



“The Possibility of an Afterlife”: An Interpretation and Defense of D.H. Lund’s View of the Self as an Immaterial Center of Subjective States

Zainab Amiri¹

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Abstract

The question of the probability of life after death has been of the highest importance throughout the ages for great numbers of people. The denial of its possibility is frequently based on a conception of a person as a completely material (or physical) being by appealing to both empirical evidence and philosophical argument. In this study, based on Lund’s view, we will present and defend a mind-body dualism in which the immaterial self does not consist in, and might not depend for its existence upon, the existence of the body and so might continue to exist after bodily death. The close association of these two distinct entities is due to a causal connection – a connection that fails to establish that the physical brings the mental into existence and is compatible with theories that the source of consciousness is not in the brain (e.g., the transceiver theory). In view of this, the continued existence of the self beyond the death of its body would be not only metaphysically possible but might be in accord with the laws of nature (i.e., naturally possible) as well.

1. PhD Student, Department of Philosophy of Religion, Faculty of Theology, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran Zainabamiri9@gmail.com.

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Arguments will be advanced in support of this form of dualism. They may be classified as follows: 1. the nature of the self (as known through acquaintance or phenomenology) and what it is to be a person, 2. Interactionist dualism and “transceiver” theory, 3. The self as an ontologically basic particular that experiences the world.

Keywords

Possibility of Afterlife, David Lund, Self, Phenomenology, Interactionist Dualism, Transceiver Theory.

Introduction

In the 21st century, everything is moving extraordinarily fast, and human attitude towards the world is changing. There has been an extensive trend between scientists to consider everything completely in terms of matter and physical measurement. Concerning this attitude, is there any excuse to speak of the self and soul? It seems not. No longer does science take seriously claims about an immaterial world, and that's because they assume that they can explain everything without referring to anything non-physical. Since the start of A.I., the phenomenal success of technology and computer science—especially transferring digital replication of consciousness— has raised new questions which are intensely focused on the nature of a person as a center of subjective experience. The result of ignoring or denying the reality of such a nature has put into question the possibility of life after death and has directly affected the necessary condition of this possibility. This is espoused by many contemporary scientists as well as philosophers. So, this issue is of historical and contemporary interest, and different scientists and philosophers in various branches are struggling to settle these problems or perhaps deny them right at the outset. Is it still possible to present and defend a kind of dualism as a conceivable theory based on inference to the best explanation which is in accordance with the contemporary achievements?

To put things into perspective more fully, it should be mentioned that even though some groups deny the reality, and even the possibility, of life beyond death, others acknowledge at least the possibility of an afterlife. Those who deny this possibility often base their view on a conception of a person as a completely material (or

physical) being and defend this view by appealing to both empirical evidence and philosophical arguments. In this regard, the empirically-grounded indicators seem to show that the likelihood of survival is not very high. The theory-based arguments would show that survival of death is absolutely (or metaphysically) impossible, at least without miraculous divine intervention. The upshot of their conclusion is that death results in the total destruction of the person. Those who reject this conclusion have a different view of persons, in most cases a dualist view, according to which a person's essence does not consist in, and might not depend upon, the continuing existence of the body and so might continue to exist after bodily death.

Those who believe that death leads to the extinction of the person note that mental states of all kinds always occur in close association with brain states and draw the conclusion that if the mind is not in some sense identical to the brain, it is such that its existence depends upon the existence of the brain and body. Dualists acknowledge the close association of mental with physical states but deny that the mental is reducible to the physical. They would argue that this association is due to a causal connection, not to a relation of identity. Some go further, challenging the assumption that the mental depends for its existence on the physical, arguing that the association in question does not establish that the physical produces the mental but is compatible with other relations that might obtain between them. Some are consistent with the possibility that the essence of a person with the capacity to have mental states continues to exist beyond biological death.

This study is an interpretation and defense of D.H. Lund's view of the self as an immaterial center of subjective states. So, this

study regarding Lund's views –which are eruditely organized in both analytic and phenomenological approaches and includes a comprehensive set of arguments against materialist and reductionist theories– proposes and defends a strong dualism (or dualism of particulars) in which a self is an essentially conscious being who is intrinsically and logically distinct from its physical embodiment and anything physical.

The Nature of the Self

The possibility of survival depends so heavily upon the nature of the self. The self is essentially a conscious being or a subject of consciousness rather than a physical organism. One argument for this conclusion is that it has modal properties¹ which no physical entity can have. Lund talks about the subject of conscious states in his great book, *The Conscious Self* (2005), and argues that the unity of consciousness is due to the existence of a unitary subject of conscious states. This conscious self we experience at the present moment remains one and the same self through time despite numerous changes, and this sense of unity through time can only be explained through a self who remains the same over time. What is both necessary and sufficient for the personal identity of the self and its survival is the existence of the *subject* of conscious states (Lund, 2009, p. 13), which is a metaphysically basic particular. So the self has a deep, irreducible essence consisting of a unitary, non-composite,

1. He has also comprehensively and broadly posited the conscious self based on modal and other properties that the self (as a subject-agent) has, and no physical particular can have in *The Conscious Self* (2005). The reader can find more credit of this argument by acknowledgment of Charles Taliaferro in his works (2018, pp. 50-59; 2017, p. 168).

indivisible subject of conscious states that endures through time while its states change. These experiential states are not part of the self (Lund, 1985, p. 19), but the self has them or is *in* them –in different states at different times.

Mind is constituted of mental states of various types (cognitive, perceptual, emotional, volitional) and they are states of the *self*. The "unity of conscious states" is explained as due to the unitary self at its center. The self is what *has* these states, it *experiences* them. It remains one and the same self over time as its states change. Since it is the carrier of personal identity through time and so must be what survives death if persons survive, it is what in religious contexts is (or should have been) referred to as the soul. These various mental states, or experiences, are conscious states of the *conscious self*. Although many speak of unconscious mental states, or even of an unconscious mind, such talk should not be interpreted as referring to conscious states that the (conscious) self is not conscious of having, but rather as (unconscious) dispositions to have conscious states.

The difficulty often considered most challenging for such a view is centered on causality and to explain how two radically different particulars can be in a cause-effect relationship (Lund, 2009, pp. 63-64). Lund successfully defends this view, utilizing phenomenology and philosophical arguments to show that the interaction is grounded in the irreducible causal properties of the two substances which are *causally accessible* to one another through embodiment. The very existence of the self as a nonphysical substance does not depend upon the existence of the physical substance in which it is embodied, so the cessation of the causal interaction will not prevent its continued existence after death. The

focus of this discussion is on intelligibility and the occurrence of dualistic causation. As Lund shows, whether we consider causation reducible to non-causal features of the items involved or irreducible to anything else, there is no basis for suspicion of the intelligibility of dualistic causation. Given the immateriality¹ of the self possessing agent-causation features, the best explanation of the irresistible immediacy of our volitional experience is that this impression of agency is a reality as it appears to be. If this approach is successful, it shows that dualistic causation—causal interaction between the mental and the physical— reveals nothing problematic about the interaction of two distinct substances; and that dualistic causation is in fact occurring.

Intractionist Dualism; "Trasceiver Theory"

The very fundamental part in picturing an afterlife, as I think, is based on Lund's specific theory called "selective-transmission" theory. This theory is an interactionist theory (Lund, 2003, p. 70) which suggests strong dualism (a strong dualism — a dualism of particulars) (Lund, 2014, p. 62) Although this kind of dualism is a Cartesian dualism, it differs from the original in important respects. The original Cartesian dualism (the dualism first conceived and expressed by the great French philosopher, Rene Descartes) has been the inspiration for many Cartesian-like views held by various past and present philosophers, but hardly any would embrace all aspects of Descartes' original view. Descartes apparently held that no non-human animals are conscious. Moreover, he was not in a position to distinguish

1. The embodied immaterial self which interacts causally with its body could survive due to its intrinsic and logical independence from the body.

between physical and phenomenal space, nor in a position to see how deeply embodied we are. These aspects have been viewed carefully in this study, partly by employing the following conceptions of possibility:

1. Metaphysical Possibility: The logical coherence (i.e., the internal consistency)
2. Natural Possibility: Is it in conformity with the natural law of the actual world?
3. Genuine Possibility: Survival of the individual person is in harmony with all the definitely known facts about the relationship between consciousness and the brain.

After we employ these conceptions, it is certain that the survival of death is metaphysically possible if, as Lund contends, the existence of the self is one thing and the existence of its body is another. But the question that is, in general, of most interest is the question of whether its survival is naturally possible or it contravenes natural law.

Though the self (or soul) and its body are, in Lund's view, distinct entities, they are causally connected, possibly such that, as a matter of natural law, the self depends for its existence upon its present body (or, at least, some body or other). Following Lund, the close association of these two distinct entities is due to a causal connection – a connection that fails to establish that the physical brings the mental into existence and thus is compatible with theories that the source of consciousness is not in the brain (e.g., the filter theory). In view of this, the continued existence of the self beyond the death of its body would be not only metaphysically

possible but might be in accord with the laws of nature (i.e., naturally possible) as well¹.

As far as my research has indicated, there are other interactionist dualist views, but none, I believe, quite like this one. No one has put forth precisely the idea that Lund expresses in the way he does. More specifically, the idea that the brain generates or produces the self and its conscious states has been questioned by others, though perhaps not quite in the way he has. Some well-known philosophers writing in the early years of the twentieth century have done so. William James in his essay *Human Immortality* (1898) did so in suggesting that the brain might have a transmitting function rather than a producing one. And J.M.E. McTaggart pointed out that the fact that the self does not have experience other than by way of its body does not show that a self without a body could not have experience in some other way. Perhaps, he suggested, it is just the existence of the body that presently makes those other ways impossible. He speaks of this in his *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1906, pp. 105-106). More recently, Edward and Emily Kelly (and others) in *Irreducible Mind* (2010), have argued for a number of interesting conclusions that include the irreducibility of consciousness, the central importance of mystical experience, and, most relevant to the specific question, the role of the brain as an organ for limiting or shaping consciousness, but not creating it

1. To put it rather differently, the self is deeply embodied (contingently embodied) and completely embedded in nature, but whose existence might not depend or consist in the existence of the body, and so the physical body is not involved in its personal identity and its survival. For more detail about personal identity and disembodied self, see:

Lund, D. H. (1990). Disembodied Existence, Personal Identity, and the First Person Perspective. *Idealistic Studies*, 20(3), 187-202.

(see, for example, page 575). They speak of the brain as having an inhibiting or filtering effect on the consciousness passing through it. The source of consciousness is taken to be external to the brain. This theory might strike many as simply incredible, but there is empirical evidence that supports it; and it is consistent with, if not made more credible by, the fact that naturalism has failed to provide a plausible explanation of the presence of consciousness in the natural world (as Moreland, (2008), has argued).

In addition to the giant body of the mentioned research, recently Eben Alexander has published a new book defending the filter theory from his scientific points of view as a neurosurgeon (2017). In the following part, we discuss the relationship between the nature of the self, filter theory and the possibility of an afterlife.

The Possibility of Afterlife

Lund considers three possibilities for the specific relationship between the self and its brain (other than the orthodox one—that the self and its experience owe their existence to the activity of the brain);

- Firstly, we can conceive of the brain as a filter (selective dissociator) in which we might expect expansion in consciousness after death.
- Secondly, we can conceive it as a consciousness enhancer, with the result that the consciousness of the self is in a highly diminished condition when separated from its brain.
- Thirdly, we can consider non-intentional consciousness as underlying the other two possibilities in which the self continues to exist as a conscious being even if its intentional consciousness ceases at bodily death.

At this point, it will be worthwhile to explore the possible origin of consciousness and the self. The conclusions that consciousness occurs only in relation to the being whose consciousness it is, and that this being (e.g., the self) is indivisible seem unavoidable. But if the brain acts as a filter or transmitter through which consciousness passes, we should have some plausible conception of the conscious source as it is prior to the effect on it resulting from its passing through the brain. It might be objectless (i.e., non-intentional) then and thus not something we would remember. There are at least two ways to approach an adequate conception of this source.

One is the theistic approach. Given that God exists and is the creator of conscious beings, He does this not by creating physical organisms with brains that produce them. Rather, they already exist as Divine creations, and the natural world with inhabitants consisting of complex physical organisms with brains through which they can filter provides the manner in which they become manifest in that world. The other approach involves mysticism and/or the non-intentional consciousness revealed in it and perhaps in other circumstances.

Considering the second approach that, in Lund's view, involves non-intentional consciousness, why should we believe that such consciousness exists and how might it be understood? Some people (e.g., mystics and some who have attained a deep meditative state) have claimed to have been in a conscious state in which they were aware but not *of* anything. They typically insist that they were not asleep, but fully awake and conscious, though not aware of any bodily sensations, emotions, volitions, sense perceptions, or cognitive activity. They were in a state of “pure” (i.e., non-intentional) consciousness, consciousness without *of*-ness, though

apparently self-illuminating. This seems paradoxical, but yet might be a fundamental form of knowledge.

Addressing this subject is complicated but important. Lund pursues part of it, focusing on the Yogacara School of Indian Buddhism. In this view, death brings the cessation of (intentional) consciousness associated with the body. That kind of consciousness ends at death, at which time there are no objects and no consciousness of objects. There is nothing to be conscious of. But store-consciousness continues. As Lund states, cessation of intentional consciousness is sought and sometimes attained in this life when store-consciousness is reached. After attaining it, maintaining exposure to it is usually brief, before it is relinquished upon returning to intentional consciousness.

Bodily death, then, brings about the cessation of intentional consciousness but not of store-consciousness —the non-intentional consciousness that presumably has always accompanied our consciousness of the intentional kind but remained in obscurity because it is not of any objects and thus of nothing for our intentional consciousness to be conscious of. Because store-consciousness survives bodily death, it is available to re-emerge through an organism with a suitable nervous system.

The reason why Lund refers to the Yogacara School here is that it is a highly respected School of Ancient Buddhist thought that maintains that some consciousness survives bodily death.

As stated, in the Yogacara contention, store-consciousness (i.e., non-intentional consciousness) survives bodily death. Their evidence that non-intentional consciousness exists consists in the testimony of those who have experienced it. It seems that only a few have direct experience of it, but this might not be so. The truth

might be that whenever I am intentionally conscious of, for example, a table, my consciousness includes a consciousness of my consciousness of the table. Otherwise, I would be conscious of the table without any consciousness of this fact. This consciousness of the table would be cut off from me: I would not know of its occurrence. As Jean-Paul Sartre (the famous French philosopher from whom Lund received this insight) said, “In other words, it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, and unconscious—which is absurd.” (Being and Nothingness, 1953, 1966).

This strikes us as an important insight, for this consciousness of consciousness appears to be a non-intentional consciousness necessarily involved in the constitution of our commonplace intentional consciousness. What distinguishes the mystical experience is that this consciousness of consciousness is experienced alone, without the obscuring overlay of intentional consciousness. Perhaps the latter’s grip on our attention prevents, or makes very difficult, our detection of the underlying and fundamental consciousness—the consciousness that apparently is the source of our intentional consciousness or, at the very least, the necessary condition of (in first-person terms) my consciousness of my being conscious of an intentional object (such as a table) when in fact I am. But noting these relations should not suggest that there is (in the case of one person) more than a single self with a reflexive consciousness of itself, and with its reflexive self-consciousness manifested in the consciousness of being conscious of an intentional object.

It appears that there is within us a consciousness that is non-intentionally conscious of itself. (As Sartre himself points out, the word ‘of’ as used here may be grammatically unavoidable but does not introduce an intentional object.) One could say that this

consciousness is self-conscious or self-aware. Its very nature is to be self-aware. In *Persons, Souls, and Death*, Lund has described metaphorically this reflexive character of non-intentional consciousness as “its self-effulgent or self-shining nature, revealing itself to itself by its own light –apparently the light of non-intentional consciousness.”

Here there are two closely related matters:

- (1) The issue of whether the self-conscious consciousness has a personal and/or an individual nature
- (2) If it has, can the identity of a person reside in it?

In regard to (1), it is important to note that Sartre calls this consciousness the pre-reflective cogito (as distinct from Descartes' Cartesian cogito) and maintains that it is non-personal. This original consciousness (e.g., the consciousness of consciousness of the table) is pre-reflective and non-personal. The “I” does not come into existence until this original consciousness makes itself the object of reflection (i.e., the object of intentional consciousness). But he also tells us that all consciousness is self-consciousness. Apparently, the “I” comes about only on the level of intentional consciousness. It is the result of introducing the subject-object dualism into consciousness with the “I” as intentional object. But the self-consciousness of the original consciousness is not like this. It is not dual. In Sartre's words, it is “...an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself.” It is always present in the (intentional) consciousness of an object. For every instance of such consciousness is simultaneously a non-intentional consciousness of itself.

So the original consciousness is non-personal even though it is non-intentionally conscious of itself. Personalization comes only when it reflects upon itself and thereby forms an intentional object

of itself, but of itself as objectified. As such, it is distinct from the original consciousness in its non-personal, pre-reflective state. In the words of Sartre, speaking of the original consciousness, “...consciousness is the knowing being in his capacity of *being* and not as being known.” (p. LX). Yet this original consciousness, though non-personal, is a particular or an individual. The original consciousness in me is one particular and the one in you is another. It is not something general, not a universal pan-psychic. Each of these consciousnesses (the one in me and the one in you) is a self-consciousness and each is a particular, but neither is personal. Neither has that set of psychic qualities that are ordinarily thought of as a personality.

Note that Sartre, unlike the mystic, does not claim that he ever experienced non-intentional consciousness by itself, without the overlay of ordinary intentional consciousness. (He seemed to be unfamiliar with the writings of the mystics.) He apparently thought of its existence as more of a theoretical matter, probably known by inference. But such an inference seems well justified. We can note with assurance that we have consciousness of our consciousness of an intentional object, even though our focus on it inevitably puts it in the position of another intentional object.

The question of whether the identity of a person can obtain in or be carried by the pre-reflective self-consciousness has not yet been answered. Sartre’s answer is that it can and does. This answer might strike one as absurd, at least at first. How can my identity as a person consist in something *non-personal*? But on closer examination, the absurdity vanishes. This self-consciousness is the subject that does the thinking and the perceiving that I do, and has the experiences that I have. It is the subject in the subject-object dualism that arises when, by reflecting on itself, puts itself in the position of

the intentional object it brings about. In this manner, a concept of itself, of an Ego, of the psyche, of the personality, and of the person as ordinarily understood come to be. But the original self-consciousness supplies the consciousness involved. Indeed, it is the consciousness of these things and also the consciousness of my consciousness of these things. It is what makes possible my knowing that I am conscious of them when in fact I am.

For Lund, we could be this original self-consciousness. At this moment at least, we don't see how we could exist without it. It strikes us as necessary for our existence and perhaps sufficient for it as well. Accepting sufficiency here would cut very deep, paring away much of what ordinarily comes to mind when we think of persons.

Though Lund finds much of interest in Sartre's view, especially his insight that Lund interprets as about a non-intentional consciousness of our ordinary intentional consciousness, he does not agree with his denial of a self-substance. Although even philosophers of mind who see a central place for the mental, such as those in the Buddhist tradition, try to deny it, their attempts are unconvincing. A plausible account of the continuance of memory, personality, and character traits, as well as the attainment of cessation, with only an event ontology, is certainly challenging if possible at all. Even the Yogacara position, one of the most sophisticated of the Buddhist views, is led to posit something that looks very much like a mental substance in the notion of a store-consciousness.

At this point, the importance of non-intentional consciousness to the survival issue comes fully into view. For it opened up the third possibility that we mentioned earlier—the possibility that the self continues to exist as a conscious being even if death has destroyed its intentional consciousness.

It follows from all these considerations that phenomenological and metaphysical examinations employed in this study show that personal survival is not only conceivable but also in harmony with all the definitely known facts about the relationship between consciousness and the brain¹. In fact, this indicates that survival of death is a genuine possibility. Inquiries into empirical issues uncover facts supporting the claim that this possibility is actualized. The perceptual world that the post-mortem self could encounter would be a phenomenal world constituted largely of phenomenal items. The self is presently at the center of its phenomenal world and would continue to have such centrality in its afterworld. Since the self is the bearer of essential capacities for consciousness and memory, its postmortem existence (assuming that this possibility is actualized) would be as a conscious being with a phenomenal body grounded in pre-mortem memory. If indirect realism is true, the post-mortem phenomenal world would be similar in content to the present perceptual world. Such a subjective, private world could be shared via extrasensory communication with other minds, thus giving that world a public dimension. This could result in a world of rich, meaningful, and diverse experiences created by discarnate selves, largely through telepathic interactions.

In closing, we will address some points regarding the level of certainty we should expect to attain in these matters we discussed in this study. As we all know, deduction is a truth-preserving form of

1. Though Lund has given reasons to believe that the continued existence of the self beyond the death of its body is naturally possible, he has been reluctant to try to quantify this possibility. Is the survival of the self more probable than not, less probable than not, highly probable, or not very probable at all? This is an epistemic issue that largely turns on what empirical investigation can reveal.

reasoning, and that is why it is so valuable. Sound deductive arguments guarantee the truth of their conclusions. But to be sound, every premise must be true and the conclusion must be correctly drawn from them (i.e., must be valid as well). The point we wish to make is about the level of certainty we can attain as to whether each premise is true. The validity of the argument is usually not as hard to establish, especially if the premises are not numerous or complex. So given that the deductive argument in question is valid, you can be as certain that its conclusion is true as the certainty you can have that every premise is true. With respect to the nature of truth, briefly, truths are about how things are, about what is, not what it is believed to be. Relativism about truth strikes us as confused.

In this context, by certainty we do not mean logical certainty—a certainty that conveys a guarantee that error is impossible, e.g., the truth of the conclusion of a sound deductive argument. For this seems unacceptably strong for the certainty presented in arguments appealing to the religious conceptions and Islamic ideologies. Perhaps the certainty we have in mind is grounded in propositions central to Islamic teaching which deem to be authoritative. Perhaps a deductive argument can be formed utilizing such propositions. If one has premises constituted of propositions that owe their truth to theological proclamation, and the conclusion of the argument is validly deduced from them, then it is also true (by theological proclamation).

Considering that Islamic scripture includes propositions claiming that there is an afterlife —propositions that are authoritative within an Islamic religious context, then an effort to show that an afterlife is possible would not be greeted with enthusiasm by those who believe that the certainty of an afterlife is already justified. In this view, its reality has been established by

religious proclamations that are taken to be authoritative.

With that assumption, we might point out that the argument that an afterlife is possible is *consistent* with the certainty of the reality of an afterlife. For whatever is actual is also possible, though the reverse is not true. More persuasive, however, is the point that our argument for the possibility of an afterlife weighs against its being impossible and thus is supportive (even if only weakly) of the certainty that an afterlife is real. Perhaps more important is that our "afterlife-friendly" conclusion is the result of proceeding along a different route from the one that provides the certainty of an afterlife, and our route might well have an appeal to those who don't find convincing an appeal to religious authority.

On a different assumption, Islamic teachings don't say much about the nature of the afterlife. Is it material to the extent that this life is? If so, how is personal identity to be preserved? If entirely immaterial, how is that to be understood? The point to be made here is that this study may be seen as serving a different though complementary purpose—not to justify certainty about an afterlife but to explain what that life might be understood to be. This study has tried to give a general characterization of what it might be to experience such a life, a characterization that is grounded in what we find to be true of us now as we examine what is essential to our present existence. As such, it has an empirical basis to some extent. This study also has examined the phenomenology of self-consciousness, along with features of an afterworld one might seem to encounter, and tried to discern what aspects of our present experience could go with us into an afterlife. Questions about the preservation of personal identity, of afterworld perception, of afterworld communication, and of the dispositional base for the continuation of these activities have been addressed, among others.

It will be also worthwhile to talk about a strong inductive argument. It is one in which the conclusion in fact follows probably from the premises. If, in addition, the premises are true, then the conclusion is probably true. If the latter is the case (i.e., a strong inductive argument with true premises), such an argument is usually called a *cogent* argument. A cogent argument always has a probably true conclusion. An inductive argument does not provide a guarantee that its conclusion is true. The best inductive arguments (the cogent ones) can yield conclusions that are only probably true. This is because their conclusions always go beyond the premises. In other words, their conclusions assert more than what their premises assert. An inductive leap is always involved.

There can be no such leap in a sound deductive argument—a valid deductive argument with true premises. Such an argument can provide certainty (a guarantee) that its conclusion is true. But it can do this because it merely reveals, or restates, what is already implicit in the premises. It merely makes explicit what the premises implicitly assert. It can be helpful in clarifying our understanding of what is contained in the premises. But, other than that, it yields no new knowledge—nothing beyond what the premises assert. Only an inductive argument can do that—by going beyond what is already contained in the premises. This is the inductive leap.

Lund's argument about survival must be of the inductive kind, but his effort is to make it as strong as possible. The premises are grounded in what we know, or have good reason to believe, to be true of us now, as they will form the best basis for an (inductive) inference about what will be true of us after bodily death. The truth about whether the future includes an afterlife in which we continue to exist is not implicit in any premises we can formulate about our conditions now. We must make an inductive leap to reach a

conclusion about our future condition. The premises of the argument we need are not easy to formulate and establish as true, but even if we accomplish such desired conclusion that follows probably from them, the conclusion is (only) probably true. Taken all together, when we view the lines of evidence we discussed collectively, we find that they have a cumulative evidential weight sufficient to conclude that the survival hypothesis is probably true. And based on all the phenomenology and philosophical arguments done by appealing to what seems to be true of living persons in an effort to establish the possibility that only what is logically necessary and sufficient for their existence as persons prior to death, we conclude that the self who is fully embedded in the natural world and deeply embodied in a physical organism would continue to exist after death in a disembodied state, and yet could have a rich variety of experiences in an afterworld encountered after death.

Conclusion

For a long time, the question of the possibility of life after death has been of great importance to a very large number of people. Those who deny this possibility often base their view on a conception of a self as a completely material (or physical) being. In this regard, the empirically-grounded indicators seem to show that the likelihood of survival is not very high. The theory-based arguments would show that survival of death is absolutely (or metaphysically) impossible, at least without miraculous divine intervention. This study, based on Lund's view, proposes and defends a strong dualism (or dualism of particulars) in which a self is an essentially conscious being who is distinct from its physical embodiment and anything physical. What is both necessary and sufficient for the personal identity of the self and its survival is the existence of the *subject* of conscious states,

which is a metaphysically basic particular. So the self has a deep, irreducible essence consisting of a unitary, non-composite, indivisible subject of conscious states that endures through time while its states change. These experiential states are not part of the self, but the self has them or is *in* them –in different states at different times.

The close association of these two distinct entities is due to a causal connection – a connection which fails to establish that the physical brings the mental into existence and is compatible with theories that the source of consciousness is not in the brain (e.g., the filter theory). In view of this, the continued existence of the self beyond the death of its body would be not only metaphysically possible but might be in accord with the laws of nature (i.e., naturally possible) as well. Lund shows that dualistic causation – causal interaction between the mental and the physical– reveals nothing problematic about the interaction of two distinct substances, and that dualistic causation is in fact occurring. He considers three possibilities for the specific relationship between the self and its brain. First, we can conceive of the brain as a filter (selective dissociator) in which we might expect expansion in consciousness after death. Secondly, we can conceive it as a consciousness enhancer, with the result that the consciousness of the self is in a highly diminished condition when separated from its brain. Thirdly, we can consider non-intentional consciousness as underlying the other two possibilities in which the self continues to exist as a conscious being even if its intentional consciousness ceases at bodily death.

Phenomenological and metaphysical examination employed in this study shows that personal survival is not only conceivable but

also in harmony with all the definitely known facts about the relationship between consciousness and the brain. In fact, this indicates that survival of death is a genuine possibility. Inquiries into empirical issues uncover facts supporting the claim that this possibility is actualized. The perceptual world that the post-mortem self could encounter would be a phenomenal world constituted largely of phenomenal items. The self is presently at the center of its phenomenal world and would continue to have such centrality in its afterworld. Since the self is the bearer of essential capacities for consciousness and memory, its postmortem existence (assuming that this possibility is actualized) would be as a conscious being with a phenomenal body grounded in pre-mortem memory. If indirect realism is true, the post-mortem phenomenal world would be similar in content to the present perceptual world. Such a subjective, private world could be shared via extrasensory communication with other minds, thus giving that world a public dimension. This could result in a world of rich, meaningful and diverse experiences created by discarnate selves, largely through telepathic interactions.

Note

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