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The metaphysics of individuation

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I now think that both theses should be accepted as innocuous. The idea that everything is something may be formalized as follows:

(x)(Eg)(gx)

The related idea that everything is identical to something thus:

(x)(Eg)(Ey)(x is the same g as y)

It is far from obvious that the first formalization above commits one to D, or the Sortal Dependency of Individuation. Everything might be something without it being the case that everything must be individuated under a sortal. Perhaps everything that exists, and is something, is not a Wigginsian substance. Furthermore, (x)(Eg)(gx) need not be construed as having essentialistic implications. Someone could accept it without thereby being committed to the doctrine that particulars have essential properties, or belong essentially to certain objective natural kinds. But this is to anticipate.

Considerations of a more general and abstract nature may at this stage be introduced by the R-theorist in order to undercut Wiggins' claims against R. I shall concentrate on the theoretical arguments presented by Geach in Logic Matters (pp.238-247) and Reference and Generality (pp.242-249). I am more concerned to convey the general nature of the arguments rather than discuss them in detail. Such a detailed discussion would not advance the chief aim of this essay, which is to critically assess Wiggins' positive arguments in favour of D.

An essential notion for the argument is that of an I-predicable, which is here interpreted as a sign utilized to express the indiscernibility of two objects relative to the predicates of a particular language.[12] Note that, therefore, an expression is not an I-predicable absolutely, but only relative to a language. In order for an I-predicable to express absolute, unqualified identity, it must express absolute indiscernibility, i.e., indiscernibility not relative to any specific language. The problem Geach raises for the advocate of absolute identity, is that the indiscernibility of x and y seems explicable only in terms of 'whatever is true of x is true of y'. However, unless something like 'relative to a language L' is added, the semantic paradoxes are unavoidable ((1972), p.240). On the other hand, once one has 'whatever is true of x is true of y, relative to a language L', it ceases to express absolute indiscerbibility. Now, if the relativized locution cannot serve as a definition of absolute or 'real' identity, how can there be a notion such as that of absolute identity?

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[12] The notion of an I-predicable can also be explicated by saying that sentences of the form ((x)(y)(xIy iff (Px iff Py)) are true in the language containing 'I'. These are not Geach's terms, I have used the formulations of Pendlebury (ibid.).

It is obvious, I think, that Geach's final step above is questionable. Why should it be the case that if one cannot define absolute identity, than there can be no such thing? The failure attests to indefinability (or rather, to the unworkability of one way of definition), not to meaninglessness. This procedure seems to me to be a dangerous one to employ in philosophy generally. Is one also to do without existence because there are problems with the definition of 'exists'? However, I do not want to pursue this line of thought any further.

Turning now to a possible answer to Geach's argument, suppose one has a language L whose domain is the words in a particular volume. Suppose also that the predicates of L do not discriminate between a pair of token-words which are instances of the same type-word. Consider then the following list:
(2.1) Andy Warhol; (2.2) Andy Warhol; and (2.3) Norma Jean. Taking each name/surname as a unit, one has a choice between treating the domain of L as the class of token-words and reading 'xIy' as 'x is a token equiform with y' (where 'I' is an I-predicable of L); or treating the domain of L as the class of type-words and reading 'xIy' as 'x is absolutely identical with y'. According to what Geach calls a 'Quinean' point of view, the second interpretation should be chosen. The guiding thought of the Quinean is to construe the domain of any language for which an I-predicable is found, as the class of objects for which that I-predicable expresses absolute identity. But now, if one adds a predicate which discriminates between tokens in L, in order to form L1, the domain of L1 will be the class of token-words. Suppose that the predicate 'is more legible than' is added to L. Under the appropriate circumstances, this predicate would serve to discriminate 'Andy Warhol' form 'Andy Warhol', so that 'xIy' can be read as 'x is identical/distinct from y'. Therefore, an I-predicable relative to L1 can be treated as expressing absolute identity by simply construing its domain in a specific way.

What Geach objects to in this Quinean manoeuvre is the promiscuous ontological commitment which it seems to entail. If L contains the expressions 'I1', 'I2',..., each of which is an I-predicable relative to the sub-languages L1, L2,..., of L, then 'I1', 'I2', etc., will express strict identity in L1, L2, etc., (and each sub-language will, for the Quinean, have different domains). According to Geach, users of L are committed to the existence of objects for which the I-predicables of its sub-languages express criteria of absolute identity, and not just to those objects covered by the I-predicable of L. That is, one would, for instance, be committed to both tokens and types. The only alternative, in Geach's view, is to jettison strict identity in favour of as many relational expressions of the form 'is the same A as' (with 'A' as general term), as one needs. These would all apply equally within a single domain.

But it is far from clear that Geach's assumption about ontological commitment to sub-language domains is correct. Perhaps the Quinean merely wants to say that the I-predicables of sub-

languages express similarities, and that only the 'I' of one's richest language should be construed as expressing identity. I think that this is a plausible interpretation of Quine's discussion in 'Ontological Relativity' (1968). If a discourse's predicates do not distinguish those persons in its domain with the same income, then the relation of equality of income enjoys within it all the properties of the identity relation. But now a sense of paradoxicality arises, for 'has the same income as' expresses absolute identity in a language-fragment only if its domain is construed as incomes. However, the language-fragment's domain was initially specified as persons. So how can 'has the same income as' express absolute identity? Since, however, the 'equal income' - language is ex hypothesi a sub-language, and hence presupposes a richer language within which the distinction between identity and what does duty for it can be stated, Quine can claim that the 'I' of his fragment of economic theory need not be construed as expressing absolute identity. This holds only for the richest background language. If this makes sense, it is also obvious that ontological commitment is limited to only those objects for which the I-predicable of the background theory expresses absolute identity.

The Geachian may make a final stand on the issue of radical changes in ontological committment. It may seem that such changes are consequential upon the addition of new predicates to the language in question. If L only distinguishes non-equiform tokens, its users will be committed to type-words (because L's domain will be type-words whenever its I-predicable is viewed as expressing strict identity). If now, as was supposed earlier, the predicate 'is more legible than' is introduced to distinguish between equiform token-words, the domain of the extended language will be token-words (again, if its I-predicable expresses strict identity). This sort of change is indeed, in Quine's own terms, highly undesirable: "... ontology is, pending revision, more clearly in hand than what we may call ideology - the question of admissable predicates..." ((1966), p.232). While one may grant Geach that an ontological shift occurs in the above example (something which is not uncontentious), it is not clear that the point generalizes. The domain of a natural language changes very seldomly as a result of the extension of its ideology. There seems to be a large amount of scope for the addition of new predicates (descriptive terms) which do not make of its I-predicable a non-I-predicable. In fact, most changes in ideology do not affect the character of the relevant I-predicable qua I-predicable. Now, since a natural language is the one in which what Quine calls 'background theories' are expressed, it may be said that for such a language, changes in ideology seldom necessitate changes in ontology (remember also that this is the only sort of language in which the I-predicable needs to be construed as expressing absolute identity). This is not, of course, to deny that some predicate-enrichments are accompanied by ontological shifts. Obviously, some enrichments result in the making of finer discriminations; no natural language makes the discriminations made in theoretical physics.

The tenor of the present section has been that Geach's theoretical arguments in support of R

are inconclusive and easily undermined. The opponent of R need not refute these arguments, he need only show that a strict identity interpretation of an I-predicable is a live one. As far as Wiggins' more circumscribed case against R is concerned, his conclusions now stand on firmer ground. The denial of R therefore allows one to treat the identity predicate as a predicate in its own right. Which is just to say that 'is the same f as' is equivalent to being the same and being an f.

Section 3
The Need for Substance Sortals

If R is false, it cannot support anything; in particular, it cannot support D, or the thesis of the Sortal Dependency of Individuation. D must therefore have another rationale, its acceptance involves something other than the acceptance of R. If it is objected that R does in fact entail D, this may be granted. However, this entailment provides no reason to think that D is true.

An initial circumscription of some of the reasons offered in support of D can commence with an examination of Wiggins' discussion of a type-(3) case (cf. SS, pp.23-27). As was pointed out earlier, the relative identity at issue here relates to circumstances where a and b are not the same g, a is a g, and it is not the case that b is. Wiggins summarizes the apparent relativity as follows: "...a case... where a cuts out, as it were, under a sortal-concept g (e.g. boy) but can persist under another sortal-concept f (e.g. human being)." (SS, p.24). Consider again the schoolboy John Doe. Is he not the same human being as the Lord Mayor, Sir John Doe? But surely he is not the same boy as the Mayor, nor the same dunce he was thought to be. However, since one can identify and count boys and dunces, these are perfectly legitimate covering concepts for identity statements, and one therefore has an example supporting R.

It does not require much imagination in order to clear this up by attending to tenses. The dunce-like boy will be Mayor, the Mayor was a boy. It is not the case that Sir John Doe is the same boy as John Doe, since the Mayor is not now a boy. There are, I believe, prima facie reasons to take tenses seriously.[13] In the present case, this means that 'a is not the same boy as b' is false, once it is properly read as 'a is not the same boy as b was'. The important distinction to which Wiggins commits himself in the above discussion, however, relates to sortals themselves. It is the distinction between phase-sortals (those under which an object can 'cut out'), and substance sortals (those an object persists under no matter which phase-sortals it cuts out under). I shall return to this distinction after the elucidation of some of Wiggins' terminology. In order for the latter parts of this essay to proceed without

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[13] Cf. Forbes (1985), The Metaphysics of Modality, pp.38-43; Prior (1967) and Haack (1978), Philosophy of logics.

misrepresenting Wiggins, this is a matter of the utmost importance. Whenever possible, I let Wiggins speak for himself.

(A) **Sortal Predicates**

"Any predicate whose extension consists... of all the particular things or substances of one particular kind, say horses, or sheep, or pruning knives, will be called here a sortal predicate." (SS, p.7).

There are a few things to notice about this informal explanation. Firstly, sortals do not serve exclusively to demarcate natural kinds, they may have as extensions the members of an artificial kind. It is not clear from what Wiggins says whether one should admit as sortals the likes of 'game of chess' or 'half-marathon'.[14] However, one way of reading him, which I shall outline shortly, does not rule such sortals out. It is also not clear, at this stage, how individual ships or pruning knives are things of a kind and how, if at all, it differs from the way in which cabbages, walrusses and kings are all severally things of the same kind. For all that Wiggins says explicitly, sortals do not seem to differ in any way from count nouns. If this is correct, his informal explanation of sortal predicates need not move beyond the grammatical. Perhaps one should speak of common nouns rather than count nouns, in order to accommodate things like water or gold. All of this is not to say that there is not a genuine and important distinction between common nouns and natural kind terms. There is, as I shall show in chapter three. The present point is merely that, given Wiggins' examples of the extensions of sortal predicates, sortals do not differ from common nouns. If they are to be limited to a subclass of the latter, no reason has been given for such a restriction.

(B) **Sortal Concepts**

"What a particular sortal predicate stands for may be called a sortal concept ... this kind of talk is fully compatible with nominalism." (SS, p.8).

The operative notion of 'concept' here is a Fregean one, where the concept horse is what it is to be a horse, the concept boy is what it is to be a boy, and so on for the concepts pruning knife, dunce, conscript and pet. That there are differences in the generality of these concepts, differences of perhaps vital importance for a theory of individuation, will emerge in due course.

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[14] They seem to be conceptually tied to activities, but only contingently to actual performance. One could still be said to possess such sortals even if no one performed the activities subsumed under them (anymore). Imagine a society of dimwits all of whom are unable to master chess but who remember the good old days when 'those bright adults would play for hours at a game of chess'.

Wiggins' professed nominalism may be taken in either of two ways. The first and more literal reading would commit him to nothing but the existence of concrete individuals. Such a reading is supported by his contention that by 'nominalism' he means that doctrine to which Aristotle and Leibniz felt themselves committed. A belief in Aristotelian concrete particulars, however, goes far beyond modern doctrines expressed in a similar way (cf. Simons (1987) on classical extensional mereology). It does not preclude the existence of particularized universals, an issue to be taken up in chapter three. Wiggins' Aristotelian nominalism seems to be problematized, however, by his use of the Kripke-Putnam theory of natural kind terms. For any sincere acceptance of the latter position would seem to be committed to species and (mass) substances as abstract individuals (cf. Salmon (1981) and Donnellan (1973)). The problems arising out of this appropriation, and the connection between essentialism and abstract objects in general, will be discussed later.

The second reading of Wiggins' nominalism relates to his overall project. It gives him the benefit of the doubt even to the extent of translating formulations in terms of properties into ones employing only predicates. Theses with essentialistic import are viewed as committing the Wigginsian to nothing more than the necessary satisfaction of a predicate. In other words, the whole project is 'read in brackets', and one's good faith will be disappointed only if Wiggins draws realist conclusions from this nominalistic basis. There is no question that he often speaks and argues in a realist way, but suspension of disbelief is surely in order until the end of the day.

(C) **Covering Concepts**

> "I shall call an individuative or sortal concept that adequately answers the question 'same what?' for an identity statement s, a covering concept for s, and reserve the letters f and g to represent such sortal concepts." (SS, p.18, fn.4).

It is evident that the connection between sortals and identity statements is supposed to take one beyond the grammatical. Presumably not all grammatical common nouns adequately answer 'same what?'. The informal explication above also seems to beg the question against R. For what is in question in the problematic between Geach and Wiggins is precisely whether covering concepts are of this nature, or need to be. I say seem to, because the Geachian is committed to sortals per se, and these will answer, at any time at which an object falls within the extension of one, the 'same what?' question for identity queries concerning it. But Wiggins' contention, already implicit at SS, p.18 and fully explicit in his discussion of the John Doe case, is that only certain special sortals answer this question 'adequately'. There is much punch in this qualification. Be that as it may, there are independent reasons to reject R and more pressing problems concerning covering concepts.

Notice that Wiggins' formulation above is independent of issues relating to the indeterminacy of sense of either the identity predicate or the referents of the flanking terms (something of which much was made in his earlier Identity and Spatio-temporal Continuity). It is not independent, however, of a distinction between true and false identity statements. How is one to construe the difference between :

(3.1) This aged simian is identical with the chimpanzee which Johnny Weismuller embraced in his first film;

(3.2) My typewriter is identical with the number two (Shoemaker (1970));

(3.3) What Heraclitus swam in today is the same as what he swam in yesterday?

(3.1) may be taken as true as a matter of contingent fact, whoever asserted it just managed to pick out the right chimpanzee, the one who upstaged Johnny Weismuller. (3.3) is indeterminate, not in sense as the Geachian position implies, but as far as its truth-value is concerned. It is a true identity statement if the noun-phrases are taken to refer to a river, false if taken to refer to waters.[15]
(3.2) is problematic. There is no indeterminacy of reference, as in (3.3), which may lead to indeterminacy of truth-value. On the other hand, there is no way in which (3.2) could be contingently true, as is (3.1). I would not want to claim that (3.2) is senseless in the way that, e.g., 'Green ideas sleep furiously' is. Geach, however, seems to be committed to the senselessness of (3.2), for there is no covering sortal to be found. Is Wiggins so committed? It seems that he need only admit that statements such as (3.2) are conceptually false, not that they are senseless. A determinate judgement is being expressed, one of 'being the same as' between a number and a typewriter. It is simply that the natures of the concepts involved are such that they preclude the discovery of any covering concept for the identity.

It might be objected that, in Wiggins' own terms, (3.2) is still senseless. For his concern is with the elucidation of identity which improves upon an account in terms of complete community of properties, i.e., an elucidation in terms of "...coincidence as a substance..." (SS, p.4). But, then, how is it possible for an assertion which states that a number and an artifact coincide as a substance to be meaningful? Note that this objection tacitly presupposes the logical priority of 'a is the same f as b' over 'a is f, b is f and a = b'. However, Wiggins remains agnostic

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[15] Cf. Shoemaker (1970), p.107: "It is true that if we say something of the form 'a is the same as b' there is sometimes an indefiniteness...that can be removed by inserting a sortal expression after 'same'. But will this be an indefinitenss in the sense of the predicate, as the Geachian position implies, or will it rather be an indefiniteness in the reference of our terms?". Insofar as Wiggins formerly endorsed this indeterminacy concerning the identity predicate at a semantic level (cf. Wiggins (1967), p.27), he was simply wrong. He is careful to dis-associate himself from it in his later work (cf.SS, p.47).

about this issue in his later work (cf. SS, p.191, note 0.02). It is therefore open to him to reply that the locutions above are equivalent and that 'a is the same as b', where a is a typewriter and b a number, is conceptually false and not senseless (because the identity-predication is of determinate referents). The finding of a common sortal underlying both 'is a typewriter' and 'is a number', is excluded not by any contingent fact, but by the nature of the current conceptual scheme.

Wiggins could therefore reformulate his position on covering sortals, saying that his claim at SS, p.18 is limited in its application to statements which are not conceptually false. None of this is to be seen as implying that there could not be any conceptual scheme which permits a common sortal in the present case. Perhaps there could be, but that is a matter I do not wish to pursue here (but cf. Grayling (1985), for the Davidsonian claim that such a scheme would not really be a different one).

The distinction between phase-sortals and substance sortals alluded to earlier may now be developed. Cases of type-(3) are said to draw attention to the need to distinguish between sortals which "...present-tensedly apply to an individual x at every moment throughout x's existence, e.g., human being,..." (SS, p.24), and those that do not, e.g., boy, dunce, mayor. The former are to be called substance sortals, the latter phase-sortals.

Now, it is not quite clear how the 'need' to so distinguish sortals should be interpreted. What is clear is that it is not simply consequential upon the denial of R, for type-(3) examples can be cleared up by no more than attention to tenses. So the need is a more general need, one which is ultimately to be justified, perhaps, by an examination of the conditions of individuative practice. The attempt may nevertheless be made to clarify the point of the distinction, in the hope that its transcendental grounding will be forthcoming at a later stage (cf. chapter two).

Substance sortals are said to be the covering concepts par excellence, insofar as they provide the fundamental and ultimate answer to the 'same what?' question. There is thus a direct link between this Aristotelian question and the need for covering concepts in statements of identity. This link is plausible, in Wiggins' own terms. To see why, one need only consider the other connection which he makes in this vital section (SS, pp.23-27). For Wiggins, the case against R (and hence in favour of 'the absoluteness of sameness') does not relate to any kind of semantic indeterminacy, as has been pointed out earlier. It relates to what is required in the singling out of substances. Individuation is linked to identity, therefore, in that every alternative procedure which yields either a 'yes' or a 'no' answer, under alternative covering concepts, to identity questions concerning x and y, yield the same answer (SS, p.18). For instance, whether one singles out Sir John Doe under 'mayor' or 'managing director', the answer as to his identity with the dunce-like John Doe will be the same in each case. This means that there must be

an ultimate covering concept which regulates such alternative individuations. And the most plausbile candidate for this role is the substance sortal answering 'same what?' If this is so, then phase-sortals do not conflict with or relativize the Leibnizean schema:

$$(x)\ (y)\ (x = y) \rightarrow (Px \text{ iff } Py)$$

The schema is unaffected by phase-changes in the values of x or y insofar as its antecedent depends for individuative determinacy on a sortal subsuming entities which survive such changes (which emerge unscathed, e.g., when 'boy' ceases to be true of them). The young John Doe is never the same boy as the man he will become, but that is uncontentious. As long as he is the same something as the man he will become, viz., a human being.

It would seem, at this stage, that the phase-sortal/substance sortal distinction is a necessary prerequisite of the denial of R. When Wiggins says that "... every concept that adequately individuates x for any stretch of its existence yields the same answer, either directly or via the principle of individuation for the predicate it restricts,..." (SS, p.25, my emphasis) to the question of x's identity with y, he is saying that the falsity of R implies that co-satisfiable sortals are co-restrictive. However, the appearance of indispensability here is misleading. It is not at all obvious that it follows directly from the falsity of R that there are substance sortals in Wiggins' sense. Wiggins has shown nothing more than how the distinction in question fits into his own programme, the distinction itself seems to be presupposed throughout. Of course, current employment of 'boy' and 'human being' proceeds more or less as Wiggins outlines it, but is there anything in reality grounding this usage, or is usage-conservation justification enough? Since there is no apriori guarantee that language has not gone on holiday in this area, one is well-advised to attempt to find another rationale for the distinction.

Perhaps substance sortals serve to isolate that which things are but do not become or cease to be (without ceasing to be). While it is true that Julius Caesar may have become a consul, a crook, bald, bankrupt or debauched, he does not ever become a human being. If he could become a human being, what was it that pre-existed such a change? Surely not a mere lump of matter, for matter is indeterminate, and any imagined Julius Caesar-lump could just as easily, qua lump, have become a tiger or a turnip.

This attempt to capture the intuitive cash-value of substance sortals does more harm than good. Surely, what pre-exists Julius Caesar's becoming a human being need not be a bare conglomeration of fleshy matter, it is simply a sperm-egg pair. It is the latter which became a human being, he did not. Consider all such sperm-egg pairs at a specific moment in time, some become tigers, some cows, some spaniels and some human beings. If it is objected that this still presupposes something which involves the sortal human being although it itself was never human, namely, the sperm-egg pair, the correct response is that this changes the

subject. The initial problem was to find a subject for 'becoming a human being', one has now been found. The 'humanness' of the sperm-egg pair itself is explicable in relational terms, i.e., via the nature of the donors. It is useful, in this context, to distinguish between two senses of 'becoming an f'. In the first sense, it can mean 'coming to be identical with f'. This is obviously not the sense intended above, a sperm-egg pair is never identical with a human being (anti-abortionists to the contrary notwithstanding). A second sense of 'becoming an f' is that of 'coming to constitute an f'. It is clear, I think, that I have been concerned with this second sense of becoming in the above. Now, it is true that Julius Caesar (the adult specimen) does not become a human being in the way he at some point becomes an adult. However, it is not clear that the original claim concerning substance sortals has been vindicated. In order to do so, it was necessary to import a relation of constitution weaker than that of identity. A skeptic about Wiggins' distinction could conceivably refuse to discern such a twofold ambiguity in the notion of becoming.

Another attempt to clarify the distinction between phase-sortals and substance sortals proceeds by employing the notion of conceivability. While it is conceivable that John Doe should cease to be a dunce or the mayor, it is not conceivable that he should cease to be a human being. This approach, despite the fact that it is one which Wiggins himself highly prizes, is not unproblematic. For is it not conceivable that Socrates should become an alligator, and thus cease to be a human being? Plantiga certainly thinks so (cf. his (1974)), and how is one to legislate against him purely on the basis of what is and what is not conceivable? Perhaps, in the present case, this does not matter in principle, as long as one has 'animal' as a substance sortal. But then there are still problems concerning, for instance, the conceivability of Socrates' becoming a rock or a rose.

That conceivability is a misguided way to attempt to systemize intuitions concerning necessity and possibility may be shown as follows. It may be conceivable 'from the inside', from a first-person perspective, that a certain stream of consciousness is linked to an alligator's body or to a beetle's husk. That does not make it possible. It is upon this perspective that Kafka's "Metamorphosis" trades, and that is why the story works and entertains. But Kafka has not thereby alerted the reader to a certain natural possibility, he has not alerted the courts to the fact that some cockroach-squashings might be homicides.

The upshot of these considerations seem to be that serious use of the notion of conceivability in this context can only succeed if accompanied by a relativization of sortals to speakers. If Plantiga has no problems with Socrates abiding in an alligator, then 'human being' is not a substance sortal for him. But this is on the condition that he does more than utter a sentence to that effect, it must in some sort of way be a genuine possibility for him (i.e., given the way he slices reality into substances). I think Wiggins can and should accept such relativizations,

provided it is agreed that most individuators in fact divide reality into substances in the same way. It is not that no other ways are possible, only that some of these will yield bad conceptual schemes, ones making no "...headway with causality - with the explanation of anything." (SS, p.145, fn.18). Communities of people tend to endorse systems of concepts and ways of dividing reality which maximize prediction and control. This seems to suggest, contrary to the above attempt at relativization, that necessities and possibilities are circumscribed by something like natural laws, and hence that substance sortals are grounded in the nomological. Notice that if substance sortals are relative to a conceptual scheme, they will also relativize what is to count as laws. If, however, one has reason to believe in laws as relations between objective, natural properties (cf. chapter three), the laws will not be relative to the substances but vice versa. But even if substance sortals are thus relative to laws, they need not be absolutized. If it should turn out that human beings can, as a matter of natural law, become beetles, then 'human being' will be a phase-sortal. Implausible as this may sound, the leeway to be recognized here is of vital importance, especially in science. 'Did that electron just turn into a positron?'; 'It can't'; 'I know it couldn't, it just did'. This is a possible dialogue in the physics laboratory, where things are indeterminate. In the present case, 'electron' and 'positron' would become phase-sortals, perhaps, of 'polectron'. Scientists could of course continue to resist such disrespect to established substance sortals by simply insisting that the above is a case of destruction and generation. I think that this would be correct, the leeway to be recognized in the use of substance sortals need not extend to the language of physics. If sortals do sometimes cut at the joints, they do so most plausibly at the atomic or sub-atomic level, this is where the natural properties are to be found. To say that, nevertheless, scientists might have labelled 'quarks' in accordance with the wrong conditions and that the ones presently around might turn ot to be phases of something else, is to adopt an inductive skepticism of which I want no part. That there is some degree of relativity in the use of substance sortals must nevertheless be granted. This is particularly evident in the case of artifacts, for which there are no constraining laws, only similarity of function.

This concludes the discussion of the phase-sortal/substance sortal distinction per se. None of the considerations offered in support of it are conclusive, and therefore D itself has not been conclusively established. Another, different attempt will be made in the following chapter. Before I turn to that, however, more should be said about the notion of a substance, its assumed self-subsistence and Wiggins' use of the notion.

Some caution in circumscribing the much-flaunted independence and self-subsistence of substances is required. To say that an Aristotelian substance, i.e., an individual dog or horse, is self-subsistent, is not to say that it is independent of all its properties. While it may be that each of a dog's properties is ontologically dependent on it (in the sense of only being present in the world because the dog is), this does not imply that the relation of dependence is

asymmetrical. No substance, in the sense of a thing with properties (an 'individual'), can exist without any properties. And this is not simply a definitional matter concerning the notion of a substance. While my nose need not be any specific shape, it must, qua (part of a) material object have some shape or another. I might regret the grossness of its actual shape and wish for a different one, but that wish is not a wish for a shapeless nose. It is best, I think, to speak of degrees of ontological dependence. Individuals can be construed as more independent than properties in that the latter exist only if exemplified by some individual. On the other hand, while individuals can exist without having to exemplify a specific set of properties, they must exemplify some properties or other. I take this, following Armstrong (1978), to be an acceptable cashing out of the Aristotelian thesis that the only things capable of independent existence are all severally a this such. The individual (this) with its properties (such) form a state of affairs, of which its components are mere conceptual abstractions. There are no bare individuals or uninstantiated properties (cf. chapter three, section three for the development of this point in relation to Bradley's Regress).

A final question remains. Does Wiggins' use of 'substance' commit him to essentialism of some kind? Insofar as he is apparently committed to the view that only the Aristotelian notion of secondary substance can adequately answer the 'what is it?' question, it would seem so. Aristotle himself has the following to say: "We should treat as predicates in the category of essence all such things as it would be appropriate to mention in reply to the question,'What is the object before you?'" (Topics, 102a32). Of course, Wiggins might want to concede that it is simply analytic that all substance sortals (terms for secondary substances) express essential properties of their extensions. But then a general critique of his programme still requires one to step back in order to ask 'Are there sortals, in this sense? And if so, why is that?' I examine the issues surrounding questions such as these in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE MASSIVE CENTRAL CORE : transcendental arguments and the construction of continuity

That Wiggins' postulation of substance sortals and his defence of D in its various forms display transcendental tendencies, is an interpretation (of Chapter two in SS) which it is not too difficult to substantiate. The significance of 'transcendental tendencies' in this context relates to the so-called 'need' to distinguish between substance- and phase- sortals isolated in Section three of the previous chapter. It was there asserted that this need, and others of a sufficient generality, are to be justified, ultimately, by examining the conditions of possibility of individuative practice itself. My use of 'transcendental' therefore relates to the isolation in thought of those conditions which lie at the limits of intelligibility, those elements necessarily presupposed in anything that is recognisable as a successful individuation. It is my belief that such a reading of Wiggins' project provides some of the strongest possible grounds for his claims concerning individuation.

Section 1
Descriptive Metaphysics

Consider, then, the following programmatic quotations from Chapter two:

(1) "Having abandoned any project of external characterization we are to build up a description of these notions (substance, identity of a substance, persistence) as it were from the inside - from the inside of a working conceptual system. And we succeed where something familiar to us is recognized as such from its theoretical description." (SS, p.68). The last sentence may be generalized along Davidsonian lines to state that a criterion of being an individuative practice is recognisability by language-using human beings. Wiggins is not committed to such generalization (cf. the development of this point in Grayling, (1985)).

(2) "... the aim is only to enhance the understanding that we already have of sameness as ascribed to continuants ..." (SS, p.52).

(3) "There is nothing in pure logic to force us into an ontology of changeable continuants..." (p.62).

(4) "If one were really unconstrained in the invention of some substantial sortal predicate by which to represent that the thing persisted, he would be equally unconstrained in

the invention of a substantial sortal predicate by which it failed to persist. We do not at the moment think of matters like this, however." (SS, p.66/7).

(5) "...observation... first of what we say and do with the 'what is it?' question and its variants, and second, of what, in the context of singling things out, we require from these answers, and can in fact supply. The claim about sortal concepts stands or fails with such observation..." (SS, p.62/3)[1]

Quotation (1) suggests that the 'theoretical description' will employ terms used in the actual practice/activity being investigated itself. Hence Wiggins' constant concentration and emphasis on locutions which are available in the object-language (cf. especially his 'Preface'). (2) and (3) suggest a conceptual dependency to be established between the notions of identity and persistence. Moreover, (3) gives the option between arguing transcendentally for continuants, or taking their inclusion in the current conceptual scheme as a datum, and then showing why this is so (Strawson attempts both strands in Individuals, sections two and three of Chapter one, 'Bodies'). (4) and (5) suggest that those representations of persistence which are made by individuators are not purely conceptual or stipulative. And, furthermore, that this claim is substantiated by actual singling-out activities which require determinacy of their answers.

Before these suggestions are developed further, it is advisable to clarify what is meant by 'transcendental argument' and its corollaries. The transcendental argument which I hope to extract from Wiggins is not 'Kantian' in the original sense in which Kant himself understood his project. By this disclaimer, I mean that the transcendental truths to be established do not originate from the constructive activities of the faculties alone, they are not produced by 'reason after a plan of its own'. It is better, reading 'transcendental' as referring to the conditions of possibility of some conceptual practice, to follow Kant in spirit only by asking questions of the following form: 'Which concepts are presupposed in thinking of individuation as determinate, or of the world as a unified system of spatiotemporal particulars?' This Kantian spirit yields a transcendental strategy, a general method with which to search for necessary conditions. If any description of (a fragment of) experience trades on certain concepts and distinctions, and Xs

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[1] There might appear to be an incompatibility between the so-called 'anthropological stance' and the transcendental stance adopted here. Jonathan Lear, in his 'Transcendental Anthropology' (in Pettit and McDowell (1968), pp.267-298), distinguishes in the thought of the later Wittgenstein an anthropological stance which rests on the observation of everyday activities. The stance is consequential upon the embeddedness of language in customs, institutions and practices (the 'language is a form of life' line. cf. Philosophical Investigations I.45: "...we are...contributing ...observations which no one has doubted,..."). It is at first sight unclear how to combine empirical data with non-empirical (transcendental) insights. Wittgenstein himself is interested in the latter, his investigation of rule-following is meant to capture a necessity about 'how we go on' (ibid.,I.109, 126). The problem surfaces in the text in Wiggins' use of 'observation' in quotation (4). However, I think any anxiety is unnecessary. Nothing said so far precludes adopting the transcendental stance towards ordinary activities, viewed as localized conceptual practices, and thus unearthing dependency relations between concepts or between fragments of the conceptual scheme and the whole. Such a procedure might even yield a philosophical reason why philosophy should be non-revisionary (cf. Philosophical Investigations, I.116). Transcendentalism may therefore be able to spell out the naturalism inherent in the anthropological stance (cf. Grayling (1985), chapter four).

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