

https://dspace.org/

The metaphysics of individuation

Human, Leon

2015-02-06
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/16905

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

THE METAPHYSICS OF INDIVIDUATION

Leon Human

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
for the Degree of Master of Arts

Johannesburg 1989

ABSTRACT

THE METAPHYSICS OF INDIVIDUATION

Human, Leon, M.A. University of the Witwatersrand, 1989

A study of something as fundamental as the conditions of individuation is problematized by one's own immersion in that practice. This dissertation is concerned with the scrutiny and development of the metaphysics inherent in everyday individuation. It examines in some detail the attempts of David Wiggins, in his Sameness and Substance, to achieve greater theoretical self-consciousness concerning the practice and its presuppositions. Wiggins claims that human individuators of three-dimensional continuants are committed to an ontology of substances. His overall programme consists in showing how this ontology is grounded in a practice which necessarily employs sortal predicates.

A central problem relates to the evaluation of some of Wiggins' descriptive claims regarding the practice of singling out. It is not always clear that these claims are purely descriptive; they are often stipulative, often overdescript-ions. Insofar as large parts of Wiggins' programme depends on the denial of sortally relativized identity, some attention is given to this latter doctrine. It is claimed that Wiggins' own position on identity is not orthodox enough. Furthermore, even in its own terms his construal of identity need not presuppose his major thesis, namely, the sortal dependency of individuation.

A major question facing the substance ontologist is that of essentialism. This issue is examined with reference to natural kinds and universals. It is argued that a commitment to sortally dependent individuation need not imply a commitment either to kinds as abstract objects or to substantival universals. Some attention is given to Wiggins' own attempt to derive essentialism, and it is concluded that his derivation is seriously flawed both in its method and in some of its premisses.

The metaphysics of individuation emerges as a complex structure deserving of careful study. It is not intractable to such changes as are necessitated by scientific discoveries, or perversely simple-minded. Care needs to be taken, however, in the circumscription of the conceptual practice of individuation within which this metaphysics is embodied. While re-identification is impossible without sortals, it is concluded that this has not been established for individuation as such.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Leon Human
1989

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Michael Pendlebury for all his valuable advice and assistance during the preparation of this dissertation.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Human Sciences Research Council towards the costs of this research. The opinions expressed and conclusions reached in this dissertation are, however, my own and do not reflect those of the Human Sciences Research Council.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION ..... (i)

CHAPTER

I. IDENTITY IS A MANY-SPLENDOURED THING: the classical conception of identity redeemed 1

1. Apparent True Instances of R Considered 1
2. The Theoretical Argument for R 7
3. The Need for Substance Sortals 12

II. THE MASSIVE CENTRAL CORE: transcendental arguments and the construction of continuity 21

1. Descriptive Metaphysics 21
2. Strawsonian Arguments 24
3. A Transcendental Justification for D(ii) 30
4. Identity is not a Property or Relation 37
5. Continuity and the Coinstantiation of Properties 44

III. HORSENESS IS THE WHATNESS OF ALLHORSE: natural kinds, universals and essentialism 57

1. Sortals and Natural Kind Terms 57
2. Putnam's Theory and Abstract Kinds 61
3. Universals and Natural Laws 71
4. Critique of Wiggins' Derivation of Essentialism 80

BIBLOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES 91

INTRODUCTION

This essay attempts to examine the ontological presuppositions of the practice of individuation. It does so by means of a critical reading of one of the most substantial and comprehensive treatments of the subject, that of David Wiggins. The complexity and variety of issues he raises in Sameness and Substance make it impossible, in an essay of this length, to do full justice to his work as a whole. I have completely ignored the final chapter on personal identity, and almost completely chapter five, 'Conceptualism and Realism'. My reasons for following this procedure are different in each case, although they can be reduced to the realization that a consideration of either chapter would result in two more essays equal in length to the present one. The corpus of writings on the subject of personal identity is at once so massive and specialized as to make cursory treatment here inadvisable. On the other hand, the generality and all-comprehensiveness of the claims in chapter five would require such detailed spelling-out that the specificity of focus on individuation per se would be lost.

I follow Wiggins in further limiting myself to the individuation of three-dimensional material objects. The concern is not with the singling out of individuals in general, where this could include things like visual-impressions or numbers. There are more than enough profound and fundamental problems within this circumscribed conceptual space to justify such limitation. My interest is (obviously) philosophical, not historical, and contemporary. I shall therefore employ the method of conceptual analysis presently current in analytic philosophy. One is, unfortunately, forced to utter such banalities as the above because of the fashionable call to historize before one philosophizes. While it may be true that I shall grasp Aristotle's intent only conditional upon my reincarnation in a Greek polis, I am not concerned with that ever elusive original meaning. Within the philosophical world, the term 'Aristotelian nominalism' has a well-defined content, and that is what I refer to when I examine the historical roots of Wiggins' own nominalism in Aristotle.

In the first chapter I attempt two things. The first is to show that counterexamples to the classical conception of identity as exhausted by reflexivity are empty. This is plodding work, and although I mostly follow Wiggins' lead, a reductive strategy is arrived at at the end of section one. In the second section, I isolate a lacuna in Wiggins' treatment of the opposing position, that of Relative Identity, and proceed to argue against the Geachian theoretical argument in favour of such a non-classical view of identity. My second main concern in chapter one arises directly out of the results of the first two sections. If the Relative Identity view is false, it cannot support Wiggins' main thesis, namely, the Sortal Dependency of Individuation or D. I therefore attempt to formulate alternative grounds for D, based on the notions of becoming and conceivability. Neither of these attempts appear to be successful. It should be

noted that these arguments for D are explicitly formulated as arguments for the substance-sortal/phase-sortal distinction postulated by Wiggins. The details in section three make it clear how arguments in favour of this distinction are simultaneously arguments for D.

Chapter two is organized around three concerns, these being divided between sections one to three, section four and section five. The first three sections attempt to extract from Wiggins' writings the strongest possible argument in favour of thesis D, an argument broadly Kantian in spirit and one which Wiggins himself never explicitly formulates. Section one sets the stage by introducing the philosophical terminology necessary for arguments which claim to isolate those presuppositions which render a conceptual practice possible. Some attention is given to modern reappropriations of this so-called 'transcendental strategy'. The final version of a completed argument is put forward in section three; and it is claimed that, although certain premisses such as that of irreducible predication in the category of substance are suspect, Wiggins can be pushed no further on this front. Section four questions a central doctrine of Wiggins' position, namely the view that identity is to be cashed out as 'coincidence as a substance'. I employ Humean arguments against such a position in order to show that identity at a time exhausts the concept of identity. Insofar as I accept that sortals are linked to identity criteria, the position arrived at here opens up the possibility of individuation without sortals, an issue taken up in the final section. I attempt to show, in section five, that the denial of transtemporal identity as a datum need not lead to a radical debunking of the present conceptual scheme. This will be the case if the unification of momentary objects into a single history can be achieved on a non-conventional basis. I follow Sydney Shoemaker in attempting such a reconstruction. Throughout I maintain that such a reconstruction is compatible with Wiggins' claim that there are no primitive synchronic concepts of continuants. It is also claimed that Wiggins' own view of what a momentary reconstruction should look like is unduly simplistic and naive. The central claim of the second chapter is that Wiggins gets the metaphysics of individuation wrong because he overdescribes the practice of singling out.

The final chapter has broadly speaking, two aims. The first is a vindication of Wiggins' self-description as a nominalist, and the second a critique of his derivation of essentialism. The first concern is spread out over the first three sections, and relates to Wiggins' acceptance of Putnam's theory of natural kind terms (sections one and two) and the question of universals (section three). Putnam's programme is examined in some detail, and he is seen to be committed to a second-order essentialism relating to kinds as abstract objects. I claim that Wiggins' appropriation of the theory need not force him into a similar commitment. Some prominence is given to Wiggins' view that particulars belong essentially to their actual kinds. Section three utilizes an Aristotelian conception of universals to argue against kinds as abstract objects. I also give a brief critique of the regularity theory of natural laws in order to tie in Wiggins' insistence on the nomological basis of kind-membership with his acceptance of a scientifically determined real essence. The final section shows firstly, that Wiggins' derivation

of essentialism is no such thing, because the essentialism is present in his premisses. It is claimed, in the second place, that the project of derivation is itself flawed, not only because it relies on what can and cannot be conceived, but also because of the dilemma Wiggins' faces when he proceeds from the essential properties of sets to those of material objects.

CHAPTER I

IDENTITY IS A MANY-SPLENDOURED THING : the classical conception of identity redeemed

The present chapter is introductory in two ways. Firstly, it attempts to provide a philosophical context for some of Wiggins' theses by arguing against a view which has often been construed as favouring that of Wiggins. In the second place, the considerations adduced in support of Wiggins' main thesis (D), that is, the claim that all identity statements should be sortalized (i.e., provided with a general covering concept such as 'dog' or 'spade'), are of an informal and inconclusive nature.

In sections one and two, I examine Wiggins' arguments against the so-called Relative Identity view (R), according to which a and b can be identical under a predicate 'f' while being distinct under another predicate 'g'. I attempt to show that while R does entail D, it cannot support D. In the remaining section, I examine informal and broadly intuitive considerations in favour of substance sortals. The full import of these 'quasi-Aristotelian' suggestions will only become evident in chapter three, where they are developed in the context of issues relating to natural kinds and universals.

Section 1
Apparent True Instances of R Considered

Wiggins commences his dark and difficult Sameness and Substance (SS) with a question, the affirmative answer to which encapsulates the Relative Identity view or R, viz., "... whether a can be the same f as b, and not the same g as b, even where a or b is itself a g." (SS), p.16).[1]

An affirmative answer to Wiggins' question is not merely an indication of philosophical whim, or a pernicious attempt to undermine heartfelt intuitions. There are indeed cases which seem to support R, cases in which intuitions ride the waves of relativism. Consider Heraclitus, and what he swam in today and what he swam in yesterday. Is it not true that the referent of these two descriptions are the same river but not the same water? If unreflective intuition agrees, this appears to be a true instance of R.[2]

---

[1] The sortal relativity of identity is most intimately associated with the name of Geach (1968): "I could not object in principle to different As being one and the same B...as different official personages may be one and the same man." (p.157). I discuss only the Heraclitus example in detail.

[2] It is not to be supposed that intuition is universally naive. Exposure to theory not only informs but moulds it. Certain intuitive options are options no longer. Thus the theoretical can play havoc with 'pure' common-sense.

A traditionalist may object that this conflicts with the Indiscernibility of Identicals, with the plausible principle that identicals have all their properties in common (or share all their predicates). And so it does. How can a be the same (anything) as b when a has a property which b lacks? What Heraclitus splashed in today was water, and a river. But then what he splashed in yesterday (ex hypothesi a river, not today's water) does not have the property being (a) water Heraclitus splashed in today (the point can be made in terms of predicate-satisfaction, if it is doubted that such properties exist). However, since these are the same rivers, how can b possibly lack this property? It is of course open to the supporter of R to simply deny that the Indiscernibility of Identicals, or Leibniz's Law, is sacrosanct, i.e., that relative identicals are indiscernible for all further predicates. If a and b cannot be rendered discernible by means of predicates presently available, it might very well be that they fail to satisfy all the same predicates when that predicate-stock is expanded (assuming, of course, some sort of restriction on which predicates are to count as genuine, cf. SS, p.21, footnote 7). A person who denies R must therefore attempt to show, rather than merely assert, that Leibniz's Law is a necessary condition of numerical identity. This is a lacuna in Wiggins' first chapter. He never addresses or considers Geach's theoretical arguments against the traditional view which considers the identity predicate to be absolute. It may well be that all cases offered in support of R turn out in fact not to support it. But such a contingency is hardly conclusive, the classical identity theorist might have been fortunate. Perhaps other (yet-to-be-thought-of) examples will conclusively support R.

I shall take these two components of the case against R in their proper order. Firstly, following Perry (1970), I shall attempt to show how one deals with purported counterexamples to the classical conception of identity as a reflexive relation conferring substitutivity.[3] Secondly, I shall urge that there are no compelling reasons to accept Geach's argument against the classical conception of identity.

At this stage, the general import of R may be expressed as follows:

(1.1) It is possible that A is the same f as B, but A and B are different gs.

---

[3] This should not be taken to imply that the Principle of Substitutivity of co-referential terms is equivalent to Leibniz's Law. It is not. The former is simply false, e.g., in Oratio obliqua contexts. Leibniz's Law is a material mode principle relating to objects and community of properties. I have used 'substitutivity' in the text in order not to beg any questions against Wiggins' professed nominalism, i.e., so that it may be read as 'co-satisfaction of predicates'. While it is true that relative identity confers limited substitutivity, it is the very limitation which is in question here. Also, two objects may share properties under one predicate but need not therefore share all their properties (given, e.g., temporal properies).

Keeping this in mind, Perry's conclusion to his case against Geachian relativistic counterexamples is suggestive:

"If 'A' and 'B' refer to the same objects throughout [1.1], the first conjunct of [1.1] is not an identity statement, and the counterexample fails. If both conjuncts are identity statements in the required sense, 'A' and 'B' must refer to [fs] in the first conjunct and [gs] in the second, and the counterexample fails." (1970, p. 189).[4]

Insofar as the R-therorist is committed to the truth of (1.1), the above quotation suggests a general strategy against R. In order to further develop this strategy, it is necessary to bring the (intuitively) R-supporting example involving Heraclitus into line with (1.1), thus:

(1.2) What Heraclitus swam in yesterday is the same river as what he swam in today, but what he swam in today and what he swam in yesterday are different waters.

Although the R-thecrist's counterexamples can all be expressed in a form such as the above, this is not necessary, and I shall therefore dispense with such torturous reformulations unless absolutely unavoidable. It may nevertheless be contended that the supporting instances of R all share a certain grammatical form. However, it can easily be shown that not everything expressible in this grammatical form is necessarily an instance of R. Consider:

(1.3) This curtain is the same colour as the carpet, but they are (of) different shapes.

In order to construe (1.3) as an identity statement, the following expansion is required:

(1.4) The colour of the curtain is the same (colour) as the colour of the carpet, but the shape of the curtain is a different (shape) from the shape of the carpet.[5]

This makes of each conjunct an identity statement, which is a necessary condition on any purported counterexample to classical identity. However, if both are identities, they refer to different things (colours and shapes), i.e., there are four distinct terms. It is therefore evident that a grammatical form incorporating 'the same' is not sufficient to make of something an identity statement.

If it is conceded that (1.4) does not support R, the strategy utilized in so exposing it may be

---

[4] I have substituted 'f' and 'g' as general term variables. Perry considers 'word type' and 'word token', which is not the example I want to develop. I have also used A for a in order to bring (1.1) into line with Perry's use.

[5] Cf. Michael Pendlebury, Identity Statements, Honours Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1974.

extended to the prima facie supporting instance expressed in (1.2). The latter should then be rephrased as:

(1.5) The river Heraclitus swam in yesterday is the same (river) as the river he swam in today, but the water he swam in yesterday is not the same (water) as the water he swam in today.

What needs to be shown, taking a cue from Perry, is either that the component clauses of (1.5) are not identity statements, or that the terms they contain are distinct. If the latter is the case, the following must be false:

(1.6) The river Heraclitus swam in today is the same (river/water) as the water he swam in yesterday.

How could one motivate for its falsity? Not by any straightforward appeal to Leibniz's Law. Although successful, I have temporarily bracketed such an appeal. A possible way out is suggested by Quine. While it may be said that a river-stage (what is swum in at t=today)is a water-stage (the water
present at the place of swimming), any two stages of a river are not stages of the same waters. Quine views 'a water' as a specific collection of molecules, and then concludes that no river is a water.[6]

An application of this insight to (1.6) makes its falsity self-evident. Consider the water Heraclitus swam in today. It is a collection of molecules. Now, although the river he swam in today is water, it is not water of such a sort, i.e., a specific set of molecules. But then it is false that the terms contained in (1.6) are the same. Hence, the river Heraclitus swam in cannot be the same anything as the water he swam in, these are distinct things which merely occupied the same place at a time, they are linked by a non-identity relation.

The above Quinean point is more rigorously developed in Wiggins' discrimination of a constitutive sense of 'is'. His position is that it is the limited ambiguity of 'is', the confusion between predication and constitution, which gives many of the R-examples an initial plausibility. "Rivers are indeed water but this means that water goes to make them up. 'Same water' is not therefore a covering concept for an identity statement identifying a river with something." (SS,

---

[6] Quine (1953), From a logical point of view, pp.65-70. There is no need to feel that this invocation of Quine commits one to a four-dimensional ontology. This may be seen from the final consideration of (1.6). There is therefore no need to follow Quine in construing 'this river' as 'this riverish summation of momentary objects including this momentary object'. Note that I am not concerned to repeat Wiggins' strictures against Quine (cf. SS, p.194, note 1.11). I am merely concerned with what one is committed to as at this stage of the argument.

p.35). Note that this does not preclude the correctness of 'This is the same water as I washed in yesterday'; one could neglect to get rid of dirty water in a basin. If Wiggins is correct, and (1.6) is accordingly false, then (1.5) must contain four terms in order to be composed of identity statements (a terminological point: for ease of exposition I use 'identity statement' for both affirmations and denials of identity throughout).

Before turning to the remaining option, i.e., construing the component clauses of (1.5) as not composed of identity statements, something more should be said about constitution. The constitutive 'is' is said by Wiggins to block inferences to the identity of an object and its matter. This emerges clearly in the discussion of artifacts, e.g., the possibility of assertions such as 'That heap of china (bits) is the jug you saw last time'. While it is predicatively true that the jug is constituted of china (not of china-bits, as Wiggins implies; ordinary jugs are not glued together out of little bits), it is not predicatively true that it is china (a quantity of china). Wiggins invokes a life-histories principle in order to distinguish between any two artifacts made of the same matter: "....if they are one and the same collection of china-bits, then their life-histories and durations must be the same." (SS, p.30). So, for any jug and any pot made out of the same china, if the pot is made at a time t, then the jug cannot exist anymore.

The constitutive 'is' also saves Wiggins' theory of predication, to the effect that if something is f it is identical with some f (for appropriate substituends for 'f'), from counterexamples of the sort advocated by Noonan (1978): "What constitutes a man is not identical with that man, but on my account it is identical with something which is a man, namely itself." (p.573). If this were correct, something could be an f by constituting this f, and yet also be distinct from this f. Wiggins denies, rightly, I think, that what constitutes an f can be identical to any f.[7]

To return to the alternative reading of (1.5), i.e., one which ignores the four-term expansion and construes (1.2) as containing only two terms in its component clauses, it can now be argued that neither clause in question expresses an identity statement. For if the reference of 'what Heraclitus swam in today' and 'what Heraclitus swam in yesterday' is a river in both clauses, then the referent of the first will not be the same water as that of the second. This follows because neither of these referents are waters (i.e., sets of molecules). If, on the other hand, these phrases both refer to waters, the referents in (1.2) cannot be the same river since neither is (identical with) a river. In fact, this reading renders (1.2) false.

The above alternative suggests a reductive summary of the strategy against R. One simply shows that, for any instance of (1.1), the second clause is irrelevant since neither a or b is a

---

[7] Perhaps subsuming things under kinds and saying what they are constituted of are simply two different kinds of predication, so that being made of wood is as much a property (not a quality) of a table as being a table is. I cannot pursue this line of thought here.

g. It is clear that:

(1.7) Phospherus is the same planet as Hesperus, but not the same star;

provides no support for R. To see why, consider its expansion into a form akin to that of (1.2):

(1.8) Phosperus is the same planet as Hesperus, but they are different stars.

(1.8) is senseless precisely because neither Phospherus nor Hesperus is a star. Hence there are not two separate relative identity statements.

Now, Wiggins appears to be fully aware of this, and he subsumes such examples under type-(1) in his typology of would-be R-specimens. The typology is set out below (Cf. SS, pp. 23-29).

Type-(1): where g is the wrong covering concept for both a and b, although a = b. (1.8) is not an instance of R because Venus is not a star;

Type-(2): where a and b are distinct entities, so that the first clause of (1.1) is violated and no relative identity arises. Venus is not the same anything as Mars;

Type-(3): where both clauses of (1.1) are satisfied, and one has (ga or gb) & (-gb). John Doe, the boy thought to be a dunce at school, is the same human being (f) as Sir John Doe the Lord Mayor, but not the same boy, because Sir Doe is not a boy (g);

Type-(4): where both clauses of (1.1) are satisfied, and one has (ga or gb) & (ga & -gb). The jug and the coffee pot are the same quantity of china (f), but not the same utensil (g);

Type-(5): again, both clauses of (1.1) are satisfied, and one has (ga or gb) & (ga & gb). The Lord Mayor is the same human being as the managing director of Gnome Engineering, but these are distinct official positions (g), which are contingently realized by one man.

What I am contending is that Wiggins' subsequent refinements of putative R-instances is unnecessary, at a theoretical

level.[8] Of course, in the service of comprehensiveness it may seem advisable to distinguish cases where a is g and b is not, from ones where both a and b are gs. However, in his discussion of cases of type-(4) or type-(5), everything hinges either on the imputation of ambiguity to the referring expressions, so that with disambiguation all semblance of support for R disappears[9], or on the uncovering of a non-identity relation (e.g., constitution or realization, which are relations weaker than identity), rendering the second conjunct of (1.1) vacuous.[10] But then all of Wiggins' positive arguments merely generalize the phenomenon in (1.7) or (1.8), and hence justifies a reductive construal of both the strategy against R and Wiggins' typology of cases. This is not to say that I cannot concede that such generalization requires harder conceptual work than that involved in unmasking (1.7). The inappropriateness of 'same star' in the latter example is much more of a surface-phenomenon than the hypothesis that if x is constituted by china, it is distinct from that quantity of china.

The prima facie supporting cases in favour of R have been shown to be answerable. It is now time to turn to the theoretical considerations offered in support of R.

Section 2
The Theoretical Argument for R

Section 1 has been an attempt to show that certain putative examples of Relative Identity need not be understood as having the logical form they seem to have. In this I have largely followed Wiggins' own procedure, abstracting only from explicit invocation of Leibniz's Law or the Indiscernibility of Identicals. Such invocation comprises the second, if overlapping, part of the consideration of R-examples, and hence of the case against R.

Wiggins formulates it as follows: "Provided we have Leibniz's Law then, and provided 'is the same f as' is as Leibnizean as '=', we can disprove any purported instance of R." (SS, p.19/20). It may be granted, for the purposes of this section, that 'is the same f as' is as Leibnizean as plain identity.[11] But why suppose that Leibniz's Law is definitive of identity in either its sortalized

---

[8] Cases of a type-3 variety are another matter, which I discuss in section three.

[9] See his discussion of Cleopatra's Needle (type-4) and the Riviera Express (type-5).

[10] Employing a realization relation for the example concerning the Chancellor who is the same man, but not the same official as the Mayor, one has: 'The official who is Chancellor is not the same official as the official who is Mayor, but they are (realized by) the same man'. (cf. Dummett (1973), p.571).

[11] Wiggins' formal reason for restricting Leibniz's Law to 'If x is the same f as y, then Px iff Py', for P as predicate-expression variable, relates explicitly to D or the Sortal Dependency of Individuation thesis. Since I am not concerned with D at present, the equivalence of the restricted and unrestricted versions may be assumed. Whether D is true or not will be considered later. If it is, there is supposedly a "...philosophical motive for enriching the predicate calculus by the addition of sortal and substantial-sortal variables,..." (SS, p.38).

or unsortalized form? Wiggins gives various reasons. It is said, firstly, that the Leibnizean principle distinguishes identity from other relations which also have the formal properties of transitivity, symmetry and reflexivity (e.g., equality in pay). This might no doubt be the case for someone who already accepts that there are 'interesting' congruence relations on the domain of elements of any first-order theory. By an 'interesting congruence relation', I mean that if there is some covering concept f such that a and b are the same f, then for all g, if ga, then a and b are the same g (cf. SS, p. 18). It is not at all clear that the R-theorist has been given any reason to believe in the need for such a congruence principle, and consequently, no reason to distinguish identity from other relations with similar formal properties.

The second reason involves likening the status of Leibniz's Law to that of the Law of Non-Contradiction. Counterexamples to the former are said to be "... scarcely more impressive..." (SS, p.21) than counterexamples to the latter. However, it would seem that the issue to be addressed is that in the one case the counterexamples are more impressive, or at least have been found to be so by some philosophers.

The final reason I wish to refer to is by far the most convincing. It charges the R-theorist with imputing needless complexity to a seemingly straightforward locution, one of the form 't1 designates z and t2 designates z'. Suppose that for any context P(), the results of substituting each term vary in truth-value. Assume also that P(x) expresses a property Q. How then could z both lack and have Q? "It is on pain of contradiction that we shall deny that every property of the bearer of t1 is a property of the bearer of t2,..." (SS, p.22).

For those unimpressed by these quasi-formal considerations, Wiggins offers a more rigorous formal proof of the incompatibility between the reflexivity and congruence properties of identity and R (more specifically, with the weaker and sortally restricted versions of these properties). I shall not reproduce the proof in all its detail here (cf. SS, pp.19/20). It proceeds by taking the predicable 'a is the same g as something/a is the same g as x' as a substituend for the predicate-variable P in the consequent (i.e., Pa iff Pb) of an instance of a restricted version of Leibniz's Law, whose antecedent states that 'a is the same f as b'. Since the R-theorist grants that a is g (cf. types (3-5) above) Wiggins can derive 'a is the same g as a', as well as 'a is the same g as b', by substitution of the chosen predicable. Two applications of modus ponens yield the derivation of 'a is the same g as b', hence contradicting R.

I initially thought that the R-theorist should object to this line of argument by questioning 'a is the same g as something'. It seemed to me that acceptance of this as a predicable begs the question, as far as D is concerned, in Wiggins' favour. However, this would only be the case if, as I thought, the idea that everything is something necessarily underlies the idea that everything is identical to something, and if acceptance of the former meant commitment to D.

Author Human Leon
Name of thesis The Metaphysics Of Individuation. 1989

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.