a being can lose the property of personhood and still persist. I will begin by clarifying three key concepts, namely, kind, substance concept and phase sortal. In section 4.2 I will try to show that the assumption that person is a substance concept creates a dilemma for the Psychological Account. I will argue that this dilemma cannot be resolved unless the assumption is given up.

### Kinds, Substance Concepts and Phase Sortals

All living and non-living beings undergo changes during their life-span, they alter in their material composition and their qualities, but they still persist. Some radical changes, which are usually referred to as substantial changes, on the other hand, destroy the being. A substantial change takes place when an object or a living being loses one or more of its essential properties. It also takes place when it gains one and comes into being. These essential properties are properties which the being must retain throughout its career. They correspond to the kind of the being and determine which changes it may undergo without losing its identity. A being persists only as long as it retains these essential properties, i.e., falls under the same kind. Accordingly, a being is destroyed and replaced by a numerically different one when the new being falls under a different kind. That is, when a different substance concept becomes applicable to the new being which comes into existence as a result of this substantial change.

Hence, a substance concept expresses the concept for a kind of being. In Wiggins’ terms it gives the privileged and most fundamental kind of answer to the ‘*What*

*is it?*’ question which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 6. It “stands for a concept that implicitly or explicitly determines identity, persistence and existence conditions for members of its extension.”<sup>46</sup> A substance concept applies to the object/living being at every moment throughout its existence, from the moment when it comes into being to the moment it ceases to be.<sup>47</sup>

Natural kind words like ‘cat’, ‘tree’, ‘fish’, ‘human being’, ‘river’, and ‘amoeba’ are the best candidates for substance concepts<sup>48</sup>. As I have briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, natural kinds are determined by reference to a principle of activity naturally embodied. If we have problems identifying a being as a member of a natural kind, say, human being, we can do an empirical search, gather more information. That is to say, if we have a subject that does not exactly look a human being we can do some tests, observe its internal organs, how they function, look at its blood, DNA, RNA, muscle and bone structure, etc., to see whether it does actually fall under the particular natural kind or not. If we do not observe the principle of activity associated with this natural kind, we can conclude that our subject is not a human being. Since human being is a natural kind term and hence a sortal concept, and since sortal concepts have to apply to a being at every stage of its existence, we can also conclude that our subject was never a human being and has no potential of becoming one.

Accordingly, bachelor, student, tadpole, boy, president, soccer player, aunt are not natural kinds, hence not substance concepts. They are phase sortals. Unlike substance concepts, they do not define any being’s identity conditions and they apply to a being

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<sup>46</sup> Wiggins 1980: 24, 62.

<sup>47</sup> See *ibid.*, 64-65. See also Olson 1997: 27-31 where he talks about substance concepts. See also Wiggins 2001: 30-1.

<sup>48</sup> I will be using “substance concept” and “sortal concept interchangeably.

during part of its existence. There are former and future bachelors, lawyers, presidents and soccer players. That is to say, a man can cease to be a soccer player, lawyer or president yet still persist. He can lose the property of being a bachelor by getting married and acquire a new one, being a husband. If he gets a divorce he reacquires the property of being a bachelor and loses the property of being a husband. These changes do not affect our existence at all.

Wiggins makes a distinction between two kinds of phase sortals.<sup>49</sup> There are predicates like ‘infant’, ‘tadpole’ which every member of the extension of the substance concept must satisfy if it lives long enough. On the other hand, there are predicates like ‘husband’, ‘teacher’, ‘alcoholic’ which only apply to some members for some time. A human being can become a teacher and lose this property by quitting his job and starting to work as an actor. He makes these changes himself. However the same is not true of losing the property ‘infant’. He ceases to be an infant at a certain age just in virtue of being a member of a certain species.

One of the most widely discussed questions in the field of personal identity is whether ‘person’ is a kind or a phase sortal. Those who adopt the Psychological Account, Rudder Baker for one, claim that person is an ontological kind, and hence a substance concept. Rudder Baker holds that unlike ‘adolescent’ which is a phase sortal, ‘person’ is an ontological kind. An individual can lose the property of being an adolescent, simply by growing up, and this change does not bring its existence into an end. However “the same individual who is now a person could not lose the property of being a person without ceasing to exist”<sup>50</sup>, she argues. It is precisely this view I will try

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<sup>49</sup> Wiggins 1980: 24.

<sup>50</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 11.

to argue against in the next section. I will try to show that person is a phase sortal, and that claiming that it is an ontological kind has several undesirable consequences.

### A Dilemma Created for the Psychological Account

In this section, by pointing out the dilemma holding such a view is prone to creating, I will try to challenge the assumption that person is a kind, that it can define our persistence conditions. Having presented and discussed one horn of this dilemma, namely, the Constitution View, I will offer an argument from two kinds of people, animal people and psychological people, with different persistence conditions. This argument will suggest that even if we accept the Constitution View despite its highly undesirable consequences there is still good reason for doubting that person can be a kind. Then, I will consider the other horn of the dilemma, namely that a person does not coincide with a human being. There is no human animal sitting on your chair, reading your book. The only being there is a person, a being with psychological identity conditions. When mental contents and capacities are lost a substantial change takes place. This psychological being ceases to be and is replaced by a human being. I will discuss this rather unpopular view and its shortcomings. Finally, I will discuss the so-called foetus-problem and argue that no matter which horn of the dilemma an advocate of the Psychological Account chooses he cannot avoid this problem, that he will have to say I cannot be identical with a foetus.

### Luis and Human Being

In trying to show that person cannot be a kind I will first take up an imaginary patient in a persistent vegetative state (PVS). A patient in a persistent vegetative state suffers from an irreversible and complete loss of consciousness. I hold that it would be highly controversial to consider him dead because the PVS patient retains some lower brain activity or brain stem function permitting continuation of many self regulating bodily functions. He is not even brain-dead because as opposed to a brain-dead patient who cannot breathe by himself and whose respiration would stop when disconnected from the heart-lung machine, a PVS patient can respire without being connected to any machine. That is, he is not machine dependent, not even in the sense dialysis patients are. If he is fed by a feeding tube, he can digest food. His cells keep renewing themselves. Like many other living beings, and a human baby all he needs to survive is nutrition i.e., to keep him alive you only need to feed him.<sup>51</sup> I will return to this point, in a different context, later in this section.

However since consciousness is irreversibly lost all capacity for experience is lost as well. PVS patients cannot experience any joy or sorrow, they have no hopes or fears. They cannot plan for their future, cannot care about anyone and cannot take interest in anything. Hence they are not persons in the Lockean sense and are not psychologically continuous with the being before the PVS. There is no continuity of mental life or actual mental experience. There is not even possibility of or potential for future experience and mental activity. That is to say, on both readings of Locke's definition, the weak and the strong, we do not have persons before us.

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<sup>51</sup> See Olson 1997:8 where he points out that a human vegetable is alive in the biological sense, the sense in which oysters and oak trees are alive.

On the Psychological Account they have ceased to exist and have been replaced by a numerically different being. Patients in this state include end-stage dementia patients, patients with some cerebral tumours and those who have suffered severe cerebral trauma.<sup>52</sup>

The particular case I will take up is an Alzheimer's<sup>53</sup> -an end-stage dementia-patient in PVS. In Alzheimer's, since the nerve cells, especially those that are involved in processing memory, are attacked and finally killed, the patient cannot recover. They cannot *wake up* one day and start talking to their friends. It is not the kind of amnesia Korsgaard describes as a "door that blocks an existing place".<sup>54</sup> An end-stage Alzheimer's patient's memories and mental capacities are not only inaccessible but they are erased. The amnesia Alzheimer's patients suffer from is similar to what Inwagen refers to as a case of total oblivion caused by a draft of the river of forgetfulness, Lethe. Under these circumstances the memories are irreversibly lost, in Inwagen's words "gone like a name writ in water and not like a name writ in lemon juice."<sup>55</sup>

As opposed to the people who drink waters of Lethe and lose their memories only, Alzheimer's patients also lose their mental capacities. Although early symptoms of this disease are only lapses of memory, sleep disorders, inability to cope with even small

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<sup>52</sup> See Brock 1993: 362-63 and Olson 1997: 7-11.

<sup>53</sup> Alzheimer's Disease is a neurodegenerative disease which affects 30% of the population over 60. In this disease a protein forms plaques or tangles which eventually destroy the brain. This is a protein we all use for repairing damaged cells. Normally it is soluble and washed away when it has done its job, but it is thought that in Alzheimer's the body's ageing mechanisms malfunction and instead of being soluble the larger globules of protein stick together in clumps and plaques which kill nerve cells. At the same time the cells are destroyed from the inside by a second protein. Its normal job is constantly providing the material to make tubes that allow material to be moved around inside cells. In Alzheimer's, instead of a tube, the protein makes solid helical lengths of material like springs. It keeps making them until they get tangled and cause cells to burst apart. The result of this twin attack is that — by the presence of abundant extracellular amyloid plaques and intracellular neurofibrillary lesions — nerve cells die. For more details see Spillantini, Tolney, Love, Goedert 1999 and Growdon 1995: 142-43.

<sup>54</sup> Korsgaard 2003: 173.

<sup>55</sup> Inwagen 1990: 183.

amounts of money, mood swings, paranoid delusions, difficulty in motor co-ordination, organising thoughts, concentration and communication, eventually all systems get damaged. Gradually the nerve cells die, shrivel and disappear. As a result of this, end-stage Alzheimer's patients suffer from profound memory loss and significant loss of ability in daily living. They need constant supervision and assistance with eating and getting dressed. They are unable to solve problems of any level and are disoriented to time, place and the people around them.<sup>56</sup> Finally they become bedridden, incontinent and in great need of permanent care.<sup>57</sup>

Now if we call the person before Alzheimer's Luis and the end-stage Alzheimer's patient Luis', what is Luis'' relation to this past being Luis? What is his relation to him on two modern versions of the Psychological Account, namely, on the Shoemaker-Parfit and Unger accounts of personal identity through time?

According to the Shoemaker-Parfit account, identity consists in psychological continuity with respect to mental contents, i.e., memories, interests, talents, character traits. The account, roughly, is this: If you are psychologically continuous with  $x$  with respect to mental contents you are identical with him. Psychological continuity is defined by Parfit as holding of overlapping chains of strong connectedness. Psychological connectedness, on the other hand, is holding of direct psychological connections. As opposed to psychological continuity, psychological connectedness is not a transitive relation and it can hold in degrees. That is,  $x$  today is strongly connected with  $y$  yesterday if he can remember at least half of what he experienced then, if he can act

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<sup>56</sup> Feldman, Schulzer, Wang, Tuokko, Beatie 1995: 238-39.

<sup>57</sup> Gustafson, Brun, Johanson, Passant, Risberg: 1995: 213.

according to his intentions and/or fulfil his desires.<sup>58</sup> Hence one can be psychologically continuous with a past being years ago even if he is not strongly connected to it.

If I can remember how I celebrated my last birthday with all the details, what I was wearing, who were there at the party, what kind of a cake we had, I am psychologically connected to that being a year ago. I may, however, fail to remember the similar details relating to my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. Yet if I remember a time, say, my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday when my parents took me to Disneyland, when I remembered my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday I can still be considered to be psychologically continuous with the past being who is celebrating her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Now let us return to Luis' and consider whether he is psychologically continuous with Luis. Luis' cannot remember any of the things Luis did, he cannot act according to any of his intentions and cannot fulfil any of his desires. He entertains none of Luis' hopes, plans or purposes. He is not involved in any of his hobbies, is not interested in the well-being of his children. He does not even exhibit any of his character traits. Hence, he is not psychologically connected to Luis with respect to mental contents. The chain of overlapping memories which secures psychological continuity seems to be broken. This entails that he is not psychologically continuous with him. Since psychological continuity with respect to mental contents is necessary for identity on the Shoemaker-Parfit account, whatever is lying on his bed is not identical with Luis. Luis he has ceased to be and has been replaced by Luis'.

What about on the Unger account which requires continuity with respect to basic mental capacities like ability to reason and retain in memory experiences one had rather

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<sup>58</sup> See Parfit 1984: 204-7 and Shoemaker 1984: 90 for details on the account they defend.

than contents? To put it compactly, on Unger's account the being x now is identical with a future y if and only if there is sufficiently continuous physical realisation of a core psychology between the physical realizer of x's core psychology and the physical realizer of y's core psychology.<sup>59</sup> Core psychology is a person's capacity for consciousness, for reason. The physical realizer of a person's core psychology, on the other hand, under normal circumstances, is his brain. If, however, a person's brain is gradually replaced by inanimate gadgets and if the process is sufficiently continuous the physical realizer of his core psychology can end up being an inanimate mess of electronic circuit.<sup>60</sup>

Accordingly, on Unger's account, as opposed to the Shoemaker-Parfit account, a person can survive Inwagen type total oblivion. He can persist even if all his mental contents are erased. He can also survive his brain's replacement with an inanimate object. However he ceases to be when he loses his basic mental capacities, the capacity to think, to reason, to retain events in memory. Since, Luis' has lost these basic capacities-he cannot reason, does not have any sense of time or space, of even of himself, cannot comprehend anything, cannot talk or solve even the simplest problems- besides his mental contents he fails to be psychologically continuous with Luis also on the Unger account. Hence it seems, on both versions of the Psychological Account, Luis has gone through a substantial change, he has ceased to be.

Having considered his status on two modern versions of the Psychological Account let us return to our imaginative end-stage Alzheimer's patient lying in his bed all day long without being aware of what is going on around him. He does not recognise his children, he is not oriented to anyone, and has no sense of time and space. He has

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<sup>59</sup> Unger 1990:116. See also Unger 1992 for details on core psychology and his account of personal identity through time.

<sup>60</sup> Inwagen 1993: 375.

impaired contact with reality. Moreover, he cannot communicate but can hardly produce some unintelligible sounds.

If we assume that the Psychological Account is correct he is numerically different from the past being Luis who was an intelligent man and was going to work, attending meetings, celebrating Christmas with his family, travelling, enjoying Mozart, solving cross-word puzzles. Then who or rather- since he cannot be considered a person in the Lockean sense - what is this being which is lying on his bed, holding his passport, has the same eye colour and height as the man in the pictures standing on his side table, is receiving his letters and telephone bills, whom his children call “Dad”? Is it merely his body, the lifeless remains of him, meaning the corpse he has left behind? In other words, is what is now lying on Luis’ bed a non-living organism?

I hold that it would be highly controversial to consider this being which is lying there ‘dead’. It is true that he has no psychology, has no hopes, no desires, plans or purposes. Moreover, since his neurons have died, he does lack capacity for a sentient and conscious life. He does not care about or take interest in anything. However, I do not think that the lack of these psychological properties would suffice to call him a corpse. First of all, we do not observe any decay as we would were he merely a corpse. Besides, his life processes seem to be continuing. He can breathe spontaneously. His heart can pump blood without being connected to a heart-lung machine. If he is fed, he can digest food. He can even reproduce.

If he were to cut himself blood would clot and the wound would be healed. Since all general preconditions of organic life, namely, absorption, excretion, metabolism,

growth and reproduction,<sup>61</sup> are satisfied, the being lying there cannot be considered a lifeless corpse.

He is a living organism, he is alive in some sense. He is alive in the sense in which all organisms which do not have any psychological life are alive. In the sense in which roses, corals, urchins, protozoa are alive. He is similar to these living organisms which lack the capacity for any sentient or conscious life, a capacity even many animals have.<sup>62</sup>

He is also alive on legal grounds. Whether the legal system's criteria of death be brain death-cessation of all brain activity, including that of the brain stem-or the irreversible cessation of heart and lung function<sup>63</sup>, the being lying on Luis's bed is no less alive than any of us on legal grounds. In most of the legal systems, if someone were to *kill* him he would be charged with murder. In some others, the physicians would be legally permitted to perform euthanasia on him-a practice, as the name itself suggests, which cannot be performed on already dead beings. He would not be allowed to be buried or cremated before he is actually reported dead by physicians on one of the above mentioned criteria.

You may remember the story of Terri Schiavo, who was in a PVS due to a stroke she had suffered. For thirteen years she was kept alive by being fed through a feeding tube. At the end of the thirteenth year, the court decided that there was no point in trying to keep her alive and the feeding tube was removed. Following this event, the legal battle

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<sup>61</sup> See Hoffman and Rosenkrantz 1997: 106-11.

<sup>62</sup> See Brock 1993: 364.

<sup>63</sup> Although highly controversial, some philosophers adopt a 'cerebral criterion' of death. According to this criterion anencephalic babies who are born without a cerebrum but who have brainstem activity would be considered dead and would die a 'second death' when this activity stops. As I have argued in this and the previous section it would be highly illogical to adopt cerebral criteria for death because both anencephalic babies and PVS patients are no less alive in the biological sense than plants or amoebas. For a defence of cerebral (higher brain) criteria of death see Green and Wilker 1980.

started. Her husband was talking about her right to die, on the other hand, her parents were defending her right to stay alive. The parents and the hundreds protesting outside the hospital, shouting “Letting her die will be murder”, won the battle and Terri was taken back to hospital and reconnected to the feeding tube.<sup>64</sup> Both sides agreed on the fact that she was alive. What they disagreed on was whether she should be kept alive under these circumstances or be allowed to die.

Accordingly, there certainly is a living being on both biological and legal grounds lying on that bed. Let ‘Human Being’ rigidly designate that organism. Now what is Human Being’s relation to Luis? A proponent of the Psychological Account cannot say that it is that of numerical identity for nothing can cease to exist leaving behind another entity which is numerically identical with it. Since, on the Psychological Account, Luis has gone through a substantial change when he lost his mental contents and capacities, i.e. has ceased to exist, and there is some living being which we named Human Being lying on the bed, the two cannot be numerically identical.

Hence, he seems to have been left with two options: He can adopt the view that Human Being was sharing the same place with Luis since he came into being and has outlived him. This is referred to as the Constitution (Coincidence) View. The alternative is to hold that Human Being has replaced Luis when he ceased to be. First Human Being came to existence then it ceased to exist when Luis came into being and then it came to being again when Luis ceased to be. I will try to discuss both horns of the dilemma and argue that they both are very hard to accept.

#### The Constitution View

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<sup>64</sup> Her husband won the final battle. Later she was disconnected from the life support system.

Shoemaker and Rudder Baker are the greatest advocates of the Constitution View. They claim that the living organism and the person materially coincide. That is, they share the matter as the hunk of bronze shares the same matter with the statue.<sup>65</sup> Luis who is essentially a psychological being and Human Being which is essentially a biological being, an organism, are not identical. If they were identical, by Leibniz' Law<sup>66</sup>, there would be no property Luis has but Human Being does not and no property Human Being has but Luis does not. However, under the Constitution View, since they differ in their modal properties and identity conditions they cannot be identical. Luis, too, could have outlived Human Being if, say, his cerebrum was removed and implanted in a new skull and the remaining brainless organism was destroyed.

However they accept that Luis and Human Being are not two completely independent objects like the tea pot in your kitchen closet and your cat sitting on the mat. Many of Luis' properties depend on Human Being's properties. They occupy exactly the same place since Luis came into being. They have the same weight, the same height, the same mass and even the same microstructure. What then is this very intimate relation between these two individual entities if it is not identity? They hold that this relation is constitution.

Constitution is defined by Rudder Baker as a relation which is as close to identity as a relation can get without being identity. However, unlike identity, it is an asymmetrical relation. Two individual beings cannot constitute each other. Human Being constitutes Luis, the piece of bronze constitutes the statue but not vice versa.

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<sup>65</sup> See Shoemaker 1984: 113 and Rudder Baker 2000.

<sup>66</sup> Leibniz' Law (Indiscernability of Identicals) states that if objects are identical they cannot have unshared properties. LL:  $\forall (\phi)(x)(y)(x=y \rightarrow (\phi x \leftrightarrow \phi y))$

When does Human Being start to constitute Luis? Defenders of the Psychological Account have different answers to this question depending on the definition of personhood they adopt. Some say, when the being becomes intelligent, some say when it becomes conscious. Rudder Baker holds that Human Being starts to constitute Luis when Luis becomes self conscious on acquiring a first-person perspective. First-person perspective, as I have discusses in detail in Chapter 3, on the other hand, is defined as “a perspective from which one thinks of oneself as an individual facing a world, a subject distinct from everything else”.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, Human Being does not constitute a foetus or a new-born baby. It starts to constitute a person, Luis, when it acquires first person perspective, becomes intelligent, rational etc. This amounts to saying that Luis comes into being when it acquires one of these properties and goes out of existence when it loses them.

Human Being and Luis have different histories. Accordingly, constitution is also a contingent relation, Human Being may one day cease to constitute Luis. He may go back to his solitary existence when Luis loses, say, first-person perspective, intelligence or rationality.

Holding the Constitution View seems highly problematic. I will try to explain why. First of all, it is very difficult to see why Luis and Human Being should be distinct. They are exactly of the same height, weight, mass. They occupy the same position. Moreover they are composed of exactly the same cells. When they are out taking a walk they are wearing exactly the same clothes, the same shoes. When they are home

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<sup>67</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 60.

watching TV they are looking at exactly the same screen. In other words, there is no observable difference between the two.<sup>68</sup>

An advocate of the Psychological Account might argue that they are distinct because Luis can think, go to work, solve mathematical puzzles, and remember what has happened on his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday whereas Human Being cannot. However it is difficult to see why Human Being cannot do all these things. Since, as Shoemaker and many other advocates of the Psychological Account claim, the two are composed of the same cells — same quantity and quality of stuff — Human Being cohabiting with Luis has exactly the same brain, nervous system, body and the surroundings as he does. It would be absurd to claim that of the two numerically distinct beings which are equipped with exactly the same nervous system, brain, capacities and surrounding one is intelligent and rational whereas the other is not.

The advocates of the Coincidence View give several reasons why Human Being is not rational and hence cannot think. Some of them, Shoemaker for one, claim it is an a priori truth.<sup>69</sup> Human Being cannot think by definition. Some say if he could think too, he would be indistinguishable from a person, in fact, he would *be* a person. Hence we would have two persons, Luis and Human Being, occupying the same place, which is unacceptable. I do not think either of these answers is satisfactory. They need to be able to show us why Human Being does not have any thoughts and Luis does although they are made of the same atoms, although there is no intrinsic difference between them.

More on this in Chapter 8.

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<sup>68</sup> See Olson 2001: 339 where he makes a similar point and argues that there is no empirically detectable difference between them.

<sup>69</sup> Shoemaker 1984: 92.

I hold that differences in modal properties and persistence conditions, too, fall short of providing an explanation for their distinctness. As I have mentioned above, and no advocate of the Coincidence View would disagree, that they are composed of exactly the same cells, they have the same microstructure. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to see how two things composed of exactly the same cells can have different modal properties.

This is why the defenders of the Coincidence View have to deny the microphysical supervenience principle.<sup>70</sup> This principle states that an individual's identity conditions, properties, and its kind must supervene on its microstructure. Accordingly, there cannot be two objects falling under two different kinds—a person and a human being or a statue and a chunk of marble—made up of the same molecules. The supervenience principle which may seem acceptable at first can be refuted by appealing to counterfeit dollar bills or androids. For instance, an android may be microphysically indistinguishable from a genuine human being, yet one is an android the other is a human being, they fall under different kinds. Olson gives another example. Descartes' demon rearranges your atoms until they compose an ordinary pig.<sup>71</sup> Under those circumstances the same atoms would first compose a human being and then a pig and the supervenience principle would not hold. The defenders of the Constitution View use these examples to argue that two objects with exactly the same microstructure can have identity conditions and can belong to different kinds. The examples of genuine and counterfeit objects with the same microstructure and Olson's human being-pig may suffice to refute the supervenience principle. Rudder Baker argues that all the mental and biological

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<sup>70</sup> See Rudder Baker 2002: 19 where she says "I think that all standard mereological theses are false" and argues against mereological supervenience.

<sup>71</sup> Olson 1997: 151.

properties an object has may not supervene on its microstructure. Having different surroundings, modal properties and histories may result in two objects falling under two different kinds—a person and a human being—with the same microstructure. However, even if we reject this thesis the problems for the constitutionist persist. I will try to explain why.

If we accept the fact that they have different modal properties despite having the same microstructure, this does not explain the supposed psychological difference. I think a defender of the Coincidence View who accounts for the distinctness of Human Being and Luis by referring to the difference in their modal properties first has to explain *how* and *why* they have different modal properties. No version of the Coincidence View has a satisfying answer to the following question. What difference between Human Being and Luis results in their having different modal properties? If it is not their microstructure, material composition, the arrangement of their atoms or their position what is it? The account must explain how they have come to have different modal properties without referring to another modal property. To me, it looks like they are the only differences between Human Being and Luis.

Olson asks another interesting question. He asks how we can destroy just one of two qualitatively identical objects by applying the same forces to both of them:

...That is, why does the destruction of your mental contents and capacities destroy you but not the human animal connected with you? And why does destroying all of you but your cerebrum destroy the animal but not you? What is it about the animal that enables it to survive such a thing, and what is it about you that prevents you from surviving it?<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Olson 2000: 98.

Rudder Baker is one of the philosophers who tried to solve this problem and provide answers to the questions raised above rather than rejecting them. Like the other advocates of the Psychological Account, she rejects the supervenience thesis and tries to account for the non-identity of the coinciding objects by referring to the differences in their surroundings. She takes up Michelangelo's David and the chunk of marble which constitutes it, which we may name Piece, and argues that David is essentially a statue, a work of art whereas the chunk of marble is not. However this sounds like a very vague distinction, it is very hard to see how and exactly when a statue comes into being and starts to occupy the same place with the marble piece. In David's case it may seem plausible, the chunk comes to occupy the same place with David when Michelangelo gives it the very form and the artistic community starts treating it as a statue.

However, when we think of the modern works of art it does not seem that obvious. Think of the block of marble, the piles of candy, and the light bulbs we see in the museums of contemporary art. Rudder Baker has to say that they, too, are essentially artworks. They must be since they are exhibited at the museums, in the same halls with Magritte's paintings and Dali's sculptures and the artistic community treats them as works of art.

When and how does the piece of bronze, marble or a two pound pile of candy start to occupy the same place with another individual which is essentially a work of art? The moment it is conceived as an art work in the artist's mind? When it is exhibited? When the critics say it is a work of art? Does the intention of the sculptor and the viewer make it a work of art in addition to a piece of marble?

These are questions which are very difficult to answer. It sounds absurd that at some point. It is not exactly clear when, the piece of marble starts to constitute a statue or a pile of candy starts to constitute a work of art. Olson takes it a step further and asks what if an artist simply finds a piece of marble and without even touching or moving it declares it to be a work of art.<sup>73</sup> To be consistent Rudder Baker has to accept that the piece will start constituting a statue the moment the artist declares that it is. That means a material substance will come to existence the moment he calls the piece a statue. I find this incredible.

I also hold that although being very similar cases there is a disanalogy between Luis and Human Being and David and Piece<sup>74</sup>. A defender of the Psychological Account also holds that all marble statues coincide with their constituent matter, a chunk of marble. Granting that they are distinct, we cannot think of a marble statue which is not constituted by a chunk of marble, i.e., which does not occupy the same space with it. To put it differently, they argue that, any articulated or functional object, be it statue or a living being, needs a chunk of matter for its existence.

However, the same does not seem to be true of the Luis -Human Being case, at least under the Psychological Account. Let us consider a cerebrum transplant case. The cerebrum which is the organ responsible for all higher brain activity is removed and transplanted into another skull. The supporters of this view argue that the *person* goes where his cerebrum goes. But what happens to the person when the cerebrum is waiting to be transplanted into the new skull? Does it go out of existence the moment it is removed and come into existence again the moment it is transplanted into another skull?

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<sup>73</sup> Olson 2001: 347.

<sup>74</sup> Let "Piece" rigidly designate the piece of marble which constitutes David.

No, the supporters of the Psychological Account claim that the naked cerebrum waiting to be transplanted into another skull *is* the *person*. In other words, not the human being but the naked cerebrum *constitutes* the person during the time it is kept in a cooler, or it is lying on the operation table. If it were a brain-transplant case as in Perry's Peter Pressher story where a brain surgeon carefully removes the brains of two men and puts them in each other's body,<sup>75</sup> then not naked cerebrums but whole brains would constitute the persons until they were successfully transplanted.

To take it a step further, imagine we save all the psychological and mental properties of Luis on a CD and then destroy him.<sup>76</sup> Under these circumstances, the CD would be a dormant person and would be psychologically continuous with Luis. Then let us load the information onto a highly sophisticated robot and destroy the CD. In this futuristic scenario, the CD and then the robot would constitute the person respectively.

Hence it seems that, on their view, person does not depend on a person-shaped being-it is hard to imagine what a person shaped being looks like-for its existence, in the same way the statue depends on a statue-shaped chunk of matter. It can be constituted by any organic or inorganic matter of any size, colour or shape. As in the case of angels or ghosts, it can even be an immaterial being, i.e., it may exist even when it is not constituted by any matter whatsoever.

On the other hand, the same analogy would hold between a human being and a hunk of human being-shaped matter, i.e., cells/tissues. The advocates of constitution should argue that we cannot conceive of a human being not consisting of cells and tissues, in the same way we cannot conceive of a statue not consisting of a chunk of

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<sup>75</sup> See Perry 1975: 3-5.

<sup>76</sup> Not all the defenders of the Psychological Account would take this step. Some may impose a condition requiring two stages of one thing to contain some of the same matter.

matter. Here is the picture. People who are essentially psychological beings are constituted by human beings which are essentially biological beings. Human beings themselves are constituted by human-being shaped hunk of living tissue which has different identity conditions. It looks like there is a hierarchy of structured objects. That is to say, we may have more than two materially coinciding objects. Shoemaker and Rudder Baker do not explicitly say that a human being is constituted by a chunk of living tissue. However, the same sort of reasoning that leads them to say a person is constituted by a human being must also lead them to argue for this.

I, on the other hand, deny constitution and hold that the only being sitting on my chair, reading my book is an organism, a human being. The human being does not share its space with a person or a chunk of living tissue, which is sometimes referred in the literature as “body”. Neither the person nor the body is a substance concept. Hence, the only answer we can give to the “What is it?” question is “a human being”. I will come back to charges of coincidence against animalism and discuss them in detail in 5.1.3 and later in Chapter 9.

### Animal People and Psychological People

If we follow the advocates of the Constitution View and accept that the two things, namely, Human Being and Luis, are distinct and that the former is the constitutive matter of the latter in the sense in which a chunk of bronze is the constitutive matter of a bronze statue, problems created for the proponent of the Psychological Account persist. I shall try to explain why.

Let us suppose that Luis and Human Being are distinct although they occupy the same place, that people and human animals are not identical. Here is my argument: Human animals are people in the Lockean sense, in the sense of being rational, conscious, having a psychological life, mental contents and capacities. At least the theory of constitution cannot explain why they are not. However, we also have psychological people whose psychological properties are essential to them, who would go through a substantial change if they were to lose one or more of these properties.

Hence, there seem to be two kinds of people, namely, animal people and psychological people with different identity and persistence conditions applicable to them. Animal people can survive total irreversible amnesia or loss of mental capacities whereas psychological people cannot. We have two kinds of people which occupy the same place at the same time. This also leads to an epistemic problem. We can never be sure which one of them we actually are. The advocates of the Psychological Account deny the truth of the first premise; they argue that the animal is not rational and cannot think, that it does not have any psychological properties. Since it cannot think it is not a person. Thus the undesirable conclusion is avoided. I will discuss this problem, which is also referred to in the literature as “the too-many-minds problem” or “the problem of the thinking animal”, and the reasons why it is very hard to deny the first premise in detail in Chapter 8.

### Has Human Being Replaced Luis?

Now I want to consider the other horn of the dilemma. An advocate of the Psychological Account who does not want to admit coinciding objects to his ontology may hold that Human Being came into existence the moment Luis ceased to be. There was only one being, a person, when Human Being entered the scene. Then with the loss of mental contents and capacities a substantial change has taken place. A being which was essentially a psychological one, has ceased to exist and has been replaced by another entity. A change in kind has taken place. The change Luis went through is the same sort of change a rectangular lump of dough goes through when it is put in the oven and is replaced by a cake or a wooden house goes through when it burns down into ashes.

This view, because it does not admit coinciding objects, may appeal more to commonsense. However, it is not very convincing. First of all, it seems obvious that there was a human being before Luis ceased to exist. Luis is a person, an essentially psychological being. Yet there was also a biological being there, a being that was breathing, digesting food, growing old.

If, with the destruction of the person, a human being comes into existence, then we have two human beings, two objects of the same kind, occupying exactly the same place at the same time. This seems to refute a widely accepted principle, namely, the principle that two objects of the same kind cannot occupy the same place at the same time.<sup>77</sup> Accepting this amounts to saying that two apples or two tables can occupy the same place at the same time. I think this is a very high price an advocate of this view has to pay if he wants to retain the proposition that person is a kind and also does not want to accept coinciding objects.

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<sup>77</sup> For the formulation and discussion of this principle see Wiggins 1968: 90-93.

## The Foetus Problem

Additionally, there are other serious problems which both the defenders of the Constitution View and those of the alternative theory have to deal with. Like in all other degenerative diseases, in Alzheimer's Disease loss of mental contents and capacities is a gradual process. The mean duration of the disease is six years. Memory failure starts during the very first stage, the duration of which is one to three years. Even the duration of the last stage leading to PVS, when severe cognitive and neurological deterioration takes place, may vary from one to several years.<sup>78</sup> So, it is very difficult to tell when exactly the substantial change has taken place, i.e., when exactly Luis has ceased to exist and was replaced by Human Being.

Adopting this explanation also seems highly problematic when we consider another change of a similar sort, the change from a foetus to a baby and from a baby to a person in the Lockean sense. The human embryo, a week after fertilisation, is not a person. In Rudder Baker's words "On *any* psychological account of person, a foetus that lacks psychological properties is not a person".<sup>79</sup> It has no memories, no desires, no rationality, no free will, no sense of itself or time, no plans for the future, no psychological life, no first person perspective. It is not even sentient. It begins to develop a cerebrum six weeks after fertilisation, after which point it gradually becomes sentient, and the organ begins to function as an organ of sensation and thought at least

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<sup>78</sup> Gustafson, Brun, Johanson, Passant, Risberg: 1995: 211-13.

<sup>79</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 155.

four months later.<sup>80</sup> It is only after six months that the foetus acquires some mental contents. It seems, and Rudder Baker would agree, that a foetus less than four months old cannot be considered a person on the contemporary versions of the Psychological Account I am dealing with<sup>81</sup>, and it cannot be considered a person in the Lockean sense, i.e., a rational being which can consider itself as itself in different times and places, until much later.

Accordingly, on any version of the Psychological Account a grown up person cannot be psychologically continuous, hence identical, with a two month old foetus or a new born baby. Similarly, it cannot be psychologically continuous, hence identical, with an end-stage dementia patient. If an advocate of the Psychological Account claims that a substantial change takes place when a being loses all his mental capacities, in that he goes out of existence and is immediately replaced by a numerically different being, he has to say the same thing of the foetus case. He has to claim that with the acquisition of the mental properties and a psychological life the foetus ceases to be and is replaced by a person. He cannot say that the foetus becomes a person because a person has all these properties essentially. Nothing can *become* a person and a person cannot *become* anything else. His only alternative is to argue that when the cerebrum begins to function the foetus goes out of existence and a person comes into being, and that amounts to saying that persons were never foetuses.

Supporters of the Coincidence View are also faced with the same problem. Since there is no person in the mother's womb or at birth, the human being, during these early

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<sup>80</sup> Olson 1997: 73.

<sup>81</sup> On some versions of the Psychological Account the foetus is a potential person, i.e., although it is not numerically identical with a person it has the potential to develop into one. For a discussion of these accounts see Olson 1997: 77-81.

stages of its existence, does not constitute a person. It starts to constitute one and share its space with it when a person comes into being, when we can observe certain psychological properties. That is to say, the human being's solitary existence ends when a psychological being comes into being and it always has a chance of going back to its lonely days if and when this new being loses its essential psychological properties. As I have discussed above, since gaining and losing these properties does not happen overnight, sometimes it may be very hard to determine when we have a lonely human being and when he has a psychological friend he shares his space and atoms with. I will return to the so-called foetus problem in the next chapter.

### Summary

I hold that the defender of the Psychological Account, if he does not adopt a relativistic notion of identity or perdurantism,<sup>82</sup> has to accept one of the horns of the dilemma I have presented in this chapter. Since he cannot claim that Luis and Human Being are identical he has to choose between the following two views. He can deny the supervenience principle and argue that Human Being and Luis are not identical although they have the same microstructure and although there is no observable-empirical-difference between the two. Accordingly, first Human Being comes into being, then with the emergence of some psychological properties another entity with psychological

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<sup>82</sup> If he adopts relative identity, since identity will be relativised to sortal, he can argue that the Luis lying on the on bed is the same human being but not the person as Human Being. If he adopts a perdurantist account he may argue that during the time one constitutes the other Human Being and Luis are identical only as the temporal parts they are, i.e., that Luis is a temporal part of Human Being. For a discussion of the perdurantist account see section 2.2.2.

persistence conditions, Luis, comes into existence and starts to share its space with it. They cohabit for many years.

When these psychological properties are lost Luis ceases to be and the Human Being goes back to his solitary existence. In this case, he also has to accept that there are two kinds of people, namely, animal people and psychological people with different persistence condition. If he does not want to admit coinciding objects to his ontology, he then has to accept the other horn of the dilemma and try and show that Luis has ceased to exist and was replaced by Human Being when the mental contents and capacities were lost-in which case he will also have to admit that a foetus goes through a substantial change when the cerebrum begins to function and is replaced by a person. These are both very undesirable consequences.

## CHAPTER V

### FURTHER PROBLEMS

In the present chapter I will try to show that accepting one of the horns of the dilemma I have tried to discuss in the previous chapter, namely, allowing for coinciding human beings and persons, creates a further problem for the advocate of the Psychological Account. It leads to an ontological inflation. For this, I will first assume that the Psychological Account is correct and try to show the degree of ontological inflation this assumption is prone to creating. Section 5.2 will treat another problem, a problem concerning other psychological kinds corresponding to other beings with psychological states, such as dogs, an advocate of the Psychological Account has to deal with.

#### Coincidence and Overpopulation

I hold that if we, like Shoemaker and Rudder Baker, accept that the person and the human being can coincide, i.e., can occupy the same spatiotemporal position, we are bound to allowing for many more beings coinciding with them. This present section will be mostly devoted to this issue.

#### Why They Claim Persons and Human Beings Are Distinct

Let us assume with the defenders of the Coincidence View that under normal circumstances-that is, when there is no irreversible total amnesia, loss of mental

capacities, teletransportation<sup>83</sup>, cerebrum removal or transplant-, whenever we have a person before us there is also a coinciding human being and vice versa.<sup>84</sup> We cannot distinguish the two by the difference in their spatial position, yet, granting Leibniz' Law we cannot claim they are numerically identical. The person and the human being have unshared properties. First of all, they have different persistence conditions. Destruction of the cerebrum, total irreversible amnesia or falling into a persistent vegetative state would destroy the person without affecting the existence of the human being which coincides with it. On the other hand, going through a radical metamorphosis and becoming a giant cockroach like Kafka's Gregor Samsa would mean the destruction of the human being. However the person would survive this change. After he turns into a cockroach Gregor Samsa has the same character traits. He remembers the members of his family and his past. Despite his present state, his main concern is getting to work on time. He is unable to speak however, he is still rational, he seems to retain his thinking faculties. He is able to evaluate his family members' attitudes towards him, he feels upset when his sister does not want to play the violin for him and when his dad almost kills him.

Now my critic may argue that what Gregor goes through does not qualify as the destruction of the human being. He may say the human being remains but in the outward form of an insect. However, what has changed is not only the outward form. Gregor is

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<sup>83</sup> Teletransportation (or teleportation) is the process of moving objects from one place to another by encoding information about an object, transmitting the information to another place, such as on a radio signal, and creating a copy of the original object in the new location. The use of teleportation as a means of transport for humans still has considerable unresolved technical and philosophical issues, such as exactly how to record the human body sufficiently accurately and also be able to reconstruct it, and whether destroying a human in one place and recreating a copy elsewhere would provide a sufficient experience of continuity of existence. Religious people wonder if the soul is recopied or destroyed, and might even consider it murder. For a detailed discussion see Parfit 1984: Chapter 10.

<sup>84</sup> See Olson 1997: 97-102 where he discusses the problem of coincidence.

now able to do things the members of kind human being cannot do. He crawls up the walls and over the ceiling. The food human beings eat disgust him, he feeds on what other insects feed on. An apple thrown at him leaves a permanent mark on his body. The food and water his family members provide do not suffice to keep him alive. In short, he now lives on some other principle. It is not only his form which has changed but also the way his body functions, feels, digests food, the secretions his glands produce. That is to say, he no longer falls under the kind human being. But the person is there with all its psychological properties. I will come back to and discuss this case again in Chapter 7.

The human being and the person also have different historical properties. The human being antedates the person, it existed before the person came into being. The cerebrum, the organ which is responsible for all higher brain activity such as reasoning, starts functioning five to six months after fertilisation.

Moreover, due to a phenomenon which in psychology is referred to as childhood or infantile amnesia most of us are unable to remember events that took place prior to our third or even fourth birthdays. Studies show that unlike the memories of older children and adults, which can endure for long periods of time, our early episodic memories are temporary and transitory and hence cannot be recalled at a later age.<sup>85</sup>

Hence, if the version of the Psychological Account one adopts requires psychological continuity with respect to event memories as well, like, the Lockean

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<sup>85</sup> There are a variety of alternative theoretical explanations which try to account for this phenomenon. Some psychologists claim that this is due to the fact that the hippocampus, the organ responsible for recording incidents and maintaining them, is not sufficiently developed. Recent studies, on the other hand, support the idea that before that age we lack a narrative-form structure which enables the construction and maintenance of a story about our participation in a specific event. This system provides the means of organising early episodic memories into a form which allows for memory of who, what, where, why and how that characterises adult autobiographical memories. See Bauer 1993: 30.

account, the person comes into existence at last three years later than the human being. If he adopts a weaker version, like Parfit's or Lewis' accounts, which require psychological connectedness and continuity rather than event memory, the person and human being still come into being at different times.

That is to say, even on the weakest versions of the Psychological Account which requires continuity only with respect to mental contents and capacities, the person comes into existence when the cerebrum starts functioning, i.e., at least five months after fertilisation. On the other hand, the human being, as a living organism, is there even couple of weeks after fertilisation. Even at this very early stage a geneticist can recognise it as a human foetus by examining the DNA. Hence, on the Psychological Account, the person comes into existence much later than the human being does.

As they have different histories, the person and the human being may also have different futures. Since they have different persistence conditions, one of them may outlive the other as I have tried to discuss above. On the basis of these arguments and granting Leibniz' Law the proponents of the Psychological Account claim that the person and the human being are not identical.

### Human Beings, Persons and Talksons

Now let us, for the sake of argument, think of a being which is essentially a 'talkson', which persists as long as it has the ability to talk. That is, something is a talkson, if and only if it is such that it has the ability to talk. By "the ability to talk", I mean the ability to communicate with others by the use of conventionalised, audible,

articulate, meaningful sounds and the use of words whose pronunciation and the methods of combining them are used and understood by a considerable community and established long usage<sup>86</sup>.

A talkson persists through time as long as it falls under the kind 'talkson'. As opposed to human beings and persons who have this ability accidentally, who would merely undergo an alteration if they were to lose it, a talkson comes into existence when it acquires the ability to talk and suffers a substantial change, i.e., goes out of existence, when it loses it permanently.

In the following sections I will argue that, on my opponents' account, most of the time when we have a human being and/or a person we also have a talkson coinciding with them. Granting Leibniz' Law, we cannot say that the talkson is numerically identical with the person or the human being because they have different historical properties and persistence conditions. First of all, most of the time, both the human being and the person antedate the talkson. The Human being comes into existence right after fertilisation, the person comes into being approximately five months after that, when the cerebrum starts functioning as an organ of thought. However, the talkson comes into existence when the organism in question acquires the ability to talk, which usually takes place later.<sup>87</sup> Babies are not born with this ability. A human child's first words become recognisable at about the time of his first birthday, by 14 months the average child begins to use single words spontaneously and at the second birthday his vocabulary size reaches

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<sup>86</sup> I have formulated this definition rearranging Martin's definition of language. See Martin 1981: 118.

<sup>87</sup> My view on talkson's relation to person presupposes that there can be thought without language. I am aware of the fact that this is not an uncontroversial view. However, since it is beyond the scope of this work I will not go into a discussion of it.

between 100-200 words. It is a year or later than that when the complex sentences of more adult speech being to appear.<sup>88</sup>

They also have different persistence conditions. Losing the ability to talk permanently but retaining all other brain activity would destroy the talkson. However the person and the human being would survive this change. On the other hand, an end-stage Alzheimer's patient like Luis who is suffering from severe amnesia and loss of almost all higher brain activity but who can mumble a few words<sup>89</sup> would still be a talkson and a human being without being a person. That is to say, they may also have different futures, one can outlive the other two. Considering these differences in their histories and persistence conditions, the three beings cited above are distinct. Saying otherwise would flout Leibniz' Law, which is usually taken to be a metaphysical truth.

Moreover there are beings who are persons but not talksons and vice versa. A robot or a well-trained parrot which can talk but cannot be considered rational in the Lockean sense would be a talkson without being a person or a human being. Similarly a human being who, due to an accident or a disease has lost the ability to talk, or was born with this deficiency who satisfies Locke's criteria of personhood would be a person without being a talkson. Since both being and not being something is a contradiction in terms human beings, persons and talksons are distinct.<sup>90</sup>

Before I proceed any further, I should try to bring further clarification to the definition of a talkson. Since a talkson has the capacity to talk essentially, it cannot

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<sup>88</sup> Martin 1981: 121-23.

<sup>89</sup> See Feldman, Schulzer, Wang, Tuokko, Beatie 1995: 238 where they say an end-stage Alzheimer's patient suffers from impairment of receptive and expressive language but can produce some hardly intelligible speech.

<sup>90</sup> Defenders of "contingent identity" hold that this does not lead into a contradiction. They argue that human beings and persons might have been distinct but in fact they happen to be identical. Accordingly, if the human being and the person cease to be simultaneously they are identical. If one survives the other they are not identical. For more on contingent identity see Gibbard 1971: 187-21.

*become* an aphasic<sup>91</sup>, in the same way in which a person who has his psychological properties like his mental contents and the ability to reason essentially cannot *become* a human vegetable. It ceases to be and is replaced by one. Likewise, when a talkson loses the capacity to talk permanently, it goes through a substantial change, it no longer falls under the kind 'talkson'. A kind change takes place and it ceases to be. To put it in other words, if 'Talkson' rigidly designates this being which persist as long as it has the capacity to talk and 'Aphacis' a being which lacks this property, then when he loses his essential property, Talkson would go out of existence and would be replaced by Aphasic.

Accordingly, we can say that when I meet my friend Terry I am actually meeting three numerically different beings, a human being, a person and a talkson. I am having coffee with three numerically different beings which can become two if she loses her ability of speech, or can suddenly become one if she has an accident and as a result of this turns into a human vegetable.

By the same token, we can say that right after fertilisation a human foetus is only one entity, namely a human being. When her cerebrum starts to function as an organ of thought she starts to share its place with a person which is a distinct being. Roughly a year after her birth, when she gradually acquires the ability to talk, a third being starts to coincide with them, namely a talkson. A hearson who has the ability to hear essentially and a walkson who has the ability to walk essentially might as well have joined them in between. Accordingly, by the time she is three years she might be occupying the same place with all four of them.

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<sup>91</sup> Person who has lost the ability of speech due to some damage of the speech centres.

Likewise, when having coffee with Terry I may actually be having coffee with these five distinct beings: a human being, a person, a talkson, a walkson and a hearson or even many more.

I hold that when an advocate of the Psychological Account allows for a being, namely a person, who has his psychological and mental properties essentially and who most of the times coincides with a numerically different being, namely, a human being, he becomes bound to accepting many other coincident entities that have their properties essentially. If a human being and a person who are distinct only in virtue of the difference in their historical properties and persistence conditions can coincide, many other beings such as talksons and walksons, as well, can coincide with them. As I have tried to illustrate above, this leads to an undesirable ontological inflation. It overpopulates the world. It is also very counterintuitive. If while I am having coffee with Terry someone asks me how many individuals are sitting opposite me my natural response is to answer “one” instead of four or five.<sup>92</sup>

Now my critic, a defender of the Psychological Account, may respond to this argument from ontological inflation by claiming that person is a kind and hence a being can essentially be a person, but the same does not hold of talkson and walkson. These are not real kinds. Hence they cannot define the persistence conditions of any being. Accordingly, by accepting two coincident beings, namely, a human being and a person, the Psychological Account does not become bound to accepting many more.

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<sup>92</sup> Olson talks about a fictional philosopher who is fascinated by our locomotive capacities and comes up with a locomotive criterion of identity not only for human beings but for all mobile objects to defend his theory against the advocates of the Psychological Account. He claims that *person* cannot be a kind because of the same reason why *locomotor* cannot be one. However he does not address the problem of ontological inflation which I believe is inescapable for the advocates of the Psychological Account. See Olson 1997:31-6. Noonan also mentions Elizabeth Ascombe using the example of a ‘roller’, a rolling, moving thing with size and weight, in her lectures to arrive at a similar conclusion, namely, that ‘person’ cannot be a kind. See Noonan 1998: 315.

However, I hold that responding to this argument from ontological inflation by claiming that person is a real kind whereas walkson and talkson are not would be an ad hoc move. An advocate of the Psychological Account needs a principle to argue for this, i.e., a principle which can determine which kinds are *real* kinds. Being able to reason, keep instances in memory, consider itself as itself in different times and places are all capacities or abilities, so are being able to talk, walk and hear. If some being can have the first set of abilities essentially some other being can have one or more of the others essentially. Hence, if the essential properties like the ability to reason, keep instances in memory and so on can correspond with a kind, namely, person, the ability to talk can correspond with another kind, talkson.

If a being can cease to be when it loses its mental contents and capacities, some other being can go out of existence when it loses the ability to talk or walk. From this we can infer that for every ability or capacity a being has, some beings have that ability essentially and these abilities correspond to their kinds.

Olson makes a similar point and argues that an advocate of the Psychological Account who holds that person is a substance concept also has to hold that locomotor-a being which persists if and only if it can move-is a substance concept too. If, on the other hand, he does not want to accept this rather absurd conclusion he has to deny that person is a substance concept:

To say that something is person is rather like saying that something is a locomotor.

Personhood, like locomotion, is merely a capacity or ability of a thing, and different kinds of people may have no more intrinsic similarity than do different kinds of locomotors. If anything, human beings, gods and electric computers have even less in common than crabs and battleships have. To say that something is

a person-roughly a rational, conscious being-tells us even less about *what* that thing is than to say that it is a locomotor.<sup>93</sup>

I do not think that an advocate of the Psychological Account would be willing to accept this conclusion and allow for locomotors, and talksons in his ontology-if for no other reason, because it leads to an undesirable and counterintuitive ontological inflation. However, to be able to reject it, he has to refer to a principle, a principle which could explain why something can essentially be a person but cannot be a talkson, he has to explain why personhood can define the persistence conditions of a being and talksonhood cannot.

He needs to explain why person can be a substance concept and talkson cannot be one. It seems to me they both tell us no more than what a being has to be able to do or have the capacity to do in order to persist. A person survives as long as he can think, reason etc. and a talkson survives as long as it can talk.

If he cannot come up with such a principle he has to accept that if, when thinking that I am talking to one being I am actually talking to be two distinct beings, two individuals, a human being and a person, I might as well be talking to three or four distinct beings, a human being, a person, a talkson and a walkson and maybe several others.

Another line of criticism could be this: You are defining talksons and walksons into existence, as other philosophers gave a definition of a Tib as part of Tibbles<sup>94</sup> and assumed without argument that there was such a being. What I am doing is different. I

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<sup>93</sup> Olson 1997: 35.

<sup>94</sup> The argument goes like this. Suppose a cat, Tibbles, is sitting on a mat. Now consider that portion of Tibbles that includes everything except its tail – its “tail complement” – and call it “Tib”. Tib is smaller than Tibbles, they have different histories. So they are not identical. It looks like we have two cats sitting on the mat. For a detailed discussion of the argument see Wiggins 1968, Geach 1980 Inwagen 1981 and Unger 1980.

am not defining persons into existence. We all accept them already. This is a valid point. However, I am not defining objects into existence. By giving definitions of talksons and walksons all I am trying to do is raise the question whether person, when it was defined for the first time, may have been defined in exactly the same way I am defining talksons and walksons. Yes, we all accept these definitions now and have been using them for centuries, however there was a time when person was not defined as such. I just want to point out that a kind most of us take for granted could have been defined in this very manner. Person is not a biological kind. It is not a natural kind. It is not defined by scientists trying to classify species or types. We cannot tell that a being is a person by studying its DNA. Thus, it is very likely that it could have been defined this way. If we accept one non-natural kind why can't we accept a few more?

### The Corpse Problem

Consider this argument a defender of the Psychological Account can give against the coherence of my theory:

On your view the body is not identical with the human being, given that a corpse is not a human. So the inflation problem emerges once again. When we have coffee together, sitting opposite to me is a human being as well as your body. So I am having coffee with two things, namely, a human being and a body.

This problem is usually referred to in the literature as “The Corpse Problem”. I will give an elaborate definition of what I mean by ‘human being’ in Chapter 7, but at this point I want to make it clear why a human being does not coincide with a human

body. A human body is not a substance concept. The only substance concept applicable to the being sitting across from me is 'human being'. Those who claim that I coincide with a body base their arguments on the fact that when we die we leave behind a body. Since the body outlives the human being it cannot be identical with it. The animalism I am defending entails that when we die a substantial change takes place. The human being which is an organism, hence necessarily alive, ceases to be and is replaced by a corpse. It does not 'leave behind' a body it used to share the same place with, rather, it goes out of existence and is replaced by a corpse. The change that takes place when a human being dies is like the change a house goes through when it is burned down. The house ceases to be and is replaced by a pile of ashes. When death occurs the organism does not exist as a corpse as Rudder Baker claims<sup>95</sup>, it ceases to be. There is no such thing as a 'dead organism', it is a contradiction in terms. A human being is not identical to a corpse, one is necessarily alive, the other is necessarily dead. No human being survives death.

However, this does not entail that they coincide during the time the human being is alive. When the human being is there the corpse is not and similarly when the corpse is there the human being is not. I will come back to this point and discuss it in detail in Chapter 7.

### Can There be other Psychological Kinds?

The problem of ontological inflation is not the only problem the assumption that 'person' is a kind is prone to creating. Another problem concerns other psychological

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<sup>95</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 207.

kinds, which correspond to other biological beings with psychological properties. During the Enlightenment man's links with the rest of the biological beings were cut. Descartes believed non-human animals were not even conscious.<sup>96</sup> Before Darwin the continuity between human beings and the rest of nature was not emphasised. It was claimed that there was a big gap between human beings and other living beings. Darwin and his followers, Wilson being one of them, have tried to show the kinship between humans and other animals and emphasise the fact that human beings were not unique and fundamentally different from other animals.<sup>97</sup> This led to the development of comparative psychology. Psychologists started studying the continuities between human being and animal consciousness and intelligence. With the advances in medical research they also started to analyse and compare brain maps and instinctive reactions. Angell, for one, tried to show that appropriate stimuli triggered similar instinctive reactions in human beings and other animals, for instance, that in case of anger nostrils dilate, veins gorge, teeth are set.<sup>98</sup>

As the view that human beings are altogether different from other animals started to die, some scientists, psychologists and sociologists emphasising the similarities between them have been accused of attributing too much to the animal mind and of anthropomorphism-seeing human qualities in other entities. All we could observe was an animal behaving in a certain kind of way, a way in which we behave when we have a

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<sup>96</sup> Many Cartesians believe that Descartes saw animals as unconscious automata. However, some of his later texts may indicate that he attributed sensation to animals. See *Meditation Six* for a support of this view.

<sup>97</sup> See Darwin 1872 for his theories suggesting mental continuity between human beings and other animals. Also see E. Wilson 1975.

<sup>98</sup> See Crook 1998 where he quotes Angell: "The evolution of the race has been notoriously sanguinary, and we should feel no surprise that under the excitement of actual combat the old brute should display the cloven hoof."

certain feeling or thought, i.e., being sad, happy or angry. However attributing the same thoughts and feeling to the animals was not a legitimate move.<sup>99</sup>

This is still an ongoing debate. Those who believe some animals have the same kind of feelings we have try to cite evidence that they can suffer emotionally-be depressed, jealous, bored and scared. By showing that they can feel similar feelings and think similar thoughts they are trying to prevent animals being used in scientific research and kept in the zoos.

These scientists may be right in thinking that an animal can be happy. However, since the only thing we can observe is their behaviour and a discussion on the existence or non-existence of mental states in animals is beyond the scope of this work, I do not want to commit myself to the existence of these states. However I will assume that higher animals like apes and dogs have some kind of psychology.<sup>100</sup>

Consider a dog. A dog is an animal, a living organism, it comes into the world, grows, reproduces, and dies. It is sentient<sup>101</sup> and conscious. Being a 'higher' animal it also has psychological properties which flies and bacteria lack. It can be trained to do certain things in a certain way and respond to certain stimuli. It can be trained to protect a house, catch a drug dealer, accompany a blind person or find truffles. It can be conditioned by reward or punishment.

Just as in the case of human beings, these psychological properties are contingent.

A dog trained not to eat anything given by a stranger and protecting the house against

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<sup>99</sup> See D. Wilson 2002 for his discussion on anthropomorphism and ethology.

<sup>100</sup> I am using "having a psychology" or "having psychological properties in the sense of "having mental properties besides physical ones".

<sup>101</sup> In the present work, the term 'sentient' refers to organisms which are equipped with a sensory mechanism. I hold with Denkel that being sentient does not necessitate the capacity to conceptualise, to form perceptual beliefs on the basis of sensory input. See Denkel 1999: 3. On this conception of sentience, organisms which do not have a developed cognitive apparatus, like birds and lobsters, too, count as sentient.

thieves may lose all these psychological properties if, for instance, due to an accident it suffers from severe cerebral trauma.

The supporters of the Psychological Account claim that human beings cannot think, solve mathematical problems, or do scientific research. It is the person who does all these things. The animal-the human being- and the person are not identical. They belong to different kinds, hence different identity conditions apply to them. They have different modal properties.

The animal survives lapsing into a persistent vegetative state whereas the person does not. However they are connected in an intimate way. They are made up of exactly the same material. This intimate relation is called constitution.<sup>102</sup> The animal constitutes the person. This is the reason why an advocate of the Psychological Account has to deny that the animal can think, he has to show that these materially coinciding objects differ qualitatively. If the animal could think, could solve mathematical problems, could create works of art he would share his mental properties with the person. It would be very hard to tell one from the other. Some philosophers claim since no property would remain unshared, by Leibniz' Law, they would be identical.

This is precisely what the supporter of the Psychological Account does not want. He wants to show that the different mental properties they have set them apart, that the relationship between them is not of identity but of constitution. He wants to show that although they share all their atoms and their location the person and the human being are distinct.

If we extend this argument to dogs we must claim that it is not the dog—the biological being— who can recognise his owner's voice, who has memory, who can catch

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<sup>102</sup> See Rudder Baker 2000: Chapter 4.

a drug dealer but some psychological being related to dogs in the same way a person is related to human beings. In somewhat greater precision here is the point: if we cannot attribute memory and rationality to the human being-the animal, the biological being-, we cannot attribute memory, consciousness or sentience to the dog, the animal. By implication, if we accept that the dog has a psychological life, and if we cannot attribute these psychological properties to it, there must be a psychological kind that stands to dogs as person stands to human beings.

This psychological kind which corresponds to dogs cannot be person because dogs do not have reason and reflection. They cannot solve the problems persons can solve, they do not have first person perspective, or second order volitions. They cannot be considered intelligent in the sense required in a person. It seems, although a dog has some psychology which differentiates it from some other living organisms such as corals, protozoa and plants which lack the capacity for a psychological life, it is not a person.

Hence, there must be a psychological kind, distinct from person, which can correspond to the dog's essential psychological properties. Let us call this kind which corresponds to the psychological life of dogs, 'skilson'.<sup>103</sup>

Accordingly, under normal conditions, every dog coincides with a skilson. However, by the same reason human being and person are distinct, the dog and the skilson are not numerically identical. Skilsons are essentially psychological entities, dogs are essentially biological entities. That is to say, if the psychological properties are lost a skilson ceases to be, leaving behind a dog. Since skilsons are essentially skilsons they

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<sup>103</sup> Mackie calls thinking subjects related to dogs 'cursons'. He coins this term to make the point that Brownson could be the same curson but not the same dog as Brown. See Mackie 1999: 372-3.

cannot become *dog-vegetables*.<sup>104</sup> Similarly dog embryos, since they lack these capacities, cannot become skilsons. It turns out that, as in the human being-person case, a skilson was never a dog embryo and cannot become a dog vegetable. Noonan, a defender of neo-Lockeanism, admits that the application of foetus and vegetable problems to dogs constitutes a problem for the Psychological Account: “Since dogs also begin life as foetuses and may end it in a permanent vegetative state, these considerations provide equally strong support, *mutatis mutandis*, for distinguishing psychologically individuated canine individuals from canine animals”.<sup>105</sup>

Moreover, there can be several other psychological kinds corresponding to the essential psychological properties of other beings. For instance, birds. Birds also have a psychology. They are at least, as opposed to plants and several other living organisms, sentient beings. They can feel pain. However, the psychological kind corresponding to birds cannot be skilson, because they lack many of the properties required of a being to be considered a skilson, e.g., a more sophisticated long term memory, more developed skills in problem solving. Hence another psychological kind, call it ‘pulson’, must stand to birds as skilson stands to dogs.

I maintain that the existence of other psychological kinds like skilson and pulson creates a problem for the Psychological Account. It is a source of embarrassment. It diminishes the force of their arguments for the existence of person as a substance concept, the kind we all fall under and which determines our identity conditions. Their claim that a person is essentially a person becomes questionable. I will try to explain

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<sup>104</sup> A ‘dog-vegetable’ is a word I have derived from human vegetable. It refers to a dog which has lost all its psychological contents and capacities irreversibly due to a trauma or cerebral tumour but can maintain its life-sustaining functions without artificial means.

<sup>105</sup> Noonan 2001: 86.

how. If many animals, too, gain and lose certain psychological properties throughout their life span, then we can think of a corresponding psychological kind for each such general type. We can also claim that the psychological kind is the most fundamental one. What does this mean? It means when skilsons and pulsons come into being a new thing comes into existence. When a dog acquires certain psychological properties it starts to share its atoms with a skilson. It also means that nothing can cease to be a skilson without ceasing to exist.

The defenders of the Psychological Account claim the adult you is not identical to the baby your mom gave birth to many years ago because he lacks certain psychological properties. This means they also have to accept that the newborn puppy you bought five years ago is not identical to the watchdog that is protecting your house against intruders. It would be odd to write articles and books on the “special” psychological kind person and not even mention skilsons and pulsons-or whatever other name they would give them. To be consistent, they would have to offer accounts for skilson and pulson identities through time as well. As we know, there are many beings with psychological states. What will the advocates of the Psychological Account regard as the essential property of a given type of being with psychological states? Once they determine these essential properties they would have to develop accounts which will determine what kind of changes they can undergo without losing their identity.

Furthermore, they would have to show that the transplant intuition, namely, the intuition that we go where our cerebrums go, has to apply to higher non-human animals. I hold that we do not have the same intuition with regards to cats and dogs. I will try to illustrate it. Say we have two dogs, Barny and Buzz. Barny and Buzz suffer the same

fate Elizabeth and Helen suffer in Chapter 1. During an operation, their cerebrums get mistakenly placed in each other's skull. The doctors tell us what happened and apologize. After a few days, when they recover, we take the two dogs home. We would very likely keep on calling the dog who has Buzz's cerebrum Barney and the one who has Barney's cerebrum Buzz. If we observed any changes we would say "Barney has changed after the unfortunate operation" but would not assume he is where his cerebrum is and go play with the dog that has his cerebrum when we want to play with him. This is why, I believe, the existence of other psychological beings corresponding to animals diminishes the strength of this intuition. The same intuition does not seem to apply to other beings that have psychology.

There is another moral argument I would like to consider, the so-called treatment argument. The advocates of the Psychological Account argue that after the cerebrum switch operation Helen and Elizabeth go through, Elizabeth's mother is more likely to visit the woman who has her daughter's cerebrum.<sup>106</sup> She looks very different from her daughter but she is the one who will recognize her, call her "mom" and ask her about the kids. She is the one who thinks she is Elizabeth, remembers her friends and family. Thus, we can conclude that we go where our cerebrums go. This argument is not very convincing. It assumes that if it is justified to treat someone as if he were a certain person we can conclude that he is that person. Let us, for argument's sake, assume it is a strong argument and apply this to the Barney-Buzz case. After the operation we take both of them home. Now which one of them does Barney's mom run to? The dog which has his cerebrum or the one which looks, smells, feels like him? If you know anything

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<sup>106</sup> See page 1 for a detailed description of this hypothetical case.

about dogs you would say that she runs towards the latter. She treats *him* as her son. That is to say, the treatment argument does not hold for other animals with psychology.

To block these undesirable consequences, a proponent of the Psychological Account may amend the Lockean definition of person. He can claim that all living beings with a psychological life are persons, i.e., having psychology-no matter how developed it is-is both necessary and sufficient for personhood. In other words, he can claim that there is only one psychological kind -person- applicable to all beings which have some psychology. In my view, changing the widely accepted concept of person would be a very high price to pay in trying to avoid this conclusion. This would have many ethical and legal consequences. For instance, the penal code would have to be rewritten. Someone who stole his neighbour's dog would not be charged with theft but with holding a person hostage against his will. Likewise, a dog that killed another dog would be charged with murder. Furthermore, the problems with the intuition and treatment arguments would still stand.

Another strategy may involve rejecting the claim that other living beings, including higher animals like apes and dogs have psychology. This was how Descartes and his contemporaries avoided these problems. They held that human being was the only conscious animal. If non-human animals do not have any psychology, we cannot talk about a psychological kind, distinct from person, standing to them. This saves the widely held conception of person but at the price of violating another, namely, the widely held conception of animals. Denying that other living beings have some psychology would amount to claiming that even highly sophisticated living beings like apes are no different than corals or protozoa in this respect. It would follow from this that there is no point in

trying to communicate with them or training them. It would also mean that performing cognitive experiments involving these beings is a futile effort — a claim which, I hold, is very controversial.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> The inflation may depend on the assumption that the capacity for each type of being with a mind distinguishes that kind of animal from all lower species. This may derive from Locke's account on which persons are essentially higher than all lower species. Evidently, wherever you find a person you will also find a skilson, pulson and so on. The defenders of the Psychological Account may be able to avoid this inflation by defining a person simply as a being capable of mental states — whether or not 'person' is the word for it — or holding that such a being is the only sort of being that is capable essentially of mental states. I thank Stephen Voss for this comment.

## Summary

This concludes my discussion that person cannot be a kind. In this chapter by offering an argument from ontological inflation and an argument from existence of other psychological kinds which correspond to other biological beings that have psychological properties I have tried to cast further doubt on the claim that person is a kind. I have tried to show that this claim that person, under normal circumstances, coincides with another individual, a human being, is highly problematic. 'If person is not a kind what are we?' is the question which immediately comes to mind. The following chapter will be devoted to a discussion of this question. I will try to answer Descartes' question 'What are we?'

## CHAPTER VI

### WHAT ARE WE?

In this chapter I will try to answer a very fundamental question, ‘What are we?’ The answer to this question tells us what sort of things we are and also what our most fundamental properties are. Are we concrete or abstract? Are we material or immaterial? Are we our brains? Our bodies? Our brain stems? Do we endure through time or are we temporally extended like events?

This is a question which can be asked independently of the ‘What is a person?’ question which I have discussed in Chapter 3. You may have an answer to one of these questions without even having given a thought to the other one. You may agree with Rudder Baker and hold that being a person is having a first person perspective and at the same time be a dualist or materialist, a particularist or a universalist. You may hold that you and I are immaterial substances and accept or deny Locke’s definition of personhood.

This question, unlike the ‘What is a person?’ question can be asked of all things. ‘What am I?’<sup>108</sup> is the ‘What is it?’ question asked in the first person. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, the answer to this question provides us with the substance concept which is applicable to an object or a being, and the kind it falls under. Since the essence of a being corresponds with its kind, it also determines the essential properties of that being, and sets the limit of amount of change it can undergo without ceasing to be. It tells us under which conditions it ceases to exist and under which conditions it persists through time. It tells us which properties this being has to retain throughout its career, i.e., the properties the loss of which would entail its destruction and the properties it can lose remaining identical with the past being before the change in question.

At this point I also wish to add a parenthetical remark on substance concepts. A substance concept corresponding to a being must be applicable to it throughout its career, that is to say, from the moment it comes into existence until the moment of its destruction. If ‘s’ is the substance concept corresponding to a being ‘b’, then ‘b is no longer s’ would entail ‘b has ceased to be’.<sup>109</sup> To give an example, if the substance concept applicable to Snoopy is ‘dog’, “Snoopy is no longer a dog” would mean he has ceased to be.

In the previous chapters I have tried to refute the answer the advocates of the Psychological Account give to this question. I have given several arguments to show that we are most fundamentally human beings, that person is not a kind.

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<sup>108</sup> This is Descartes’ most fundamental question. It is an ontological question. He inquired about himself in the first person and tried to come up with an answer. I am asking this question in the same way Descartes asked it.

<sup>109</sup> Wiggins proposes the ‘applicability at every moment of an object’s/being’s life span’ as both a necessary and sufficient condition for substance concepts. See Wiggins 1980: 64.

In my view, the ontological inflation and the problem of other psychological kinds I have tried to expound in Chapter 5 as well as the various other problems<sup>110</sup> the Psychological Account creates for itself can only be resolved if we can provide a different answer to the ‘What am I?’ question. To return to my main point, I want to ask what is the thing<sup>111</sup> I am having coffee with when I am having coffee with Terry?

According to the Psychological Account, there are two distinct beings sitting opposite me, a human being and a person. However, as I have discussed in the previous chapters, this answer is highly problematic. I have tried to show that the assumption that person, too, is a kind, leads to several problems like ontological inflation and the existence of other psychological kinds.

In my view, this fundamental assumption of the Psychological Account, i.e., that person is a kind, is false. The argument I have given in Chapter 4 from the possible existence of animal people and human people as two distinct kinds with different persistence conditions applicable to them supports my claim. This is an absurd consequence. It also leads to an epistemological problem which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 8.

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<sup>110</sup> The most widely discussed problem for the Psychological Account is that of branching. This happens when there are two or more beings psychologically continuous with one being. Another major charge is that of circularity. For a brief discussion of the branching problem see Chapter 2. For detailed formulations of and proposed solutions to the branching problem see Parfit 1984: 245-62, Perry 1972: 463, Inwagen 1990: 182-212, Nagel 1971. For charges from circularity see Butler 1975 and Perry 1975. For Shoemaker’s attempts to block the charge of circularity see Shoemaker 1984: 98-101. For the solution Parfit proposed see Parfit 1984: 220-23.

<sup>111</sup> Wiggins calls this ‘the most privileged and most fundamental kind’ an object falls under and which determines its persistence conditions. However, this question assumes that there is just one being having coffee with me. See Wiggins 1980: 24 for his discussion of the ‘what is x?’ question. He contrasts substance concepts which provide the answer to this question with what he calls phased sortals. On his account, sortal terms like human being apply to a being throughout its life-span whereas phased sortals like boy apply only for some period of time.

Hence, I will propose that only one substance concept constitutes the answer to this question, namely, human being. To put it more precisely, that there is a single being sitting opposite me when I am having coffee with a friend and the kind this being falls under is 'human being'. Since essence of a being corresponds to the kind it falls under, its essential properties are determined only by the sortal term 'human being'.

### Possible Answers

In this section, before moving on to the discussion of my answer to the 'what are we?' question, I will briefly mention the answers several prominent philosophers have given to this question throughout history.

We are partless, immaterial substances, i.e. souls: This view has been advocated by many philosophers including Plato, Augustine and Descartes. Plato in the *Phaedo* claims that the soul is immaterial and simple-without parts. Augustine argues that we are immaterial souls and bodies are material substances. Descartes also holds that we are our minds, thinking things, things without extension as opposed to bodies which are material substances.

We are persons constituted by human beings: This is the Coincidence View I have discussed in the previous chapters. Persons and human beings are not identical. The relationship between them is that of constitution. The human being constitutes the person. Advocates of this view are Shoemaker and Rudder Baker.

We are our brains: One of the defenders of this view is Puccetti. He holds that we are nothing beyond our brains. Peter Van Inwagen makes a similar point in *Material*

*Beings*. This also amounts to saying that we would go where our brains go and we would not survive a brain transplant.

We are our bodies: The advocates of this view, one of them being Judith Thomson, claim that we exist as long as our bodies do. Under this account, we can survive some of our limbs' being replaced by inorganic ones. However we cannot survive an adventure such as teletransportation or transmigration when we seem to leave our original bodies behind and acquire a new one.

We are a collection of perceptions: The most influential advocate of this view, which is sometimes referred to as the "bundle theory", is David Hume. He says, "When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist." From this he concludes that we "are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."<sup>112</sup>

We exist only for short periods of time: Strawson calls this the Pearl View and uses the metaphor of a stringless string of pearls. Each self is compared to a pearl. "I will call my view the Pearl view, because it suggests that many mental selves exist, one at a time and one after another, like pearls on a string, in the case of something like a human being. According to the Pearl view, each is a distinct existence, an individual physical

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<sup>112</sup> Hume 1978: I, iv, 6, Personal Identity.

thing or object, though they may exist for considerably different lengths of time.”<sup>113</sup>

Accordingly, there is no continuant self; we exist at one time and then at another time. Our existence is interrupted during the times when conscious experience is interrupted, for instance, when we are on an operating table. On this view, there are no substances, objects things happen to. There are just fields of energy, a kind of pure process. “The view that there is some ultimate stuff to which things happen has increasingly ceded to the idea that the existence of anything worthy of the name ‘ultimate stuff’ consists in the existence of fields of energy — consists, in other words, in the existence of a kind of pure process which is not usefully thought of as something which is happening to a thing distinct from it.”<sup>114</sup>

We are temporal parts of human beings: The advocates of this view, also known as the four-dimensionalists, claim that we do not endure through time by being wholly present at different times. Rather, we are made up of temporal parts located at different times. Like an event, we fill up an interval of time. According to the most prominent defender of this position, David Lewis, we are nothing but aggregates of human being stages that are psychologically connected. Two stages are connected if one has memories of an experience the other had.

We do not exist: This amounts to saying that although there are acts, i.e., speaking, walking, thinking, there is nobody doing them. That you and I exist is merely an illusion. Buddhist philosophers defend this view. They believe in anatta (non-self). They hold that all things are impermanent and are in a state of flux. The existence of an

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<sup>113</sup> Strawson 2003: 359.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 362.

unchanging, independent self is denied because it stands in the way of realising this universal impermanence which is the way to enlightenment.<sup>115</sup>

## Animalism

Animalism is one of the answers we can give to the ‘What are we?’ question. The advocates of this view claim that we are animals, essentially biological beings. Since we are most fundamentally animals, the animal associated with us — human being — should determine our persistence conditions. Wiggins and Olson are the proponents of this view. Hence, before moving into a discussion of my version of animalism I want to discuss their versions of this account.

### Wiggins’ Version of Animalism

David Wiggins claims that he is a supporter of animalism, the view that you and I are animals. However, I believe, there are problems with his animalism. To see this we need to look at his definition of person and its persistence conditions. When defining a person Wiggins says “x is a person if and only if x is an animal falling under the extension of some natural kind whose members perceive, feel, remember, imagine, desire, make projects, move themselves at will and carry out projects, acquire a character as they age, are susceptible to concern for members of their own and like species.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For more on the Buddhist notion of non-self see Chichore 1995.

<sup>116</sup> Wiggins 1976: 161. For a discussion of Wiggins’ definition of person see section 3.4.

Accordingly, to be a person is to be a certain sort of animal. This view rules out the existence of non-animal persons like automata, and gods.

As I have discussed in Chapter 3, for him both human being and person are substance concepts. So, his answer to the *what am I?* question is “I am a person which is a certain kind of animal”. In other words, I am a human-person.

Now let us consider his answer to the question *what it takes for a person to exist?* Unlike Locke and many other early advocates of the Psychological Account, Wiggins does not openly say that psychological properties like memory and consciousness determine whether x at t1 and y at t2 are identical or not. However, they still play an important role on his account:

Whether plausibly or implausibly, the memory condition informs and regulates the continuity condition of personal identity, holds it apart from mere continuity of material body, and it leaves its distinctive mark on judgements founded on it.<sup>117</sup>

Memory is not then irrelevant to personal identity, but the way it relates to is simply that it is one highly important element amongst others in the account of what is it for a person to be still there, *alive*. It plays its part in determining the continuity principle for persons, as opposed to bodies or cadavers<sup>118</sup>

Accordingly, human-persons still have psychological identity conditions. Some kind of psychological relation is necessary for them to persist. Under his account, since you and I are human-persons, not material bodies or cadavers, we need to retain certain psychological properties to persist. The conditions for our persistence derive both from our status as persons-psychological beings and as humans-biological beings. We cannot turn into a pillar of salt or a robot.<sup>119</sup> These changes would bring our existence to an end. Can we lose our memory and persist?

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<sup>117</sup> Wiggins 1976: 152.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 168.

<sup>119</sup> Wiggins 1980: 60.

In relation to this question Wiggins considers the last stages of Nijinsky when he was suffering from what he calls ‘madness’.<sup>120</sup> He says that the Nijinsky who was performing on the stage and the Nijinsky who was suffering from madness in an asylum are the same human being. This is highly intuitive because no human being ceases to exist when it loses memories and rationality. Both the advocates of the Psychological Account and the advocates of animalism would agree that the human being who used to be one of the best dancers of all time and the hospitalised madman are the same human being.

Then he makes a rather controversial claim. He goes on to say that the person in the last stages of Nijinsky’s madness and a hospitalised amnesiac are also the same person.<sup>121</sup> It is very hard to see how they can be the same person when memory is considered to be one of the crucial elements under his account of personhood. Furthermore, a hospitalised amnesiac, say an end-stage Alzheimer’s patient or a patient suffering from severe dementia, cannot even be considered a person on Wiggins’ account. He has no memories, he does not desire anything; he cannot make projects, and carry them out. He does not even have concern for his family and friends let alone for the members of his own and like species. I hold that, given his definition of personhood, it is hard to see how the amnesiac and Nijinsky in his last stages can be persons and how they can be the same person.

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<sup>120</sup> We learn from his diaries and the book written by psychiatrist Oswald that Nijinsky suffered from psychosis, infantile rages and catatonic withdrawal during the last three decades of his life. He was often institutionalized and became progressively disabled in his forties. For a detailed study of his psychosis see Oswald 1991.

<sup>121</sup> See Wiggins 1976: 167 where he says “The hospitalised amnesiac, or Nijinsky even at the last stage of madness, are the same man and the same person.”

There is one alternative way of interpreting his theory. We can take his definition of person which I have quoted above as a weakening of his acceptance of the psychological criterion. If he had meant something stronger he would simply have said “x is a person if x feels, perceives”. Given this weakening, he may hold that it is a necessary truth that every human being is a person since he or she is a member of the right kind until death. Accordingly, the definition may allow Nijinsky to be a person until he dies. Since the members of this species perceive, feel, think etc. this would also mean that he will not cease to be a person until his death.<sup>122</sup> The facts that he cannot think, reason and recognize his relatives are completely irrelevant. As long as he falls under the right kind he remains a person-the very same person. What makes me a person is something psychological about my species, not about me. Typical members of my species have memory and lots of further psychological features.

Although weakened his theory is still a version of the Psychological Account which claims that some sort of psychological relation is necessary or sufficient for us to persist from one time to another. I agree with Olson<sup>123</sup> that Wiggins is not actually an advocate of animalism. Since he claims that you and I are persons which is a certain sort of animal he seems to be an advocate of animalism. However, I think, a close reading of his view reveals him to be an endorser of some kind of Psychological Account. For him, human-persons still have psychological persistence conditions. Memory is one of them. If we are not fundamentally persons our existence through time cannot have anything to do with psychological properties like memory, desires and imagination or concern for the members of our species. These are all psychological properties, properties an animal

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<sup>122</sup> I am grateful to Stephen Voss for drawing this interpretation to my attention.

<sup>123</sup> See Olson 1997: 20-1 for his discussion of Wiggins’ account.

does not have essentially. Animalism states that we are organisms, and no organism needs to have memory or any other psychological property to persist through time. That is why I hold that Wiggins' theory, which is the earliest version of this account, cannot be considered animalism in the sense in which we understand the theory today.

### Olson's Version of Animalism

Olson's account of animalism is the most recent, consistent and developed account. He denies the constitutionalist claim that we and the human being are distinct. He argues against the Constitution View which holds that we are intimately connected with, i.e., constituted by the human being. He says that we, human people, are identical with the animal, we are the animal.<sup>124</sup> That is to say, the human animal is identical with the person we refer to when we say 'I'.<sup>125</sup> However, his account does not rule out the existence of non-animal, or inorganic people like gods, elves, vampires or angels. Something can be an animal without being a person.

Olson's view is closely related to the account, referred to as the 'bodily criterion', which claims that we are our bodies. He neither affirms nor denies that we are identical with the past or future person whose body is our body. There is an important difference between the two accounts though. He denies the possibility of a partly or wholly inorganic animal, which, for him, is a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, under the bodily criterion we can survive having a partly or wholly inorganic body. If our limbs were gradually replaced by inorganic matter and we ended up having an inorganic

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<sup>124</sup> See Olson 1997: Chapter 5 for his discussion of animalism.

<sup>125</sup> I will discuss the reference problem in detail in Chapter 8.

body we would cease to exist under Olson's account but survive this change under the bodily criterion. He argues that, under the bodily criterion, someone may have an entirely robotic body. However, his account rules out this possibility. An animal cannot have a robotic body.<sup>126</sup>

The animal, according to Olson, has persistence conditions "by virtue of being an animal and not by virtue of being a human body."<sup>127</sup> A human animal continues to exist as long as his brainstem is intact and functioning. Since the brainstem is responsible for life-sustaining functions, we cease to be the moment our brainstem is destroyed. This may not seem very intuitive. However if we consider the importance of the brainstem we can begin to see Olson's point.

When the brainstem is damaged our cells and organs stop working together. That means our biological life is interrupted. When the biological life is interrupted we cease to be a living organism, a human animal. In the way in which we cannot survive damages to the brainstem, we, human animals, cannot survive brainstem replacements either. Even if the doctors manage to replace the damaged brainstem with a new one in a split second we cease to be the moment our brainstem is removed and are replaced by a new being. Olson compares brainstem replacements to annihilation and replacement by a duplicate. Since the latter two would be the end of us so would the brainstem replacement be, he argues.<sup>128</sup>

Olson may be interpreted as saying 'we are our brainstems'. However, I hold that this interpretation does not do justice to his account. Yes, our brainstem is essential to us. If it is destroyed we cease to exist but only because without a functioning brainstem there

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<sup>126</sup> See Olson 2003:320.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>128</sup> For Olson's discussion of this analogy see Olson 1997: 141.

would not be life, a biological organism. Since we, human animals, are necessarily biological organisms we cannot survive this quite radical change. We cannot survive the destruction of our brainstem because, being necessarily biological beings, we cannot survive death.

I think the only problem with Olson's account is his claim that we cannot survive brainstem replacements. I agree with him that we cease to be when biological life stops but only when the cessation is irreversible. In my view, the replacement of a brainstem is not analogous to being annihilated and then being replaced by a perfect copy. It is more similar to a case when heart-lung function stops, the patient is reported dead and after a couple of minutes the doctors manage to start the heart beating again. You must have read several such stories. In some extreme and rare cases the patients are even put in a body bag and are taken to the morgue where they find out he is not dead. I think, under such circumstances, claiming that the patient has ceased to be and was replaced by a numerically different being would be very counterintuitive.

If the human being has ceased to be the moment his heart stopped beating what or who is this being lying on the same operation table with a beating heart, who will wake up in a few hours and talk to his children? We have all the reasons to believe that he/she is the same human being who has checked into the hospital that very morning under the same name.

Precisely because of the same intuition, I believe, Olson's claim that we cease to be when our brainstem is replaced does not seem very reasonable. Biological life may stop for a couple of minutes during which the brainstem is replaced and then can be restarted.

This does not mean the human being has ceased to be and was replaced by a numerically different one. I hold that only when the cessation of biological life is irreversible does a substantial change take place, i.e., only then do we go out of existence.

I believe this is the only weak spot in Olson's animalism. I think his theory would appeal more to common-sense had he allowed for brainstem replacements. He could also have avoided the criticisms of equating us, the human being, with the very brainstem we are born with.

### What I Mean By Animalism

I believe, as Olson does, that we are human beings. None of the psychological properties like keeping our experiences in memory, imagining, rationality, fear of death, self-concern and concern for the others we love are essential to us. We can lose them and still persist. That is to say, rather than ceasing to be and being replaced by them, we can *become* human vegetables. If I wrote in my will "if one day I become a human vegetable due to a severe cerebral trauma or a neurological disease I do not want to be kept alive artificially" I would be making sense. Since I would be the human vegetable lying there on a hospital bed when writing the will I would be referring to myself by the words "human vegetable", not some being which will replace me when I lose my psychological properties.

Similarly, under the account I am trying to defend, "The very first pictures of me are the ones taken when I was in my mother's womb" would be a true sentence. I was the human foetus who later on developed into a human baby, a human child and then into

a human adult. If I had an album full of pictures starting from the ones in my mother's womb and ending with the one showing me as a human vegetable all of those pictures would be *my* pictures.

When we browse through these pictures what we see is a human being. We observe her gain some properties and lose some others. She loses the property of being a baby and becomes a toddler, loses the property of being a student and becomes a teacher and so on. What remains the same is her identity. When we look at her one-day old picture and the picture showing her graduating from college we are looking at one and the same thing-the same human being.

In the same way, she gains and loses other properties, she gains and loses the property of being a person. She does not go out of existence when she ceases to be a person because, as I have tried to show in the previous chapters, person is not a substance concept. The only substance concept applicable to her is human being. Nothing goes out of existence if a human being loses the properties associated with personhood, it just loses a property. Personhood is not an essential property of the human being, he/she has this property contingently.

A human child acquires the property of personhood and may one day lose it without losing his/her identity. Under the animalism I want to defend Nijinsky, Maupassant, Klimt, or Poe in their madness, an end-stage Alzheimer's patient or a PVS patient in the photo album is the same human being who has just lost the property of personhood.<sup>129</sup> Human beings survive madness, dementia, amnesia, or lapsing into a PVS.

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<sup>129</sup> To some readers, this sameness may appear to be an empty concept. However, I hold that it gives a very coherent picture of life starting from the early embryonic stages to biological death.

As I have tried to show elsewhere in this thesis there is only one substance concept applicable to us, i.e., human being. We are essentially human beings and contingently persons in the same way we are contingently students, lawyers, husbands and members of the parliament. When I say “We are human beings” the first question that comes to mind is “What is a human being?”. We need to define a human being in order to discuss its persistence conditions, which adventures it can survive and which other ones would terminate its existence. Since we are essentially human beings these conditions will also define the changes we can go through without losing our identity. This will be my task in the following chapter.

### Summary

In this chapter I have tried to answer a very fundamental question, ‘What are we?’ I have first considered several answers philosophers have given to this question throughout the history of philosophy. Rejecting all these answers, I have claimed that we are animals. Having suggested animalism as an answer, I considered the two widely discussed accounts of animalism, one by Wiggins, another by Olson. I have argued that Wiggins’ animalism is actually a version of the Psychological Account in the guise of animalism. After I have discussed Olson’s account I have laid out the differences between his version of animalism and the version I am trying to develop.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONTINUITY UNDER THE KIND HUMAN BEING

In this present chapter my main goal will be to offer an account of persistence for human beings. I will offer ‘continuous existence under the kind human being’ as the criterion of diachronic identity for human beings. For this, I need to begin by expounding what a human being is. Then I will try to show what is required for a human being to persist through time, in other words, what being continuous under the kind human being is. Finally, I will define the conditions under which a human being goes through a substantial change, conditions under which he/she ceases to exist and is replaced by another being.

#### What is a ‘Human Being’?

A human being is an organism. By an organism I mean a living -biological- entity. As Hoffman and Rosenkrantz point out, distinguishing between living and non-living or dead entities may not always be as easy as we think it is.<sup>130</sup> Philosophers have been asking what ‘alive’ means for thousands of years. For Aristotle, a living being has to possess at least one of the main life functions, namely, nutrition, sensation, motion, thought and reproduction.<sup>131</sup> His view and versions of it have been adopted by many

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<sup>130</sup> See Hoffman, Rosenkrantz 1997: 92 where they discuss whether viruses should be considered as living or as non-living entities. They argue that viruses “can neither classify as living nor classify as non-living in any principled way”.

<sup>131</sup> See *De Anima*, Book III, Chapter 3, in Ackrill 1987.

biologists, morticians and prosecutors. Some modern versions of this view have emphasised the importance of metabolism, self-replication and mutability. With the advances in genetics ‘possession of a genetic program’ has been added to the list of characteristics of living things. Some also argue that the cells of living being have to contain DNA or RNA.

A philosophical analysis of the biological concepts of life and death is beyond the scope of this work. However, I will be discussing some of the criteria adopted by philosophers, biologists, morticians, doctors and legal systems. As Feldman points out, a good criterion should be useful, practical and decisive. Adopting a criterion is a matter of convention. If enough people who will use it agree on one it becomes the criterion of life or death-until it is replaced by another one. In his words, “the excellence of a criterion is *usefulness*, not truth.”<sup>132</sup> For practical purposes, I shall assume that human beings are living entities, that they have a biological life and later on discuss what could be the most useful criterion of death for them.

Granted they are living, the next question that comes to mind is how we will distinguish organisms from other living entities. A heart, a lung, a cerebrum, or a kidney waiting to be transplanted is also alive in some sense and it needs to be kept alive in a cooler until transplantation. If not well preserved the cells in the detached organ would die, it would cease to be a living tissue and hence would not be good for transplantation. The doctors would start looking for another organ. Red blood cells, bones and neurons are also alive in this sense.

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<sup>132</sup> Feldman 1992: 58.

However, to be itself considered an organism a living entity should not be a part of another living entity.<sup>133</sup> Thus, although hearts, lungs, livers, cerebrums kept in coolers are living entities, because they are living parts of other organisms, they do not themselves count as organisms. They need some other organism to continue to be alive, they do not have independent lives. A detached human heart cannot pump blood and hence continue to be alive outside a human body, it needs to be connected to a circulatory system to function. Similarly, a lung cannot pump air in a cooler, it has to be part of a respiratory system with a healthy heart to be able to fulfil its function.

You may have heard of a particular technique used in some risky brain surgeries. When, due to a severe trauma, there is a risk of swelling of the brain during the operation the neurologists remove parts of the skull and preserve them in the abdominal cavity. When there is no further risk of swelling they put them back in the skull. To put it in other words, the bones in the skull are kept 'alive' in the abdominal cavity during the operation. If instead of preserving them in the abdominal cavity the surgeons simply removed them and kept them somewhere in the operation room they would soon become unusable. This illustrates that the bones, like all the other living tissue in our bodies, need the human being to continue to be functional. Hence, although the bones are alive in some sense they do not count as organisms. They, like hearts, kidneys and neurones are merely parts of organisms.

On the other hand, apes, birds, fish, human beings and amoebae are organisms. They have a biological life of their own and the life processes of their living parts

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<sup>133</sup> See *ibid.*, 93 'Necessarily, something is an organism only if it is an organic living entity which is not a *part of* another organic living entity. See also *Ibid*: 124.

subserve them.<sup>134</sup> The hearts, lungs, golgi bodies, kidneys, red blood cells, livers have functions which serve the organism they are parts of. Hence, we may define the concept human being as follows :

D: For any object  $x$ ,  $x$  is a human being if and only if  $x$  is a living biological organism and is a member of the biological species *Homo sapiens*.

Being organisms, human beings are part of the biological realm. Like other organisms, they possess a genetic program, they reproduce and grow. Their material composition is constantly renewed. Again, being organisms, they are mortal. If one or more of their vital parts<sup>135</sup> stop functioning, under normal circumstances, that is, when they are not connected to some machine which sustains the functions of these organs artificially, they cannot live for a long time. They die. Hence a fairy or an angel cannot be considered a human. Neither can any of the twelve Olympians, who is not subject to the natural laws human beings are subject to, who can survive irreversible cessation of heart-lung function, can be born out of the foam, can visit the city of the dead and come back and assume the form of a swan and so on. Since these beings live on some other principle, the physics and the chemistry of our universe does not govern them; they cannot be considered human beings.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.: 94.

<sup>135</sup> A vital part is defined by Hoffman and Rosenkrantz as: “ $v$  is a vital part of an organism  $O$  at time  $t = \text{df.}$  (i)  $v$  is a proper part of  $O$  at  $t$ , and (ii) for some time  $t'$ , later than  $t$ , but not so much later than  $t$  that  $O$  could nor live from  $t$  until  $t'$ , there is a function,  $f$ , such that so long as the degree of naturalness of  $O$ 's life-processes remains constant,  $O$ 's life processes continuing from  $t$  to  $t'$  entails that  $O$ 's life-processes are sustained by  $v$ 's performing  $f$  at some time  $t^*$ .” Hoffman, Rosenkrantz 1997: 122. On such a definition, a human being's vital parts would be his brain, heart, liver and any one of his lungs. Vital parts of an amoeba, on the other hand, would be its nucleus or golgi body.

## Persistence Conditions for Human Beings

In this section I will try to discuss what it takes for a human being to persist through time, in other words, what having a continuous existence under the kind human being is. I will first try to state which changes would merely be alterations and which others would be substantial changes for human beings.

### Alterations

Being members of the species *Homo sapiens*, human beings have a more developed brain and nervous system, hence higher mental capacities than other organisms. They are capable of reasoning, imagining and creating. Since they have a very developed and complicated memory they can remember incidents which happened years ago, the things they have read in books and the places they have travelled to. These capacities enable them to do things other living organisms cannot do, such as composing symphonies, solving mathematical puzzles, programming computers, space travelling, and erecting high rise buildings.

However, none of these capacities and abilities is essential to a human being. Contrary to what Aristotle sometimes writes, a human being is not necessarily a rational animal. Rationality should not be employed in defining the concept. A human being which loses all his mental capacities or which has never had them, i.e., an anencephalic baby, would still fall under the kind 'human being' together with the most ingenious members of its kind.

By the same token, if an ingenious mathematician were to lose all his mental capacities due to an accident or a neurological disease like Alzheimer's he would not cease to be a human being, he would still persist as one. He would have gone through a major change, an alteration. Ronald Reagan, who was suffering from Alzheimer's, who did not even recognise the members of his family, was the same human being as President Reagan. The changes he went through when he started losing his mental and psychological capacities had no affect on his identity. When he died in 2004, after having suffered from the disease for over ten years, 'President Reagan' was reported dead.

To bring further clarification to the point I have made above, I wish to consider a seagull and draw an analogy. A seagull falls under the kind 'seagull'. Being a member of that kind it has an ability which most other organisms lack, namely, the ability to fly. However, if due to some accident, it loses this ability it does not cease to exist. It does not stop being a sea-gull. It merely suffers an alteration, loses a very significant ability. Rather than ceasing to exist and being replaced by a numerically different being, it *becomes* a seagull which cannot fly, in the same way an Alzheimer's patient, when he loses his all his higher mental capacities, *becomes* a human being which cannot recall incidents and cannot reason.

The analogy also works the other way round, when we consider the acquisition of these abilities. A five month old foetus or a newly born baby cannot think rationally, cannot learn mathematics and cannot recall incidents. Similarly, a newly born seagull cannot fly. Both of them 'acquire' these significant abilities eventually, as they grow up. I do not think anyone would be willing to say that a newly born bird which cannot fly

ceases to exist and is replaced by a different being when it acquires this ability. I hold that the seagull example is exactly analogous to this foetus problem the Psychological Account is faced with. Neither the bird nor the foetus/human baby goes through a substantial change when it acquires an ability/property most of the members which fall under the same kind with them possess.

Accordingly, anencephalic babies, retarded kids, patients in PVS, one year old toddlers, and end-stage Alzheimer's patients are all human beings who have lost or who have not acquired some significant properties which most of the members of their kind possess. All of these beings fall under the kind human being. So do Einstein, Bach, Picasso and Lincoln. If a competent biologist studied a cell from any of these organisms he could tell that they all were members of the species *Homo sapiens*. By examining the DNA in the cell he could distinguish between the human and cat or dog cells.

Rudder Baker mistakenly presupposes that under all versions of animalism a human being which has lapsed into a persistent vegetative state is a person. With this assumption in mind she comes up with the following argument:

Suppose that a human organism that goes into a persistent vegetative state caused by the death of cerebral neurons has no hope of recovery<sup>136</sup>. Although it is still a living organism, it is incapable of suffering or of any awareness whatever, and never will be. It is a being that does not, and never will be able to, care about itself or about anything else. If such a diminished being is a person, then to be a person simply is to be a living organism. In that case, it is difficult to see

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<sup>136</sup> Note that the patient "has no hope for recovery". Both animalists and defenders of the Psychological Account use examples involving PVS patients who cannot recover because the neurons of the cerebral cortex have died. A PVS patient, unlike a comatose patient, is *irreversibly noncognitive*. He cannot regain psychological abilities. In Rudder Baker's view a comatose patient who has chances of "waking up", who has capacity for first-person perspective, is still a person. It is only when the neurons die, and the capacity for a kind of psychological life ceases to exist that a person goes out of existence.

why being a person should have any special moral status; for considered as purely biological beings, human organisms have no greater claim to respect than any other kinds of organism.<sup>137</sup>

I have devoted a whole chapter to the concept of person. A PVS patient is not a person under any definition of personhood I have considered in that chapter. Being an organism, i.e., being able to digest food, reproduce, breathe without being connected to a machine, does not entail being a person. There are many non-person organisms, to name a few, PVS patients, the retarded, anencephalic babies, dogs, cats and seaweeds. Personhood is a collection of properties a human being can gain and lose. When it loses all of these properties it may lose some of its legal rights. If we go back to the Terri Schiavo case, since Terri was not able to decide for herself whether she wanted her feeding tube to be removed or not, her parents and her husband were fighting for her right to stay alive and to be let die respectively. Her rights were transferred to her guardians.

Similarly, when court doctors diagnose a patient as being “incapable of rational choice” he/she loses the rights over his/her property or his business. The heirs are given the right to keep and sell his/her property. You may also have heard of judges, doctors whose licence to perform their job was taken back as the result of a similar diagnosis.

However, this does not imply that a human being that is not a person is not a bearer of legal rights at all. I disagree with Jeffrie Murphy who argues that the comatose are similar to things like rocks, that they cannot be bearers of rights.<sup>138</sup> I hold that the PVS patients, the comatose, the retarded, the imbecile can be victims of crimes like murder, mutilation, theft and rape. They do not lose their right to life, dignity, respect when they cease to be persons. In most cultures even the dead have the right to dignity.

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<sup>137</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 121.

<sup>138</sup> See Murphy 1977: 27.

In the U.S. some states have laws against necrophilia.<sup>139</sup> They only are deprived of the rights which a being acquires in virtue of being self-conscious and/or rational. A human being has certain rights solely in virtue of being human. For instance, some experiments which can be performed on animals cannot be legally performed on the retarded or the comatose. Similarly, some experiments which can be performed on rocks cannot be performed on dogs. Dogs have certain rights solely in virtue of being sentient, they are different from rocks. The necessary and sufficient conditions for being an object of moral and legal consideration is a very intriguing subject. While some philosophers exclude non-humans and non-person humans like the comatose, the retarded and the babies, others include many animals alongside all the humans. However, since it is beyond the scope of this work I will not go into a detailed discussion of it.<sup>140</sup> Before I move on I just wish to point out again that I believe non-person human beings can be bearers of rights.

With this point in mind consider this hypothetical example. Diane is a human being who has the property of being a person and also a lawyer. Since they are phase sortals, personhood and being a lawyer are properties Diane can lose without losing her identity. If one day her license is taken back, if she is disbarred, she ceases to be a lawyer but retains the property of personhood. If she lapses into PVS she ceases to be a person but still remains a human being. Depending on the social circle she is living in she may lose some respect when she goes through these two changes. Yet, she will have her basic rights in virtue of being a human being under the U.S. Constitution.

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<sup>139</sup> There is a debate on whether these laws are unconstitutional or not. Those who argue they are point to the fact that the dead cannot give consent.

<sup>140</sup> For a detailed discussion of the role of being human in moral thought and practice see Diamond 1991, McNaughton 1991.

What I wish to do here is to show that, unlike what Rudder Baker assumes, when the psychological properties are lost, the human being loses the property of personhood. However, it does not cease to exist. Loss of these properties amount to alterations only, changes or adventures human beings can survive. This being is worthy of respect in virtue of being a human being. On Rudder Baker's view, a human being in PVS does not constitute a person. Since I am essentially a person I can never be identical with such a being, it simply cannot be *me*. On my view, the organism which once had the property of being a person, continues to exist. It seems that my view allows for greater respect for that organism. The organism has a claim to respect solely for being a human being. Considering the arguments I have given above, I think it is actually more acceptable in virtue of its moral implications.

Human beings survive losing the property of personhood. However, being necessarily living organisms, they go through a substantial change, they cease to be when one or more of their vital organs lose its function irreversibly. To put it in other words, a human being ceases to exist when it dies. Having said this, I believe I need to clarify what death is. Hence in the following section I will try to state what constitutes death for a human being.

### What is Death?

The goal of this section is to discuss the criterion of death. I will not be formulating a philosophical analysis of the concept. I acknowledge that death is a very complicated concept and such an analysis is beyond the scope of this work.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 4 there are two widely accepted criteria of death for human beings. One of them is the whole brain death criterion, i.e., the total and irreversible cessation of all spontaneous brain activity, including that of the brain stem<sup>141</sup> which directs the vital functions. The other is the total and irreversible cessation of heart and lung function. Of these two criteria the first one is the most commonly accepted one in legal systems. The reason for this is that even under the circumstances when all brain activity has irreversibly ceased it is possible to maintain heart-lung function artificially by connecting the patient to a heart-lung machine.<sup>142</sup> That is to say, the medical staff can keep the signs of life through external respiratory support in a brainstem dead patient. This can be done until receiving the consent of the heirs for organ donation, until the specialist physicians render their opinion unequivocally that irreversible cessation of brain functions has occurred and medical treatment can be terminated, the support system can be turned off.

However, when disconnected from the life support system which pumps air into the lungs to keep the heart beating, the heart-lung functions of these patients stop within a couple of minutes. Since they are considered 'dead' in most of the legal systems and medical communities the beings kept alive under these circumstances are usually referred

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<sup>141</sup> See Olson 1997: 140-142 for problems concerning brain stem replacements. As I have discussed in Chapter 6, Olson argues that since as soon as the brainstem is destroyed the human being loses the capacity to direct vital functions he cannot survive brain-stem replacement.

<sup>142</sup> See Brock 1993: 161.

to as ‘ventilated corpses’. In a few legal systems, however, legal death cannot be pronounced except when the vital functions have ceased after the external support system has been switched off.

Hence, on the most commonly accepted and used criteria of death the human being is considered dead when the whole brain function completely and irreversibly stops, even under the circumstances when the heart-lung function, i.e., circulation and respiration, can be mechanically maintained:

When all brain processes cease, the patient loses two important set of functions. One set encompasses the integrating and co-ordinating functions, carried out principally but not exclusively by cerebellum and brain stem. The other set includes psychological functions which make consciousness, thought, and feeling possible. These latter functions are located primarily but not exclusively in the cerebrum, especially in the neocortex.<sup>143</sup>

When this happens the human being ceases to exist and is replaced by a lifeless corpse. He goes through a substantial change, i.e. a change in kind. What we see when we are looking at a corpse does not fall under the kind ‘human being’. What is lying there, where a human being used to be, is not an organism but merely a lifeless body. The human being has ceased to exist and has been replaced by a new entity, namely, a corpse.

We may sometimes hear a corpse being referred to as a dead human being. This seems to presuppose that human beings continue to exist after they die. Rosenberg’s Aunt Ethel example illustrates this convention:

My Aunt Ethel died last week, and we are burying her tomorrow... There is no such thing which both died last week and will be buried tomorrow. What died last week was Aunt Ethel. What will be buried tomorrow, however, is not Aunt Ethel but rather Aunt Ethel’s remains. What will be buried tomorrow is a corpse. Aunt Ethel’s corpse...Aunt Ethel’s corpse is not Aunt Ethel.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.: 146 quoted from President’s Commission for Ethical Problems in Medicine. *Defining Death*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981: 38.

<sup>144</sup> Rosenberg 1983: 27.

This use is even more common when animals are in question. We often witness people talking about the ‘dead cat’ they saw on the side of the road. However, since both human beings and cats are necessarily organisms neither a human being nor a cat fall under the kind they used to when they die. What we see on the road is not a dead cat but the carcass which replaced the cat when he died.<sup>145</sup> There is no such thing as a dead organism. When the bodily functions stop and when it is irreversible an organism, i.e., a cat, a human being, a dog, a fish goes out of existence. It does not survive death ‘as a corpse’. Rather, it ceases to exist and is replaced by a new entity.

I hold that this mistake is mostly linguistic. It is mere linguistic appearance. If we were to ask the people who refer to the carcass they see as the ‘dead cat’ whether a cat can survive death they would most probably say “no”. Similarly, if we asked Aunt Ethel’s relatives whether Aunt Ethel is a corpse they would be confused. In my view, Aunt Ethel is not a corpse. The corpse is her remains, the entity which came into existence when she died. No biological being’s history extends beyond its death. Hence, a human being’s history cannot continue past his biological death.<sup>146</sup>

Under the account I am trying to defend, the newly dead body which may even look alive to a non-professional is ontologically no different than the bodies of Ancient Egyptian pharaohs we see in museums. When I make this point I do not imply that corpses are not and cannot be objects of moral concern. I am not saying that, in terms of their moral status, they are no different than other non-living beings like tables and

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<sup>145</sup> See Olson 1997: 136 where he makes a similar point. He argues that what we call a dead animal is strictly speaking the lifeless remains of one.

<sup>146</sup> See Feldman 1992, Chapter 7 for his discussion of how human beings survive death. He argues that they survive death as corpses, that human corpses are biological beings. For him, a dead human being continues to exist until cremation or total destruction.

chairs. My point is not an ethical but an ontological one. Many societies respect and honour their corpses as corpses of human beings, and loved ones through funerals.<sup>147</sup> I believe that the corpses can be objects of moral concern, that they should be treated with respect. *Human Being* as a moral concept may extend beyond death. A human corpse can be the bearer of moral and legal rights. All I am saying is that death results in a substantial change. It is an ontological claim, not a moral one.<sup>148</sup>

### Death versus Ceasing to Exist as a Human Being

“Is death necessary for a human being to cease to exist?” is the next question that comes to mind. I maintain that the answer to this question is no. Although biological death is sufficient for a human being to cease to exist, it is not necessary. A human being may go out of existence without dying a biological death. Since the criterion I am proposing requires continuous existence under the kind ‘human being’ he would cease to be if he were to turn into some other living entity, even if none of his vital functions was interrupted. In other words, if a kind change were to take place the human being would cease to be.

Let us consider metamorphosis. Since real life examples for human beings are difficult, if not impossible, to find, I will consider a fictional case to illustrate my point. Consider the case of Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Kafka’s novella *The*

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<sup>147</sup> See Diamond 1991: 58 for a discussion on the moral concern for the dead.

<sup>148</sup> Not everyone agrees with this. Some philosophers hold that the moral dimension is constitutive of the ontological category. One might hold that the respect we have for human corpses may be due to their species’ capacity for psychological life. It is the sort of respect a being is due on account of the natural kind of being one falls under. I thank Chryssi Sidiropoulou for bringing this up.

*Metamorphosis*. Gregor wakes up one morning to discover that he had turned into a giant cockroach:

When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin. He was lying on his back as hard as armour plate, and when he lifted his head a little, he saw his vaulted brown belly, sectioned by arch-shaped ribs, to whose dome the cover, about to slide off completely, could barely cling. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, were waving helplessly before his eyes.<sup>149</sup>

Since this change is far beyond any ordinary natural metamorphoses, the resulting creature, call him Gregor II, cannot be considered identical with Gregor Samsa.

Although neither his brain nor heart-lung function has stopped, not even interrupted, a substantial change has taken place during his sleep. He has ceased to be a human being and has turned into an insect-or rather into something beyond what any organism around us can naturally transform into. He can hang from the ceiling, he leaves behind a sticky substance-which only insects can produce-wherever he crawls, he feeds on rotten food, an apple thrown at him remains imbedded in his flesh and so on. Furthermore, he is not even a mammal, he is oviparous. He no longer is a member of the biological species *Homo sapiens*. Hence, since our criterion requires continuity under the kind ‘human being’, we must conclude that Gregor Samsa and Gregor II are not identical. Strictly speaking, rather than turning or changing into a cockroach, Gregor Samsa has actually ceased to exist and has been *replaced* by one.

Kafka, probably, would not agree with my conclusion. Since he still uses the name “Gregor” when referring to him, the novelist seems to think that the old Gregor is still on the scene. He may think that he did not go through a substantial change, that he continues to exist through the amazing alterations in shape and inner structure. The same

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<sup>149</sup> Kafka 1996: 3.

may not be true of his family though. Their reactions are very different after the metamorphoses; they do not even want to see him. They may be thinking he still exists but in a disgusting form or may agree with me that the Gregor they knew and loved has ceased to be and has been replaced by another being. Their use of the term “Gregor” may just be linguistic appearance.

Gregor Samsa’s case is in fact analogous to the Rover-Clover example frequently used in the literature.<sup>150</sup> In this hypothetical scenario, a dog called ‘Rover’, due to some cosmic factors, like strong radiation, goes through an extraordinary metamorphoses and turns into an amorphous collection of cells, named ‘Clover’. If we observe this change we can see spatiotemporal continuity as in the cases of the butterfly and Gregor. Rover’s vital functions have not stopped in between, in other words, nothing has died in the biological sense and has left behind a lifeless body. What we see before us is ‘alive’ in some sense. Still we cannot identify Rover with Clover on the account I am trying to defend. Clover is no longer a dog, he lives on some totally different principle than dogs around us do. “Not only is Clover not a dog, by the facts we know, it is also beyond anything a living being on Earth can naturally transform into.”<sup>151</sup> Both Gregor and Rover have ceased to be and have been replaced by numerically different beings, a giant cockroach and an amorphous mass of living cells respectively. A kind change has occurred. After the substantial changes they have gone through, different sortal terms have become applicable to them.

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<sup>150</sup> Price 1977: 203, Brody 1980: 77. See also Denkel 1996: 146-51 where he uses this example to support his theory that survival in a formally continuous body under a kind is both necessary and sufficient for identity of living being over time.

<sup>151</sup> Denkel 1996: 149.

As I have discussed in the previous chapters “if I ever become a human vegetable I would like to be disconnected from the machines which keep me alive artificially” would be a meaningful sentence under the account I am trying to defend. So would “the great ballet dancer Nijinsky spent his last years in a mental institution”. Since I regard continuous existence under the kind human being as the criterion of identity for human beings, human beings can *become* human vegetables, end-stage Alzheimer’s or dementia patients, but they cannot become cockroaches, vampires, zombies or pillars of salt. The moment they start falling under a different kind they cease to be and are replaced by other beings.

In the popular book by Anne Rice, *Interview With the Vampire*, the charming vampire Lestat bites Louis. When he starts begging for his life, he makes him drink his own blood. Lestat tells him not to pay attention to his dying body. In a few minutes, Louis becomes a vampire, he has been given the dark gift. He becomes immortal. From that evening onwards Louis starts living like Lestat, seeing the world with his vampire eyes, living on the blood of other human beings and animals, avoiding the deadly sunlight by sleeping in a coffin all day. Both Louis and Lestat play their part very well, everyone mistakes them for actual human beings and lose their lives to these two vampires who have to kill to survive. When he is bitten by Lestat, Luis ceases to be a human being, hence he ceases to be. He is replaced by a new entity, a vampire.

In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and its spin off *Angel*, a vampire is defined as a demon of a species which inhabits and animates a human corpse. Vampires’ hearts do not beat, their lungs do not absorb oxygen. When a human being is attacked by a vampire the victim dies of blood loss. Then the demon takes possession of the corpse

and replaces the human being. Vampires feed, walk, talk; they look like human beings. However under the account I am defending they are not human.<sup>152</sup>

Accordingly, although sufficient, biological death is not a necessary condition to destroy a human being. In theory, a human being may go through a substantial change even without dying a biological death. This happens when he no longer falls under the kind human being although his biological life is not disrupted. However, since there are no real life examples of these cases I do not want to go into a very detailed discussion of them. The point I have been trying to make in this section is that, under the account I am trying to develop, a human being can cease to be even if his brain and heart/lung functions do not irreversibly stop.

### Uninterrupted Existence

Before closing this section there is a final point I want to highlight concerning the persistence of human beings. I have said that a human being persists as long as it has a continuous existence under the kind human being. This entails that there should not be spatiotemporal discontinuity, i.e., gaps in its existence. That is to say, under the theory I am defending, a human being cannot survive going out of existence and coming back into existence again after a couple of hours. It cannot survive even a minute long gap in its existence. The criterion of spatiotemporal continuity I am adopting which is accepted by

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<sup>152</sup> Some interesting philosophical questions on identity, like ‘a vampire with a human soul’ or human/vampire hybrid baby are brought by the writer Joss Whedon in the popular TV series. Some of these issues also appear in Whedon’s comic books and science fiction/western series *Firefly*. I thank Barry Stocker for introducing me to Whedon. Application of my theory to these problems and the existentialist universe Whedon created could be the subject of an interesting paper I may want to write in the future. However, since these issues are beyond the scope of this present work I will not go into a detailed discussion of them here. See South 2003 for a philosophical look at Whedon’s work.

many philosophers<sup>153</sup> has its roots in the Lockean principle that one thing cannot have two beginnings of existence.<sup>154</sup> Something which goes out of existence cannot be restored, the same object or being cannot exist again. I will try to show how this criterion applies to my theory on the persistence of human beings.

As I have briefly mentioned in the previous sections, there are reported cases when a patient's heart/lung function stops and restarts after a certain amount of time. For instance, comedian Jerry Lewis claims that he died several times during his open-heart surgery.<sup>155</sup> I guess, rather than *I died*, he means *my heart has stopped*. If this period is short enough, the patient can survive the cessation of heart/lung function without permanent brain damage. However if it is longer than ten minutes, which is the time span during which the brain cells can survive without oxygen, the patient may become a human vegetable. He loses the property of personhood yet survives this radical change. This is not a case of interrupted existence in a human being's career.

For a human being, having gaps in existence means coming back to existence after the *irreversible* cessation of all brain function, including that of the brain stem. The patients I have mentioned above can even be reported 'dead' by the doctors. However, since, the heart, somehow, starts beating again, the cessation of the vital functions was not irreversible. Irrespective of what the doctors say, since the brain function was not *irreversibly lost* these patients have an uninterrupted existence.

A case of a spatiotemporal gap in a human being's life is, if not impossible, very hard to come by in the observable world. That is why I will use the example of a fictional

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<sup>153</sup> See Denkel 1996: 128, Russell 1948: 488, Shoemaker 1963:5.

<sup>154</sup> Locke 1961: 274.

<sup>155</sup> Feldman 1992: 65.

character. Think of what happens to Lois Lane in the 1978 Superman movie.<sup>156</sup> A big earthquake takes place and she gets swallowed by the ground in her car and dies. Her vital functions are irreversibly lost when Superman finds her. With anguish, he takes her in his arms and begins to mourn his loss. Shortly after, a brilliant idea comes to his mind: he will fly around the world really fast for a few times, turn back time and save her. So he does: he turns back time, gets to her before the ground swallows her and Lois Lane is resurrected. Ordinary intuition says she survives this gap. Locke and many of his followers diverge from this judgement and say she ceases to be and is replaced by a different woman.

Let us also consider the case of Gregor Samsa. If Gregor II wakes up some other morning and discovers that he has become a human being again, the human being lying on that bed would not be Gregor Samsa. Gregor Samsa has suffered a substantial change, he has ceased to be and was replaced by a numerically different being. Hence, he cannot come into existence again. Similarly, a human being cannot die a biological death, i.e., cease to be, and then come back into existence via resurrection or by any other means. Whatever were to come into existence as a result of these means would fail to be identical with the human being who had ceased to be.<sup>157</sup>

## Summary

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<sup>156</sup> Superman, 1978, directed by Richard Donner.

<sup>157</sup> On the account I am defending, a Phoenix, for instance, is an impossible being. For a discussion on surviving death see Russell 1967: 73.

In this chapter I have tried to define a human being. I have argued that a human being is necessarily a biological organism which is a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. I have tried to differentiate it from other living beings such as body parts and detached organs which do not have a biological life of their own. I have then proposed continuity under the kind “human being” as a criterion of persistence for human beings. After discussing the widely used criterion of death for human beings, I have claimed that, although sufficient, biological death is not necessary for a human being to go through a substantial change. Since a human being is necessarily a human being it cannot survive a change which results in a kind change, i.e. it cannot become a vampire, an angel or a cat. Rather, it ceases to be and is replaced by one of these beings. I have concluded the chapter by claiming that a human being cannot have gaps in its existence, that its existence has to be uninterrupted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHAT DOES 'I' REFER TO?

One final problem I would like to tackle concerning persons and human beings is the referent of 'I'. Both the advocates of animalism and of the Psychological Account have tried to provide answers to this question. What do I refer to when I use the personal pronoun 'I'? To a person? An animal? A soul? This problem is closely related to the question whether a human being can think. If the animal can think then he can think about himself. But can he refer to himself? Can he be the referent of his I-thoughts? As I have discussed in the previous chapters, most of the advocates of the Psychological Account hold that the animal is neither thinking nor intelligent. It cannot think, and therefore cannot think I-thoughts and cannot refer to itself. Although I have rejected the Psychological Account in the first five chapters I also want to consider their answers to the reference problem and try to show why animalism has a better answer.

In trying to solve this problem, one of the advocates of the Psychological Account, Harold Noonan, draws a distinction between the I-user and the referent of the 'I'. I will try to explain how this distinction works in sections 1 and 2. Noonan argues that the animal is a thinking substance which can also think I-thoughts. However, the animal's I-thoughts and utterances do not refer to itself; the referent of these I-thoughts is the person it constitutes. That is to say, when human being says 'I' he refers to the person he is temporarily constituting. I will discuss this position and the reasons why it is not a plausible solution to the reference problem.

The second philosopher whose solution to the reference problem I will consider in this chapter is Rudder Baker, who argues that the personal pronoun ‘I’ refers to a person who is constituted by a human being. Since constitution is a very close relationship, unlike in Noonan’s theory, ‘I’ does not fail to refer to the human being. When I say “I am a fast runner”, I refer to a person who is constituted by a human being which can run fast. Being able to run fast is a property the person has derivatively and the animal has nonderivatively. I shall discuss the advantages of this position over Noonan’s suggestion and the problems it faces.

Finally, I shall argue that the personal pronoun ‘I’ refers to the human being, that both its utterer and its referent are the human being who has the property of being a person. Since self-reference requires personhood, the human being stops being able to refer to itself when it loses this property. An end-stage Alzheimer’s patient cannot refer to itself, just as a parrot or a talking toy cannot.

### Can The Human Being Think?

As I have discussed in the previous chapters, the advocates of the Psychological Account claim that the person and the human being are distinct on the basis of their mental and psychological properties. The person can memorise poetry, solve mathematical puzzles and design houses, whereas the human being cannot. Accordingly, lapsing into a vegetative state destroys the person whereas the human being survives this change. This indicates that we are not identical to the human being with whom we share

all our atoms. The relation between us is not that of identity but that of constitution. The human being constitutes us.

One of the implications of this view is that the human being-the animal which constitutes the person-cannot think. He has a healthy nervous system, a functioning brain, he has been to the same schools you have been to, has read all the books you have read yet he cannot think. It is the person who does all the thinking, remembering and the problem solving. One of the proponents of the Psychological Account, Shoemaker, held this view. He argued that animals, including the ones which share their matter with persons, cannot think. Human beings are masses of matter, i.e., material objects. A material object, by definition, cannot have any mental property at all. The nature of mental properties rules out masses of matter, including animals, thinking.<sup>158</sup> Animals do not and cannot possess these properties. It is an a priori truth. Why did Shoemaker insist on this? Because if animals could think as we do then they would be indistinguishable from persons. It is thinking, reading, problem solving that makes a person what it is. If the animals could also do these things they would not be very different from persons. In fact, they would actually be persons in the Lockean sense. Let me try to formulate the problem. We know that there is a person with psychological identity conditions sitting on your chair, reading, and thinking.

If the material object constituting the person-the animal- is also able to think, this would mean that there are two persons, one with psychological identity conditions, the other with physical-biological- identity conditions sitting on your chair and thinking. This problem is called “The too-many-minds problem” or “the problem of the thinking animal”. Hence, in order to avoid this problem, Shoemaker simply assumes that, being

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<sup>158</sup> See Shoemaker 1984: 92-96.

material objects, all the animals, including human beings, cannot think. They have no mental properties.

Noonan, on the other hand, tries to solve this problem. He suggests that a supporter of the Psychological Account—in his terms a neo-Lockean—need not embrace this rather implausible position, i.e., deny that a human being can think although he shares all his matter with the person. He claims that animals—meaning, human animals—are our paradigm of what it is to think.<sup>159</sup> His suggestion, which is very commonsensical at first sight, leads to several problems. Once we accept that the animal can think, as I have tried to show above, we have to allow for two coinciding thinking substances. The Psychological Account states that the person and the animal—the human being—are not identical. The person is, by definition, a thinking, intelligent and rational being. If the animal is also a thinking being then where I am there are two thinking beings, an animal and a person. We are both working on my dissertation, reading and marking student papers. It also implies that my thoughts belong to two thinking beings. This leads to overpopulation, to the problem of too-many-minds.

Allowing for thinking animals also leads to an epistemic problem. There are two thinkers, so which one of them am I? Am I the person who can refer to herself, or the animal which cannot? Since the animal and the person think the same thoughts, and utter the same sentences, I have no means of finding out which one of the two I actually am. For all I know, I may be the animal who mistakenly thinks she is a person. Take Noonan: he thinks he is a philosopher, a person, that he can be the referent of his I-thoughts. How can he rule out the possibility that it is in fact the animal who is thinking these thoughts and that he is completely mistaken? It looks like, if we accept his theory, we will have no

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<sup>159</sup> Noonan 2001: 308.

means of finding out whether we are in fact persons because the animal is thinking the very thoughts we are thinking.<sup>160</sup>

Allowing for two thinking substances sharing the same place at the same time also creates a problem about what a person is. If, as Noonan argues, the animal can think, then he can also solve problems, remember things, and design houses. This implies that he is an intelligent, conscious being with reason and reflection, i.e., a person. If Noonan accepts that the animal is a person then there are two persons occupying the same place at the same time. A human being-person constitutes the other person. This is unacceptable. That is why he denies that the animal is a person.

The animal can think, he can think about himself, he has reason and reflection. But he is not a person. He can do all the things, a person can do but one. He cannot refer to himself by using the personal pronoun 'I'. When he says 'I', he refers not to himself but to the person he shares his thoughts with.<sup>161</sup>

I hold that Noonan's attempt to defend the Psychological Account and also allow for a thinking human being by distinguishing between the 'I' user and the referent of 'I' fails. If the animal can think I-thoughts he also has to be able to be the referent of these thoughts. In the following section I will try to explain why.

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<sup>160</sup> See Mackie 2001: 375 where he makes a similar point and says of Noonan "Hence his proposal would leave us, absurdly, in doubt as to whether we are persons."

<sup>161</sup> See Noonan 1998: 315-7, 1999: 87-90 and 2001: 286-7 for his distinction of the 'I' user and the referent of 'I'.

## The 'I' User versus the Referent of the 'I'

Harold Noonan is an advocate of neo-Lockeanism—a modern version of the Psychological Account which assigns a significant role to psychological continuity. The defenders of this view also accept that there can be divergences between the histories of the persons and those of the human beings, one can outlive the other. In their view, coincidence is a temporary relationship. That is to say, encountering the same person on different occasions, at different times may involve encountering different human beings or encountering the same human being on different occasions may involve encountering different persons.<sup>162</sup>

As I have briefly mentioned in the previous section, Noonan departs from the early advocates of the Lockean View with regards to his ideas about the animal which constitutes a person. He claims that they are thinking, intelligent beings. This brings them very close to persons. There has to be a distinguishing factor between the person and the animal. So he suggests the following:

He [the Neo-Lockean] must insist on a distinction between the 'I'-user and the reference of 'I'. Thus, he can say that in the problematic situation in which a person and an animal temporarily coincide, the animal can indeed think 'I'-thoughts... [T]he reference of its 'I'-thoughts is not itself but the person with whom it is sharing these thoughts.<sup>163</sup>

He then asks the question which comes to our minds:

But what, then, is the rule of reference for 'I'? The standard one: the reference of an 'I' thought is the person thinking the thought. No other rule is needed, since whenever, on this account, an animal is thinking an 'I' thought, so also is a person.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> For a detailed discussion of how person and human being can outlive each other under the Psychological Account see Chapter 4.

<sup>163</sup> Noonan 1998: 316.

<sup>164</sup> Noonan 1998: 316.

This is what, I believe, he is trying to say. When the two coincide, both the person and the human being think. However since the personal pronoun ‘I’ cannot refer to an animal, when the animal thinks I-thoughts and utters the personal pronoun ‘I’, it refers not to itself but to the person. Accordingly, when the human being says “I am a human being” or when he says “I am a person” he is referring to the person. Therefore, the statement “I am a person” is true; he is saying something true about the person rather than something false about himself. Likewise, since ‘I’ refers to the person, the statement “I am a human being” uttered by the human being is false. Noonan gives the following example. If the animal says “I want my dinner”, this means that he wants the person he is coinciding with to have his dinner. However, the only way he can say this is by uttering the sentence “I want my dinner”.<sup>165</sup>

Despite the fact that it is a rational, thinking being with a functioning brain, why can’t the animal refer to himself by using the personal pronoun ‘I’? Noonan holds that he cannot refer to himself because he is not a person, he has the wrong identity conditions. Personal pronouns refer to persons and persons only. They cannot refer to any other intelligent, thinking thing like human beings, smart apes or person stages. I find this explanation very unsatisfactory. There is also a circularity involved. I will try to show why. Noonan denies that a human being is a person although it can think and can even think about itself. The reason why it does not qualify as a person is because it cannot refer to itself. On the other hand, the reason why it cannot refer to itself by using the first person pronoun is because it is not a person and personal pronouns refer only to people who are psychological continuers.

Olson makes a similar criticism of Noonan’s suggestion and says the following:

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 316.

The personal pronouns don't refer to human animals because those animals aren't people, and they aren't people because personal pronouns don't refer to them... We might as well say that there is no reason why animals aren't people.<sup>166</sup>

Noonan, also, in my opinion, mistakenly assumes that the human being will always share its thoughts and utterances with a person, i.e., there will always be a person who will be the referent of its I-thoughts. This is not necessarily true. Consider a stage III (severe) Alzheimer's patient. As I have discussed in detail in Chapter 4 these patients are not psychologically continuous with the being before the disease. They stay in bed all day, unaware of the things happening around them, they do not recognise anyone and do not have a sense of time. Because of the severe neurological damage in their brains, they suffer from profound memory loss. They do not even remember how many kids they have or what they used to do for a living. They always appear agitated and suffer from movement abnormalities. You cannot communicate with them as they also suffer from speech impairments called echolalia and palilalia.<sup>167</sup> That is, they either repeat a word or a phrase or the words of another person trying to communicate with them in a mechanical and meaningless way-a condition which may also be observed in some patients suffering from schizophrenia.

Someone I know was at this stage of the disease and when you entered her room you could often hear her repeatedly utter the phrase 'I am 56', followed by the question 'shall I give you 56?'. No matter what you said to her she kept repeating these two phrases. Now going back to Noonan's suggestion, what did this patient refer to when she said 'I'm 56'? She could not have been referring to a person she is sharing his thoughts

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<sup>166</sup> Olson 2002a: 197.

<sup>167</sup> Richter, Blass 1994: 19.

with because there was no such person.<sup>168</sup> Since self-reference requires personhood this human being did not refer to anything when she said “I’m 56”. Noonan does not talk about this possibility. He takes it for granted that there will always be a person sharing the thoughts and utterances of a human being. Not all the beings that can utter the personal pronoun ‘I’ shares its thoughts with a person. When there is no such person thinking the same thoughts and uttering the same utterances as the human being, I-thoughts and utterances do not refer.

Circularity and the problem of non-person human beings are not the only problems Noonan’s distinction between the I-user and the referent of the ‘I’ creates. There is also an epistemological problem he faces. Let a person constituted by a human being utter the sentence “I am an animal”. Since this statement contains the personal pronoun ‘I’, it refers to the person. Hence, it is a false proposition. On the other hand, the proposition “I am a person” uttered by him is true, since the ‘I’ again refers to the person. Now let us imagine him uttering this slightly different sentence “the thinker of this thought is an animal”. Mackie asks whether this sentence is true because the human being is thinking the thought expressed or false because the person is thinking it.<sup>169</sup> I think this is a very legitimate criticism. The human being and the person share the same brain, however since one of them is a human being and the other is a person some of the utterances coming out of the same mouth will be true or false depending on whose thoughts they are expressing. We have no means of finding out who is thinking those thoughts. This is a very absurd consequence.

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<sup>168</sup> Since there is no psychological continuity or connectedness, Stage III Alzheimer’s patients cannot be considered a person under any of the versions of the Psychological Account. See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of this point.

<sup>169</sup> See Mackie 1999: 375.

As I have tried to show above, Noonan's distinction between the I-user and the referent of the 'I' creates several problems, which he, himself, admits:

I acknowledge the implausibility of the proposal I have put forward in defence of the NeoLockean... But I do not think that the implausibility is significantly greater than that of the four-dimensionalist position... I should add, however, that I would not like to be construed as an enthusiastic defender of this proposal. I am, in fact, increasingly attached to the view that 'person', whether defined in Locke's way or according to the revision suggested here, is not a sortal term at all.<sup>170</sup>

Once we deny that 'person' is a sortal term<sup>171</sup> the reference problem can be solved without making any implausible distinctions between the referent and the utterer of the 'I', or adopting four-dimensionalism. Even Noonan, who has been an advocate of the Neo-Lockean position for many years comes to see this. If person is not a kind, then the human being is the only being sitting in your chair, reading a book, thinking and talking about itself. It refers to itself and only to itself when it uses the personal pronoun 'I'. However, before going into a discussion of how animalism solves the reference problem, I would like to consider Rudder Baker's suggestion. Rudder Baker, another advocate of the Psychological Account, tries to solve the reference problem by arguing that 'I' refers to the person constituted by a biological being. However, unlike Noonan, she points out that when the person refers to himself using the personal pronoun 'I' he also refers to the animal. In the following section I shall discuss her solution and whether it solves the reference problem.

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<sup>170</sup> Noonan 2001: 89-90.

<sup>171</sup> Some philosophers use the terms "substance concept" and "sortal concept/term" interchangeably. I take that Noonan is one of them. Like a substance concept a sortal term can be the answer to the Aristotelian "What is it?" question. If a sortal term applies to an object it cannot cease to do so. See Wiggins 2001: 8-11 where he discusses sortal terms.

## ‘I’ Refers to a Person Constituted by a Human Being

Being an advocate of the Constitution View, Rudder Baker holds that some of our properties depend on being constituted by our human animal, whereas some do not. For instance, being 6 feet tall, weighing 120 pounds, being a fast runner, being blue-eyed, having an ulcer are some of the properties which depend on our constitution relation to the animal. However, there are other properties, such as being good with numbers, speaking French, reading fast, which do not depend on this relationship. I, the person, have the first set of properties derivatively-in virtue of being constituted by a particular human organism- and the animal has them nonderivatively. Similarly, I have the properties of the second kind nonderivatively, whereas the animal has them derivatively-in virtue of constituting a person who is good with numbers, who speaks French and reads fast. Despite this, my person, which is essentially a psychological entity, and my human organism, which is essentially a biological entity, are, in her own words “not two separate things”<sup>172</sup>. They are very closely related. However, this does not amount to a denial of Leibniz’ Law. She does not say that the person and the animal are numerically the same. Since constitution is a very intimate relationship, what I call ‘me’ is a single constituted being rather than two separate things. That is to say, “the constituting animal is no more separate from the person than the constituting piece of marble is separate from *David*”.<sup>173</sup> You are the animal, and the animal is you. Yet, you are an animal contingently and a person essentially.<sup>174</sup> You can cease to be an animal and survive this change. However if you cease to be a person you would simply cease to be.

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>174</sup> See Olson 2001b: 23.

On this view, the personal pronoun ‘I’ refers to a person constituted by a human animal. This entity speaks French, digests food, runs fast, ponders the origin of the universe and has blue eyes. Hence, there are neither two digestive systems nor two thinking or French speaking beings.<sup>175</sup> My uttering a French sentence is not a separate event from my animal’s uttering one. Hence, the ambiguity problem and the problem of overcrowding Noonan faces seem to be avoided. There are neither two thinkers nor two speakers. As a person constituted by a human being I am the sole owner of my thoughts and words. If I utter a sentence using the personal pronoun ‘I’, I will be referring to a single embodied being. If I say ‘I weight hundred twenty pounds’ I will be referring to the person and saying something true of her. Being hundred twenty pounds is a property she has derivatively-in virtue of being constituted by this particular animal. However, Olson thinks introducing this “very intimate” relationship does not even solve the overcrowding problem:

[The animal] can think in the first person insofar as it constitutes an essential person who can think in the first person; it can't think in the first person independently of its constituting anything. Well, insofar as your body can think in the first person, there are at least two numerically different beings--people, in fact--thinking your thoughts, even if they "aren't separate" or are "almost one".<sup>176</sup>

It seems like there are still two entities sitting on my chair and doing the thinking. One of them is essentially a person, the other is accidentally one. Now which one of the two do I refer to when I utter the sentence “I am an animal”? In that case, I am still referring to the person and saying something true of her as long as I am using the *is* of constitution. However, if I say “I am an animal” to mean “I am identical to an animal” what I am saying is false because the Constitution View denies that persons and animals

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<sup>175</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 200.

<sup>176</sup> Olson 2001b: 25.

are identical. The same applies to the use of 'I' in Mackie's example I have discussed above. "The thinker of this thought is an animal" is true if the *is* used in the sentence is the 'is' of constitution, false if it is the 'is' of identity. Hence, Rudder Baker also avoids the epistemological problem. The entity who is thinking our thoughts is a person in a human body. We have the means to find out when she is saying something true about herself and when she is not.

However, there are other problems the Constitution View faces. One of them concerns the utterances made by the animal. Rudder Baker argues that since constitution is a very intimate relationship there is only one thinker, one speaker. I speak English nonderivatively, the animal speaks it derivatively. If the animal did not constitute a person it would not be able to speak English or rather, any language. Yet we are not identical. The sentence "I am identical to an animal" is false. This brings to mind the following question. Can the animal say something true about himself by uttering the sentence "I am an animal"? Since Rudder Baker holds that the personal pronoun 'I' always refers to a person-constituted by a human being- this is not possible. This sentence will always be false. Although the person can refer to and say something true about himself by uttering the sentence "I am a person", the animal is, for some reason, incapable of this. Rudder Baker says, "When a person refers to herself, she does not fail to refer to the constituting animal: She refers to an embodied being constituted by that animal"<sup>177</sup> However, all her utterances which are true of the animal and false of herself will be false.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 200.

The animal has properties like speaking English, being able to think. It has them derivatively, i.e., by virtue of constituting a person. It has them in the same way I have the property of being a fast runner by virtue of being constituted by an animal which can run fast. I have this property derivatively and it allows me to run fast. I can say “I-the person- am a fast runner.” I can *use* the property I have by virtue of being constituted by a fast animal. Hence, it should be able to use the properties it has by virtue of constituting me to say something true about itself. It has a healthy nervous system, a functioning brain and all the education its needs. It should be able to use English to refer to itself and utter a true sentence. Why can't it use the properties it has derivatively when the person can? Rudder Baker does not provide us with answers to these questions.

There is an animal which is not identical to the person, which has a different set of identity conditions, which can outlive the person, which came into being before the person did, which is capable of thought and speech, and yet this entity, for some reason, can never refer to itself and say something true about its essence. For instance, it can never say something true about itself by uttering the sentence “I can survive lapsing into a vegetative state”, although this proposition is true of it.

If the animal could utter true sentences which would be false of the person, Rudder Baker would face the ‘problem of too many minds’-the problem of two thinking and speaking entities sharing their atoms. She avoids this problem by claiming that there is only one thinker, a person constituted by an animal. However she fails to explain why the animal is incapable of saying something true about itself by uttering the sentence “I am an animal” although it has all it needs to be able to-a healthy nervous system, a functioning brain, many years of education.

Another problem concerns the non-identity of the person and the human being. Rudder Baker claims they are very closely related. The person and the animal are not two separate things but a single constituted being like a bronze statue. When the person uses the personal pronoun 'I' she refers to this entity. Yet, the person and the animal are not identical. The person is necessarily a psychological being whereas the animal is necessarily a biological one. They have different essential properties and hence, different persistence conditions. It is very hard to see how they can be so intimately related, share the same atoms, be *almost* identical and yet have different persistence conditions. Rudder Baker does not point out a difference between the person and the human being which enables them to have different persistence conditions or different essential properties. The animal is not identical to the person because he can survive lapsing into a persistent vegetative state whereas the person cannot. They are not identical because the animal comes into being before the person does and may outlive the person.

My question is, what makes this possible? What is it that the person has and the animal does not have-or vice versa-which results in different modal properties, i.e., a different set of persistence conditions, different histories? The Constitution View Rudder Baker is defending cannot provide us with answers to these questions. When trying to explain why they have different persistence conditions it appeals to the essential differences between the two: one is necessarily a biological being the other a psychological one. However, this is not a satisfactory answer because, since they share all their atoms, what makes one a biological being and the other a psychological one are merely modal properties. We still need to know what enables them to have different

modal properties, different histories, and the Constitution View cannot provide a non-circular answer to our question.<sup>178</sup>

As I have tried to discuss above, although it avoids some of the problems Noonan's neo-Lockeanism is prone to creating, the Constitution View, too, is faced with problems when trying to solve the reference problem. One other solution to the reference problem is giving up the Psychological Account and endorsing animalism-accepting that psychological continuity is neither necessary nor sufficient for diachronic identity, that 'person' is not a substance concept. In the following section I will try to discuss how my version of animalism approaches the reference problem and avoids the problems the other accounts face.

### 'I' Refers To a Human Being

According to the animalism I have tried to develop in Chapters 6 and 7, we are most fundamentally human beings, i.e., some kind of animal. Our persistence conditions are determined by our being human beings. Personhood is not an essential property. We can lose this property in the same way we can lose the properties of being a bachelor, a teacher, a member of the parliament, and still persist. Lapsing into PVS is not a substantial change. The patient in this vegetative state is still a human being, an animal who has lost the property of personhood. In sum, a human being starts out as an embryo, acquires many physical and mental properties throughout its career and one day can lose many significant properties and *become* a PVS patient.

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<sup>178</sup> For a detailed discussion of this controversy see Chapter 4, section 2.1.

What does the personal pronoun ‘I’ refer to in this picture? ‘I’ refers to a human being who has the property of personhood. Of the many properties human beings acquire over the years some are intellectual-being good at physics, being able to speak three languages, play chess-, some are physical-having dark hair, being overweight, having an ulcer. Through most of their career human beings have the property of being people, which is a collection of many intellectual properties. During these times, ‘I’ refers to a human being who has the property of personhood. For example, when I say, “I am reading Virginia Woolf’s biography”, or “I am planning my next trip to New York” , the ‘I’ in these sentences refers to Itr, the human being, who has the properties of being a person, being a Ph.D. student, an English Literature graduate and so on. When I utter the sentences “I weigh 120 pounds”, “I have dark hair”, “I have an ulcer” ‘I’ still refers to Itr, the human being.

What happens when I lose the property of being a person? Under those circumstances, ‘I’ stops referring. I shall try to illustrate this point by considering an end-stage Alzheimer’s patient suffering from palilalia. As I have discussed in Chapter 4, an Alzheimer’s patient at this state is not a person under the widely accepted accounts of personhood. Imagine that this patient is your aunt. You approach her smiling and say, “Hi, I’m your niece Amy” upon which, instead of responding, she utters the very same sentence, “Hi, I’m your niece Amy”. She does not know who you are, who she herself is, has no sense of time and space, and has no clue what any of the words in that sentence mean. She just repeats the words other people tell her. Now, since she no longer possesses the property of personhood and since self-reference requires personhood, the personal pronoun ‘I’ when uttered by your aunt does not refer.

Here is my point. Not every utterance of ‘I’ refers. For it to refer the utterer must possess the property of personhood. The ‘I’ uttered by the aunt is no different than the ‘I’ uttered by a parrot or the toy robot I and my brother had as kids, which when you pressed the red button on its head said “I’m an atomic power robot, please give my best wishes to everybody”. Also think of the labels Lewis Carroll’s Alice sees on the bottles that read “Drink Me”. Neither the bottle nor the potion inside the bottle is a person, so the “me” does not refer. In my view, only the “I” utterances which refer are the ones uttered by a human being who is also a person.

My approach avoids the problem of too-many-minds. ‘I’ has only one referent, a human being.<sup>179</sup> Where I am is only one entity, a human being who currently has the property of being a person. There is only one thinker, one speaker. My uttering a sentence is a single event. It is I who speaks English, who lives in Chicago, who has dark hair. One day I may lose my higher brain functions, i.e., my ability to reason, think, read, speak and calculate. If that happens, I will be a human being who cannot reason, think, read, speak, calculate and refer. Sitting on my chair will still be one entity. Hence, my position avoids the overcrowding problem.

I can refer to myself and utter both false and true sentences about my essence. If I utter the sentences “I am a human being” or “I am [identical to] an animal” I will be saying something true about myself. The sentence “I am a person” is also true of me in the same way the sentences “I am an aunt”, “I am a Turkish citizen”, “I am married”, “I am a Ph.D. student” are true. Person is a phase sortal just like bachelor, student and aunt. I have these properties contingently. They apply to me during parts of my career.

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<sup>179</sup> This is not a very popular view. Many philosophers reject it. Strawson argues this may be due to the belief in a self which is illegitimately spiritualized and a human being incompletely grasped. See Strawson 2003: 340.

The sentence “I am a Ph.D. student” is true of me only during the time I am registered in a Ph.D. program. When I graduate it will be false. I will cease to be married if I get a divorce yet I will continue to exist. Similarly the sentence “I am a person” will be false if I lapse into persistent vegetative state. I will stop being a person, yet survive this change as a PVS patient.

On the other hand, if I use “I am a person”, to mean “I am essentially, most fundamentally, a person”, or “I am identical to a person” according to my version of animalism, I will still be referring to myself, the human being. However, since person is not a substance concept, and hence no being can be essentially a person, what I am saying will be necessarily false.

### Summary

In this chapter I have tried to discuss the reference problem the Psychological Account creates. This approach denies the identity of the human being and the self-the person- which results in a problem concerning the referent of the personal pronoun ‘I’. If there is a human being and a person where I am sitting now what/who is the referent of my I-thoughts? Is the thinker of these thoughts identical to the referent of them? As we have seen, different versions of the Psychological Account have different answers to these questions. However, none is capable of avoiding the ambiguity created by the use of personal pronoun ‘I’. Animalism, on the other hand, is not faced with a reference problem. Since I am identical to the human being the referent of the ‘I’ is always the human being which is the only entity sitting on my chair, working, and thinking. When I lose the property of personhood I can no longer solve mathematical problems, recall

incidents and I can no longer refer. 'I' always refers to the human being which has the property of personhood.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In the present study, I have tried to show that no psychological relation is either necessary or sufficient for our persistence through time. One of my main contentions has been that the fundamental assumption of the Psychological Account namely, that person is a kind, is false. I have challenged this assumption on several grounds. I have pointed out that it creates a number of intuitively odd consequences and tried to state them within the framework of a dilemma. I have also discussed the ontological inflation and the reference problem it is prone to creating.

Having argued that we are not fundamentally persons, I have introduced animalism, the view which states that we are most fundamentally human beings. I have defended this view and developed my own version of it. I have proposed continuity under the kind human being as the criterion for our existence through time. Throughout this work, I have given many reasons why animalism is a better, more coherent theory than its rival, the Psychological Account. I have argued that it avoids the problems that afflict the advocates of the Psychological Account effectively and without adopting four-dimensionalism, relative identity, contingent identity or denying Leibniz' Law. In this concluding chapter I want to summarise my reasons why we should accept animalism over the Psychological Account and its other rivals which try to account for what we are and explain our persistence through time.

I will also consider the most serious challenge to animalism, what is referred to in the literature as the "corpse problem". As we saw in Chapter 7 an advocate of the Psychological Account may claim that animalism, when trying to raise a foetus objection against the Psychological Account, is itself faced with a "corpse problem". I will go back to this problem, respond to the challenge and argue that my version of animalism has no

corpse problem. Here is the picture which, I think, is very clear and plausible: We start our lives as human zygotes which develop into human foetuses, which develop into human babies, into children and adults. When we die a biological death we go out of existence and are replaced by corpses.

### The Branching Problem is Avoided

One of the advantages of animalism is that it avoids the branching problem. Since animalism denies that identity consists in some psychological relationship the fission cases do not constitute a problem for an advocate of this account. Let us consider this imaginary case. A patient goes through hemispherectomy, i.e., one of his cerebral hemispheres is removed. Another patient goes through an operation during which his completely damaged cerebrum is removed and discarded. This healthy hemisphere from the first patient gets successfully transplanted into the second patient's (empty) skull. These operations do not create two beings which are identical to the first patient a day before he checks into the hospital and undergoes hemispherectomy. It is true that if this were to happen both the hemisphere donor and the recipient would be psychologically continuous with the patient who checked into the hospital a couple of days before this operation. However, since according to animalism, identity has nothing to do with psychological continuity or connectedness the patient lying on his bed before this complicated operation takes place is not identical to the recipient of one of his hemispheres.

Animalism provides us with a very simple explanation. The patient who arrives at the hospital two days before the operation and goes through the operation is numerically identical to the patient who is brought back to his room—who now lacks one of his hemispheres and suffers from some serious psychological impairments due to this. There is no other being which is identical to him. Ontologically, he is no different from a patient who comes to the hospital and goes through an operation during which one of his kidneys is removed and is transplanted into some other patient who was suffering from kidney failure.

Can there be a body part that supports the essential properties of human life like the brain stem Olson is talking about? If so, it may be suggested that if this part is moved from one body to another the human being's identity can go with it. I do not think there is any such body part. I hold that no matter which body part you remove the human being stays behind. If it is a crucial part and if it is not replaced the human being may cease to exist.<sup>180</sup>

Animalism gives us similar solutions to other hypothetical problem cases of the same kind. The process of cloning during which your memory and character traits can be transferred to your exact genetic replicas is one of them. In this context, by cloning I mean an operation during which you enter into a machine which scans you and produces several genetic copies-clones-in the same manner in which a Xerox machine produces copies of the one piece of paper.<sup>181</sup> According to animalism, although your clones

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<sup>180</sup> Developing this question may be an interesting future project. I thank Ilhan Inan for bringing it up.

<sup>181</sup> I would like to emphasise the fact that I am not referring to the genetic process of cloning where a somatic cell taken from an adult organism is isolated and the nucleus from that cell is transferred to an egg from which the nucleus was removed after which the egg cell with the new nucleus starts behaving like a fertilised egg, develops into an embryo and then into a fully-grown organism. In that case the two organisms would be exact genetic copies but would have different memories and possibly different character traits.

created in this manner would be psychologically continuous with you, you would not be identical to any of them. You would continue to exist as yourself and be identical to yourself until you are biologically dead or until you stop falling under the kind human being. The number of replicas who are psychologically continuous with you would have nothing to do with your persistence through time.

### Identity is What Matters

To avoid branching some supporters of the Psychological Account, Derek Parfit for one, have denied that numerical identity is what matters. Identity is a one to one relationship. I cannot be identical to more than one being. That is why the branching problem is created. However you and I can be psychologically continuous with and connected to two or even more beings. I will try to illustrate how. Let us reconsider the case I have described in the previous section. A patient checks into a hospital. For practical purposes let us call him Patient. He goes through an operation during which one of his cerebral hemispheres is removed and is transplanted into an empty skull.

Let Donor rigidly designate the patient who comes back to his room having donated one of his hemispheres and Recipient rigidly designate the patient who has received it. Recipient is psychologically continuous with the Patient; he can recognise his friends, enjoy listening to his favourite music, remember his plans for the future. So does Donor. He may initially have some difficulty walking, talking and writing. He may

have to relearn all these abilities.<sup>182</sup> However, he will have Patient's memories and psychological features.

Since identity is a one-to-one relationship neither one of the offshoots is numerically identical with Patient but they are both psychologically continuous with him. To put it in other words, Patient did not survive the operation, because there are now two entities psychologically continuous with him. Since identity is a one to one relationship this is not acceptable. He has ceased to be and has been replaced by two successors. Parfit claims this is as good as ordinary survival.<sup>183</sup> Both Donor and Recipient will continue with Patient's work, they will spend time with his family and friends, continue to enjoy all the things he used to enjoy.

Furthermore, if we look at it in a certain way, it may even be better than ordinary survival because Donor and Recipient will have twice as much time to donate to Patient's work, family, friends and hobbies. It will be like doubling of the years to be lived. For Parfit, this-what he calls Relation R- is what matters. Relation R is defined as psychological connectedness and/or continuity. As opposed to identity, which is an all or nothing relationship, Relation-R can come in degrees. I may be strongly connected to some future being who receives my whole cerebrum, somewhat connected to one who receives one of cerebral hemispheres and remotely connected to one who receives half of one hemisphere.

In another hypothetical scenario, the being I am strongly connected to can also look exactly like me. I enter into what Parfit calls a "teletransporter", a machine which

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<sup>182</sup> Studies show that in 70% of cases of hemispherectomy speech and writing return. The missing half is replaced by marrow fluid and the brain eventually recovers from this catastrophic loss. There are even recorded cases of patients who have recovered the ability to be fluent in more than one language – the languages they spoke before the operation.

<sup>183</sup> Parfit 1984: 261.

destroys me and records the exact state of my cells. This information is forwarded to another machine on Mars which using organic material makes a copy of me. This being created on Mars remembers everything about my life until the moment I walked into the Teletransporter and, moreover looks, sounds and behaves exactly like me. Parfit believes that there is no reason why we should not accept this operation, not see it as a form of travelling.

At first sight, all this seems very counterintuitive. You may not like the idea of some being, which is not you, finishing your book, spending time with your spouse and children, walking on the surface of Mars, making new friends. However, Parfit points out that being R-Related to at least one future being is much better than total annihilation. For him, there are two ways in which you can lose your identity: by dying and by dividing- donating your cerebral hemispheres, being cloned, copied, teletransported. While the first one means total annihilation, the latter results in at least one being psychologically continuous with you. He claims it is irrational to think that this option is as bad as ordinary death.<sup>184</sup> If we take the community context into account and consider teletransporting people like Gandhi, Mandela, Atatürk, Martin Luther King, Parfit's point may seem more valid. We may all prefer these people teletransported rather than dead.

Under some circumstances, for us too, having offshoots which will continue our work may be preferable to death. You and I may rather undergo fusion, teletransportation or cloning than die an ordinary death. With the same instinct, you may be very concerned about the patient who will receive your cerebrum. You may want him/her to have a comfortable life and not at all be concerned about what will happen to

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 261.

the brainless human being which the operation leaves in persistent vegetative state. The advocates of the Psychological Account take this lack of concern to show that you go where your cerebrum, in other words, where your psychological properties, goes. You do not care as much about what will happen to the brainless animal. Therefore, you are not identical to it. Here is a passage which supports this claim from Spanish director Luis Bunuel's semiautobiography *My Last Breath*:

You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realise that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all, just as intelligence without the possibility of expression is not really an intelligence. Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it, we are nothing.<sup>185</sup>

If you are nothing without your memories you do not care about what is going to happen to that *nothing* once the memories are gone, and if you do not care about it you are not identical to it.

This is not a very convincing argument. As Parfit has shown us, you may be very concerned about an offshoot you are psychologically connected to but who is not numerically identical to you, i.e., somebody who has one or more of your cerebral hemispheres, who has somehow inherited your psychological properties. It looks like concern does not always follow identity.

Just as it is conceivable – and may even be rational – to be concerned about a being which is not identical to you, you may also not care about something which is in fact identical to you. I will try to explain how. Let us imagine you are given some kind of medical proof that we are identical to PVS patients, that if we were to lapse into such a state identity would still be preserved. Knowing that you will be identical to it you can

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<sup>185</sup> Bunuel 1994: 4-5.

still say that you are not at all concerned about someone in PVS . You can put in your will your desire to be disconnected from all the machines and let die if this were to happen. For instance, you can say “I do not want to be kept alive under the circumstances in which I no longer am able to experience any joy, recognise my loved ones and communicate with them”. Under some circumstances, concern and identity may not always go together. Since your lack of concern is no proof that you are not identical to a PVS patient, your concern for the offshoots which would be R-related to you does not indicate that you are identical to them. In other words, your concern for them fails to show that animalism is wrong.<sup>186</sup>

Moreover, these are all practical questions, ethical concerns about future beings which will be qualitatively identical to you-will look, sound like you, have your eye colour etc.-or bear a strong psychological resemblance to you-will enjoy reading your favourite writer, will react to happiness the way you do, will remember the things you have experienced, and so on.<sup>187</sup> I think we need to separate these questions from questions about numerical identity. As I have discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the question of persistence is a question about numerical identity and as we have seen above these two kinds of identity do not always entail each other.

Animalism, since it is not faced with a branching problem, does not need to deny the importance of numerical identity, invent a new relation like Relation-R and appeal to a concept of prudential concern to support it. According to animalism, I was a human foetus, then a human baby, and a human child. Now I am a human adult. If one day I suffer from a severe cerebral trauma or donate my cerebrum I may become a human

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<sup>186</sup> See Olson 1997: 56 where he makes a similar point and says, “So once we admit that one’s prudential concern need not be concern for oneself, it ought to come as no surprise if the Biological Approach is true.

<sup>187</sup> For more on qualitative identity see section 2.1.

vegetable. Numerical identity holds between all these beings. On the other hand, my replica on Mars who would look like me, remember my childhood, enjoy my favourite symphony, would not be me. The moment the teletransporter destroys me I would cease to exist and a new entity qualitatively identical to me would come into being in Mars.

This operation may lead to interesting ethical questions about me and my replica. However, as I have underlined several times, having a replica is not what matters in survival. Identity is.

### Coincidence Is Avoided

One of the strengths of animalism that I have discussed in detail is that it avoids coinciding objects, objects existing at the same place at the same time. It is not faced with the problem of overpopulation. Where I am, sitting on my chair, reading my book, thinking certain thoughts is only one entity, a human being. At no time during its career does this human being coincide with another being. It does not start sharing its atoms and space with a person when it acquires certain psychological properties or with a talkson when it learns to talk.

In animalism, person is a phase sortal rather than a substance concept. Hence, the human being can acquire and lose the property of personhood without losing its identity. It can lose this property in the same way it can lose the property of being a student or a bachelor and survive this change. If it lapses into a persistent vegetative state it does not go out of existence, it loses a very important property-the property of personhood. Since the only substance concept it falls under is human being the loss of personhood does not

amount to a substantial change. It is, rather, an alteration like growing taller, becoming a mother or a lawyer.

Since person is not a substance concept the problem of the thinking animal is also avoided. Animalism is not faced with the problem of a person and human being who share the same nervous system, the same brain and are thinking the same thoughts. There is only one thinker and one speaker, and that is the human being. The human being continues to think and be the referent of its I-thoughts as long as it retains the property of personhood. If it loses this property it can no longer think or refer to itself. However, since these psychological properties are not essential to it, it continues to exist until the day it ceases to be a human being.

Some may hold that in this picture the notion of personhood becomes very elusive. I do not think so. Person is still a very important concept in my theory. I have devoted a whole chapter to the discussion of this concept, to how we can tell a person from a non-person. Nowhere in that chapter have I tried to devalue this concept which has a very significant place in our everyday lives. In my theory it is still a very important concept. It just has a different ontological status — it is a phase sortal.

My version of animalism can also be developed to help metaphysicians working on the coincidence problem regarding artifacts or artworks. There is an amorphous piece of copper before us and it is later on shaped into a statue of Albert Camus. The advocates of the Coincidence View claim that as a result of this a new entity, the statue of Albert Camus, comes into being and starts to share its place with the piece of copper. This leads to the coincidence problem. I think it is possible to approach the problem this way: When we are looking at a copper statue there is only one entity before us. A piece of

copper which currently has the property of statuehood. If, one day, it is melted it will lose this property but will survive this change. This approach certainly will lead to several questions concerning the identity conditions and essential properties of pieces of matter. An advocate of this view will have to show why a ‘piece of clay’ is a substance concept and ‘statue’ is a phase sortal. However, I hold that my solution to the problem of personal identity can be a viable candidate for a possible solution to the materially coinciding objects.

### Is There a Corpse Problem?

Above I have claimed that avoiding coinciding material objects is one of the strengths of animalism. According to Rudder Baker, however, animalism is faced with what she calls “a corpse problem”. She notes that on animalism the human animal does not coincide with a person but coincides with a human corpse. The human corpse is not identical with the human being because they have different persistence conditions. It can survive death, unless the death was very violent, whereas the human being cannot. It looks like every human being shares its place with a body—a corpse to be—when it is alive. So the coincidence problem emerges once again.

I want to show that the corpse problem is not a problem at all for my version of animalism. Rudder Baker asks “What happens to the organism at death? “Does it still exist as a corpse?”<sup>188</sup> My answer is “no”. Since a human being is necessarily an organism, when biological death occurs it goes through a substantial change. It ceases to

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<sup>188</sup> Rudder Baker 2000: 207.

be and is replaced by a different entity, a corpse. It does not “continue to exist as a corpse”.

The change a human being goes through when biological death- the irreversible cessation of whole brain or of heart and lung function - occurs can be compared to the change a forest goes through when it is completely burned down by a fire. The forest does not exist as a barren land when this happens, it goes out of existence and is replaced by a barren land. Another example is the change cookie dough goes through when it is kept in the oven for 25 minutes. What comes out of the oven is a dozen cookies which have replaced the dough. We cannot refer to them as ‘baked dough’ for dough is necessarily unbaked and cookies are necessarily cooked.

As I have underlined several times there is not such a thing as a ‘dead human being’, or a ‘dead cat’. These are contradictions in terms. We may be using these phrases in daily speech but such things do not exist. When their bodily functions stop and when this is irreversible, an organism-a cat, a human being, a dog, an amoeba, a sea horse-goes out of existence. It does not survive death ‘as a corpse’ because one is necessarily alive, the other is necessarily dead. They are like Clark Kent and Superman in the sense that where we have an organism we cannot have the corpse, where we have a corpse we cannot have an organism.

A human being does not share its matter with a corpse to be-a human body- during the time it is alive and does not leave behind a dead human body when it dies. ‘Human body’ is not a substance concept. The only substance concept applicable to human beings during the time when they are alive is ‘human being’. When they die biological deaths they cease to be human beings and, under normal circumstances, are

replaced by corpses. I hold that this is a very coherent picture. A human being goes through several stages, it comes to life as a foetus, grows up to be a human baby, a child, and adult and when it dies it ceases to be and is replaced by a corpse. This concludes my defence of animalism against the charges of a corpse problem. I conclude that animalism is not faced with such a problem. It is not itself faced with a problem of materially coinciding human beings and human bodies and mysterious corpses.

### Conclusion

I have argued for my version of animalism. I have tried to show that it deals successfully with metaphysical problems like branching, material coincidence and ontological inflation. It provides us with satisfying answers to the questions of what we most fundamentally are, how we persist through time and how the concept of a person fits into this picture. It explains how we can be identical to a human foetus and to a patient in a persistent vegetative state.

It is superior to its opponent the Psychological Account in that it emphasises the continuity between human beings and rest of the nature, the kinship between them and other animals. According to animalism, our identity conditions are not fundamentally different from those of cats and dogs. Like them, we are born, we grow up and cease to exist when our biological functions stop. Our persistence has nothing to do with the continuation of our psychological properties. Hence the big gap between us and other animals is bridged.

Although I have not committed myself to any theory of persistence or identity I would like to emphasise that it is compatible with the three-dimensionalist view. It

admits three-dimensional objects that endure through time. It also has an advantage in that it embraces absolute identity, does not replace it with a weaker relation in order to avoid the metaphysical problems it is faced with. Absolute numerical identity holds between you and some earlier human being or a later human being. When it ceases to be and is replaced with a new entity the identity chain breaks.

Finally, it is compatible and consistent with recent developments in neuroscience and the medical breakthroughs in neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. A human adult gets Alzheimer's disease. Several biological — the appearance of amyloid plaques in the brain — and abnormal cognitive changes in memory and learning take place as the disease progresses. No study suggests that during the course of the disease, when full-blown Alzheimer's symptoms become evident, i.e., when psychological properties are lost, an entity goes out of existence. Under normal circumstances, the human adult who showed the first symptoms of the Alzheimer's some years ago eventually dies of the disease.

Thus, I want to conclude by claiming that we are students, philosophers, doctors, engineers, mothers, wives, uncles, persons but most fundamentally human beings. And, we exist as long as we continue to be human beings.

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